Superintendent Evaluation: The Basics

A Sample Tool Developed by the

Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators

Why Evaluate?

There are three primary reasons to evaluate the superintendent: alignment, communication, and accountability. And now added to these reasons of effective practice is the fact that annual evaluations are now required by state law.

A sound evaluation process will align the organization's goals with its expectations for its chief executive. The first step in the superintendent evaluation process should include goal setting for the organization and an agreement on the measures that will be used to determine progress in achieving the organization's goals.

Goal setting and the role of the chief executive in moving the organization toward those goals involves substantial conversation among the members of the team of ten (the nine board members and the superintendent). Formal annual goal discussions focus this conversation and help to ensure that the goals are shared and reasonable. It gets everyone working on the same things. One important function of the evaluation is to prompt and focus this conversation.

It is much easier for the leader to lead and for the board to hold the leader accountable when the goals are clearly articulated, agreed upon and accompanied by agreed-upon objective performance measures.

Who Should Evaluate?

The superintendent should be evaluated by the full board sitting as a board. When the board acts on the superintendent's evaluation, as in everything else the board does, it speaks as a corporate body, not as nine separate voices.

The setting of the district's goals, the communication of expectations and the evaluation of performance are uniquely functions of the full board acting as a board. It is not

appropriate to delegate these functions to a few members, such as to a board officer, or to a committee of the board. Nor is it useful or fair to merely average the rating scores of each board member to develop a composite. The board needs to work as a body and speak with one voice in evaluating the superintendent.

As important as the result of the evaluation itself, is the discussion that occurs when setting objective performance standards, annual goals and objectives and then when actually conducting the annual evaluation engenders between the board as a whole and the superintendent about the direction of the school district and the role of the superintendent in leading and supporting the rest of the organization in moving the district toward its strategic goals. This discussion should be scheduled as the only agenda item for an executive session of the board.

When Should the Evaluation Occur?

The Pennsylvania Public School Code requires that the superintendent's employment contract include a timeframe for the Board's annual written evaluation of the Superintendent. The specific dates for accomplishing each step in the evaluation are less important than the board and superintendent setting a schedule and keeping to it.

Many boards and superintendents tie the goal-setting and evaluation to the school calendar and fiscal year. In this model, the goals for the following year would be set in January, as the board is beginning to set goals and allocate resources in the district's preliminary budget. Another important consideration is the timing of when state testing, school performance profiles and other data generated by the state, College Board and other sources becomes available. There may be time set aside quarterly or mid-year to discuss progress toward achieving the goals with a formal written evaluation in November before the process starts again in the new year. (This schedule also recognizes that new members may join the board in December and it allows those who set the goals to evaluate performance against them and allows the new members to participate in new goal-setting.)

How Should the Evaluation Proceed?

As discussed above, the board and superintendent should have an extended conversation about performance expectations, development of objective performance standards and the evaluation process and instrument. This should occur prior to employment and be reduced to writing in the employment contract. Boards are now required to post on the district website the mutually agreed to objective performance standards developed for the superintendent and assistant superintendent. The important thing is that such conversation happens, and that it happens well before the period for which the superintendent will be evaluated.

The discussion should lead to an agreement upon:
- when annual (or multi-year) district goals and superintendent performance standards will be updated or set
- the specific evaluation methodology and instrument
- when the board will conduct its evaluation
- the information and data that will be used in conducting the evaluation (i.e., a portfolio maintained by the superintendent, district/school student performance data, school performance profiles, district management results, completion or progress on specific major projects such as school construction, program revisions, grade realignments, or input from other sources such as a "360 degree" survey). Identification of the kind of data that will be used upfront, will lessen the common tendency to make judgments based on hearsay and anecdotal evidence that may not reflect more common practice.

What Should an Evaluation Instrument Include?

The board and superintendent should agree on the instrument that will be used to organize and communicate the evaluation. A sample is attached. It was developed by a team of PASA members with the help of Peg Portscheller, an educator and consultant from the Leadership and Learning Center. The team looked at a number of instruments that were being used in Pennsylvania to evaluate superintendent performance. The team also looked at the growing body of literature on superintendent evaluations, work being done in other states, particularly in Iowa, and at the AASA and ISLIC standards. The team borrowed extensively from these sources to develop the sample. The items in this sample are consciously aligned with the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership standards. Each standard is followed by a number of indicators that would reflect success in meeting the standard.

In addition, to meet the 2012 statutory requirement that the Superintendent's annual evaluation include assessment of mutually agreed to objective performance standards-- Standard 9 – Objective Performance Standards, has been added to the model.

Before adoption by any board and superintendent, the evaluation instrument should be reviewed carefully by the team of ten. The instrument may be adapted to meet unique needs and challenges of the district. It is expected that school boards and superintendents will, at the beginning of each goal-setting and evaluation period, freely add and delete indicators as appropriate to align it with district goals for that period. The evaluation of each standard is assessed against the indicators. The indicators are designed to make the standard more concrete and identify the kinds of things that would be accepted as evidence of having met the standard. It is expected that were will be objective, measurable or observable evidence from among the indicators that the standard has been met (or not met.) We suggest that board use a Likert scale of 1-4 in rating a superintendent's performance against each standard.

Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators
Proud Leadership for Pennsylvania Schools

SAMPLE SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION TOOL
Leadership Standards

Standard 1 - SHARED VISION. An education leader promotes personalized student success by thinking and planning strategically to create and sustain an organizational vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Standard 2 - CULTURE OF LEARNING. An education leader promotes personalized student success by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning.

Standard 3 - DECISION MAKING. An education leader promotes personalized student success by accessing and using appropriate data to inform decision making at all levels of the system.

Standard 4 – MANAGEMENT. An education leader promotes personalized student success by ensuring management of the resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment.

Standard 5 - FAMILY AND COMMUNITY. An education leader promotes personalized student success by collaborating, communicating, engaging and empowering others inside and outside of the organization to pursue excellence in learning.

Standard 6 – ETHICS. An education leader promotes the personalized student success by operating in a fair and equitable manner with personal and professional integrity.

Standard 7 – ADVOCACY. An education leader promotes personalized student success by advocating for children and public education in the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.

Standard 8 - PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH. An education leader promotes the personalized student success by supporting professional growth of self and others through practice and inquiry.

Standard 9 - OBJECTIVE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS. Section 1073.1 of the Public School Code of 1949 provides that "the employment contract for a district superintendent shall include objective performance standards mutually agree to in writing by the board of school directors and the district superintendent." The objective performance standards may be based upon the following: 1) achievement of annual measurable objectives established by the school district; 2) achievement on the PSSA and/or Keystone Exams; 3) student growth as measured by PVAAS; 4) attrition or graduation rates; 5) financial management standards; 6) standards of operational excellence; or 7) any additional criteria deemed relevant and mutually agreed to by the board and district superintendent.

Standard 1 (SHARED VISION) An education leader promotes personalized student success by thinking and planning strategically to create and sustain an organizational vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Below are examples of behaviors that indicate success in meeting this standard:

* In collaboration with others, uses appropriate data to establish rigorous, concrete goals in the context of student achievement and instructional programs.

* Uses research and/or best practices in improving the educational program.

* Aligns and implements the educational program, plans, actions and resources with the district's vision and goals.

* Provides leadership for major initiatives and change efforts.

* Communicates effectively to various stakeholders regarding progress with school improvement plan goals.

* Constructively handles dissent and disagreements within the organization.

Rate on a scale of 1 to 4 where 4 is high and 1 is low (circle one):   4   3   2   1

Standard 2 (CULTURE OF LEARNING) An education leader promotes personalized student success by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning.

Below are examples of behaviors that indicate success in meeting this standard:

* Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of curriculum, instruction and assessment.

* Articulates the desired school/system culture and shows evidence about how it is reinforced.

* Systematically and fairly recognizes and celebrates accomplishments of staff and students.

* Creates a system that prioritizes the needs of the staff in terms of professional development leading to improved student learning.

* Oversees the evaluation of staff and ongoing coaching for improvement.

* Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of curriculum, instruction and assessment.

* Is highly visible and engaged in the classrooms, schools and student activities.

* Delegates appropriately to encourage the empowerment of staff

Rate on a scale of 1 to 4 where 4 is high and 1 is low (circle one):   4   3   2   1

Standard 3 (DECISION MAKING) An education leader promotes personalized student success by accessing and using appropriate data to inform decision making at all levels of the system.

Below are examples of behaviors that indicate success in meeting this standard:

* Decisions are made after acquiring the best information possible.

* Decisions are consistently made in a timely manner appropriate to the situation.

* Decisions are consistently made based upon the needs of the students.

Rate on a scale of 1 to 4 where 4 is high and 1 is low (circle one):   4   3   2   1

Standard 4 (MANAGEMENT) An education leader promotes personalized student success by ensuring management of the resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment.

Below are examples of behaviors that indicate success in meeting this standard:

* Complies with state and federal mandates and local board policies.

* Has system in place to recruit, select, induct and retain staff to support quality instruction.

* Addresses current and potential issues in a timely manner.

* Manages fiscal and physical resources responsibly, efficiently and effectively.

* Maximizes instructional time by effectively designing and managing operational procedures.

* Communicates effectively with both internal and external audiences about the operation of the school/system.

* Has systems in place to monitor budget

Rate on a scale of 1 to 4 where 4 is high and 1 is low (circle one):   4   3   2   1

Standard 5 (FAMILY AND COMMUNITY) An education leader promotes personalized student success by collaborating, communicating, engaging and empowering others inside and outside of the organization to pursue excellence in learning.

Below are examples of behaviors that indicate success in meeting this standard:

* Engages families and community by promoting shared responsibility for student learning and support of the education system.

* Facilitates the connections of students and families to the health and social services that support a focus on learning.

* Mobilizes community resources to support individual student success.

* Collaboratively establishes a culture that welcomes and honors families and seeks ways to engage them in student learning.

* Evaluates staff and provides ongoing coaching for improvement.

* Promotes collaboration with all stakeholders.

* Is easily accessible and approachable to all stakeholders.

Rate on a scale of 1 to 4 where 4 is high and 1 is low (circle one):   4   3   2   1

Standard 6 (ETHICS) An education leader promotes the personalized student success by operating in a fair and equitable manner with personal and professional integrity.

Below are examples of behaviors that indicate success in meeting this standard:

* Models values and beliefs and attitudes that inspire others to higher levels of performance.

* Fosters and maintains supportive professional relationships with staff.

* Demonstrates appreciation for and sensitivity to diversity within the school community.

* Is respectful of divergent opinions and of different points of view within the boundaries of the values and mission of the organization.

* Acts in accordance with the letter and spirit of the law.

* Meets commitments, verbal, written and implied.

Rate on a scale of 1 to 4 where 4 is high and 1 is low (circle one):   4   3   2   1

Standard 7 (ADVOCACY) An education leader promotes personalized student success by advocating for children and public education in the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.

Below are examples of behaviors that indicate success in meeting this standard:

* Collaborates with community agencies and other decision makers to improve students' well-being.

* Advocates for policies and practices to improve the welfare of students.

* Communicates with all constituencies to advance the mission and goals of the district.

* Communicates with all constituencies to advance the mission of public education.

Rate on a scale of 1 to 4 where 4 is high and 1 is low (circle one): 4 3 2 1

Standard 8 (PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH) An education leader promotes the personalized student success by supporting professional growth of self and others through practice and inquiry.

Below are examples of behaviors that indicate success in meeting this standard:

* Engages in periodic quality reflection and self-evaluation.

* Seeks feedback from others internal and external to the school community.

* Sets personal and professional job-related goals that are connected to the system's mission, vision and goals.

* Participates in professional development opportunities to extend and expand upon one's knowledge, skills and competencies, including performance coaching if appropriate.

* Arranges for the personal and professional development of others within the system, including the school board.

* Reads professionally and seeks to stay abreast of current education and leadership research and theory.

* Engages in activities to promote personal well-being.

* Seeks to ensure that the resources for the above are available.

* Uses current research and theory about effective schools and leadership to develop and revise his/her professional growth plan.

Rate on a scale of 1 to 4 where 4 is high and 1 is low (circle one): 4 3 2 1

Standard 9 (OBJECTIVE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS) Objective performance standards <u>may</u> be based upon the following: 1) achievement of annual measurable objectives established by the school district; 2) achievement on the PSSA and/or Keystone Exams; 3) student growth as measured by PVAAS; 4) attrition or graduation rates; 5) financial management standards; 6) standards of operational excellence; <u>or</u> 7) any additional criteria deemed relevant and mutually agreed to by the board and district superintendent.

It is suggested that five or fewer standards be used annually to keep the focus on the district's most critical items. Note: Section 1073.1 requires that the board to post the mutually agreed to objective performance standards on the school district's website. Upon completion of the annual performance assessment the board shall post the date of the assessment and whether or not the superintendent met the agreed to objective performance standards. It does NOT require the evaluation itself to be posted.

Below are criteria that should be considered when developing objective performance standards.

* Standards must be clear and readily understandable so as to leave little room for misunderstanding by both the superintendent and members of the board.
* Standards must be within the scope of the superintendent's control. They must only be held accountable for matters that are within their direct control.
* Standards must be focused on district priorities by limiting the number of objective performance standards to the most important priority areas. PASA suggests no more than 5.
* Standards must be directly aligned with the goals of the district as approved in board approved documents such as the district's mission and vision statements, strategic plan, superintendent's job description or board policies.
* Standards should be designed to stretch, but not exceed, the capacity of the district in terms of time, talent and resources.
* Standards must be readily measurable as determined through available quantitative data and/or through observation of activities/behavior.
* Standards must have a clear timeframe for achievement – or reasonable benchmarks to measure progress.

<u>**Objective Performance Standards**</u>	<u>**Met/Did Not Meet**</u>
1._____	_____
2._____	_____
3._____	_____
4._____	_____
5._____	_____

Evaluation Summary

Rating

Standard 1 - SHARED VISION _____

Standard 2 - CULTURE OF LEARNING _____

Standard 3 - DECISION MAKING _____

Standard 4 – MANAGEMENT _____

Standard 5 - FAMILY AND COMMUNITY _____

Standard 6 – ETHICS _____

Standard 7 – ADVOCACY _____

Standard 8 - PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH _____

Standard 9 - OBJECTIVE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS: (Met/Did Not Meet)

1._____ _____

2._____ _____

3._____ _____

4._____ _____

5._____ _____