

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE FOR PRINCIPALS AND ADMINISTRATORS

I. Introduction

Administrators play a crucial role in organizing and carrying out the mission of a school. Competent, dedicated, and well-performing administrators are any school's most important assets. Administrators who are committed to excellence assess every aspect of the school's performance regularly for continuous improvement. They set standards and strive to achieve those goals. While schools aim for excellence through continuous assessment, formal administrative evaluations are also an important step towards improvement, the growth of human resources, and achieving success. Formal performance assessments of administrators are regarded as a means of promoting excellence in schools. The Performance Evaluation System reflects the school's commitment to quality.

II. Who Evaluates Whom?

In well-established independent schools, the division heads or administrators assigned to the task conduct the performance assessment of the teachers; the Principal or School Head conducts the performance evaluation of the administrative team/division heads; and the board chair or board task force conducts the performance assessment of the Principal/School Head. The Board Development Committee leads the board in Board Performance Assessment, Individual Trustee Performance Assessment, and Meeting Assessment by using self-evaluation tools.

III. Purpose of Performance Evaluation

The main goal of the Performance Evaluation is professional growth. The purpose of the Performance Evaluation is to measure the effectiveness of the administrator and ensure that the administrator's performance conforms to the predetermined job description, annual goals, and the school's strategic priorities. The evaluation process should allow both the evaluator and the individual being evaluated the opportunity to identify areas of competence and excellence, as well as any areas of further growth and improvement. An administrator's strengths should be discussed so that they can be capitalized upon and developed further. An administrator's weaknesses should be identified so that appropriate methods can be devised to resolve or alleviate them.

IV. Four Premises for an Effective Performance Evaluation

1. Professional growth should be the main goal of the Performance Evaluation.
2. Performance Evaluation Tools should be agreed upon by the administrator and the supervisor.
3. Performance Evaluation Objectives should be formulated by the administrator and agreed upon by the supervisor.
4. The Performance Evaluation Timeline should be jointly agreed upon by the administrator and the supervisor.

V. Establishing a Performance Evaluation Process and Timeline

Step 1. August-September: Initial Meeting between Supervisor and Administrator

Before assessing performance, it is important that the administrator and the supervisor agree on a process for the evaluation, as well as the appropriate instruments. If a process and the tools are in place, they should be periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the objectives. The supervisor should expect the administrator to set his/her goals annually (goals related most often to the school's mission, priorities, and strategic plan), and the administrator's performance will be evaluated in terms of his/her success in meeting these goals. The following assessment tools could be used for successful performance evaluation:

- a. Job Description
- b. Individual Administrative Goals
- c. Leadership Traits
- d. Self Evaluation
- e. Reflections on the year
- f. Portfolio

Step 2. October-November: Finalizing the Assessment Tools

At this meeting, the Job Description is reviewed and revised; Individual Administrative Goals are proposed by the administrator and agreed upon by the supervisor; and both the supervisor and the administrator agree upon Leadership Traits.

Step 3. December-January: Holding a Mid-Year Evaluation Meeting

In December or January of each year, a mid-year evaluation meeting will be held between the administrator and the supervisor. Each administrator meets with his/her supervisor to discuss the progress in achieving the goals and feedback about the job description and leadership traits, as well as focus on achievements and strategies to achieve unmet goals.

Step 4. February-March: Preparing the Agreed-Upon Tools for Summative Meeting

The month of February-March involves preparing materials for the summative meeting, the final step of the performance evaluation. Each administrator submits a status report on their Job Descriptions, as well as their progress on achieving Individual Administrative Goals, a Self-Evaluation, Leadership Traits and Reflections on the year. If the administrator and the supervisor agreed to the portfolio assessment, then this will be the time to prepare the portfolio.

Step 5. April-May: Summative Meeting - Finalizing the Performance Evaluation

Administrators meet with their supervisors to finalize the Summative Performance Evaluation, in which all the agreed-upon performance evaluation tools (Job Descriptions, Individual Administrative Goals, Leadership Traits, Self-evaluations, and Portfolios) are discussed.

Step 6. June: Finalizing the Performance Evaluation by writing the report.

The supervisor will finalize the written Performance Assessment with commendations and recommendations; the administrator and the supervisor will agree on next year's goals, and the Performance Evaluation Cycle will start again.

VI. Performance Evaluation Tools

It is important to note that there is no single instrument that could assess the performance of the administrator's complex job. At the first Performance Evaluation Meeting between the supervisor and the administrator, one of the discussion items will be to agree on the Performance Evaluation Tools. The following lists of tools are useful instruments. Both the administrator and the supervisor can use a few or all of these tools:

Job Description

The job description of each administrator reflects the expectations on a daily and annual basis of performance of duties. It is a contract between the employee and the supervisor outlining the performance expectations. Each administrator will meet annually with his/her immediate supervisor to review and revise the job descriptions. The agreed-upon description will be the basis for an annual summative evaluation of job performance. Each administrator will be evaluated by the superior to whom they immediately report according to the job description.

Individual Administrative Goals

Each administrator, working in cooperation with his/her immediate supervisor, will annually develop a minimum of three Individual Administrative Goals. Individual Administrative Goals must be different and distinct from the tasks listed in the administrator's job description.

Leadership Traits

The school administrators will be evaluated in terms of his/her performance in relation to the leadership skills document developed by the administration team. This list of skills represents the findings of the consensus of opinion of administrators regarding the skills and behaviors that are associated with successful school administration. The Leadership Traits Document will be a document that will be same for each administrator.

Self Evaluation

Self assessment is a powerful tool for the administrator and the supervisor. While the administrators are filling out the self-evaluation form, they are critiquing their performance and sharing it with their supervisor in an open and honest way. This is a great way to enhance the relationship and growth process.

Reflection on the year

Administrators will write an annual reflection about their year, and their success stories and challenges will be shared with their supervisor. The following list might be helpful in formulating this paper:

- Short summary of duties and responsibilities
- Achievements and challenges

- Influencing factors that help or hinder your achievements
- Goals you wish to achieve for the coming year
- Review of your last year's goals
- What went well this year?
- What did you accomplish this year?
- What barriers or challenges did you face?
- What did you do to overcome those challenges?

Portfolio

The Portfolio Assessment is a powerful Performance Evaluation Tool because it encourages professional growth and emphasizes self-assessment and analysis. The portfolio is a collection of thoughtfully selected exhibits, artifacts, and reflections related to the administrator's experiences. The Portfolio Assessment creates ownership and commitment of the evaluation system and develops a shared sense of leadership expectations. The following artifacts could be part of the portfolio:

- Resume
- Letters of commendations from parents or others
- Letters or notes from teachers thanking you for input or help
- Staff meeting, staff development agendas
- Student achievements
- Newly established programs
- Participating at community building events
- Professional growth activities
- Reflections on the year

RESOURCES

- Barker, Cornelius L. and Claudette J. Searchwell. *Writing Meaningful Evaluations for Non-Instructional Staff—Right Now!!: The Principal's Quick-Start Reference Guide*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc., 2004.
- Brown, Genevieve and Beverly J. Irby. *The Principal Portfolio*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc., 1997.
- Johnson, Eric W. *Evaluating the Performance of Trustees and School Heads*. Boston: National Association of Independent Schools, 1986.
- Langlois, Donald E. and Richard P. McAdams. *Performance Appraisal of School Management: Evaluating the Administrative Team*. Lancaster: Technomic Publishing, 1992.
- Margulus, Lisabeth S. and Jacquelyn Ann Melin. *Performance Appraisals Made Easy: Tools for Evaluating Teachers and Support Staff*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc., 2005.