

Fact Sheet #6 - Performance Standard 6: Teacher/Staff Evaluation

TEACHER/STAFF EVALUATION

The leader fairly and consistently evaluates school personnel in accordance with state and district guidelines and provides them with timely and constructive feedback focused on improved student learning.

What does *teacher/staff evaluation* mean?

In general terms, teacher/staff evaluation is “the ability to judge and evaluate teacher (staff - added) effectiveness.”¹

What does research say about teacher/staff evaluation?

The two major purposes of teacher/staff evaluation are professional growth and performance accountability. Though viewed by some as mutually exclusive, Stronge argues that:

there is room in evaluation systems for both accountability and performance improvement purposes. Indeed, evaluation systems that reflect both accountability and personal growth dimensions are not only desirable, but also necessary for evaluation to productively serve the needs of individuals and the community at large.²

The National Education Policy Center advocates an evaluation system that targets both continual improvement of the teaching staff and timely dismissal of teachers who cannot or will not improve.³ An effective system meets both of these objectives.

Good Practices. If teacher evaluation is to benefit teachers, leaders must consider ways to improve the evaluation process so that it is marked by quality characteristics.⁴ These characteristics include: positive climate, clear communications, teachers/staff and leaders committed to the evaluation, and practices that are technically sound.

One of these characteristics is a positive climate. A positive climate is one characterized

by mutual trust. Evaluation “conducted in an environment that fosters mutual trust between evaluator (representing the institution) and evaluatees holds the greatest potential for benefiting both parties.”⁵ A second characteristic is clear communication between teachers and leaders during the evaluative process. Two-way communications, where both parties are encouraged and able to share ideas and interpretations, fosters mutual understanding. Mutual understanding leads to evaluations focused on growth and accountability.

Leaders and teachers committed to teacher evaluation is a third quality characteristic that can improve a teacher evaluation process. When leaders are committed to the teacher evaluation system and prioritize their commitment, the evaluation process becomes a vehicle for teacher growth and improvement. Everyone benefits from this commitment.

Since effective teachers impact student achievement, a teacher evaluation system that improves teacher effectiveness can serve as a tool for increasing student achievement. Leaders can demonstrate this priority by setting aside time and focusing attention on the evaluative process and by allocating resources that support the evaluation system and teacher improvement practices.⁶

Finally, leaders should ensure their evaluative practices are technically sound. This means leaders participate in training to build knowledge and understanding of the teacher/staff evaluation system.⁷ They commit to the process.

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Research related to these quality characteristics is summarized:

- Teachers/staff who participate more fully in the evaluation conference are more satisfied with both the conference and the leader than those who participate less.⁸
- More trustworthy relationships are built by leaders who balance caring and high expectations than relationships characterized by high caring and low expectations or low caring and high expectations. Balance is key.⁹
- Teacher involvement at every level of the evaluation process is a requirement for an effective evaluation system.¹⁰

Documentation. Multiple data sources inform understanding in every context. Teacher/staff evaluation is no different. Using multiple data sources or measurement tools increases information about teacher/staff effectiveness and thus provides a more fully rounded picture of teacher/staff levels of competency. Moreover, the use of different measurement tools can offset weaknesses found in others. Evaluation tools that are used without proper training can impact the validity of an evaluation.¹¹

Teacher observation is the measurement tool used most often by leaders during the teacher evaluation process. A study of measurement tools by Goe, Bell, and Little identified both strengths and weaknesses. Observations are feasible and can provide useful information. However, observations provide limited information because of the narrow focus on instructional delivery and classroom management. The whole of teachers' work—e.g., instructional planning, student assessment, professional development—is left unexamined.¹² The National Education Policy Center advocates multiple measures to include: classroom observation, instructional artifacts, portfolios, teacher self-reports, student surveys,

and value-added assessment.¹³ Though each has strengths and weaknesses, when combined, they can provide a holistic view of teacher/staff performance. This, in turn, provides the leader with both quantitative and qualitative data to fully inform the evaluation product.

District Guidelines. Effective school leaders understand the district guidelines of the personnel evaluation system. The following are research findings related to evaluation:

- School leaders affect student learning primarily by hiring and supporting high-quality teachers and staff.¹⁴
- Effective leaders hire, support, and retain good teachers while removing less-effective teachers.¹⁵
- School leaders' abilities in performing evaluation affect the ability to remove teachers due to incompetence.¹⁶
- Remediating or removing low-performing teachers is the responsibility of the school leader.¹⁷
- Effective leaders continue to document deficiencies while working to help struggling teachers so that they have the necessary documentation should dismissal become necessary.¹⁸

Sample Performance Indicators for the Professional Knowledge of Leaders

- Has a thorough understanding of the teacher and staff evaluation systems and understands the important role evaluation plays in teacher development.
- Provides support, resources, and remediation for teachers and staff to improve job performance.
- Documents deficiencies and proficiencies and provides timely formal and informal feedback on strengths and weaknesses.
- Evaluates performance of personnel using multiple sources consistent with district

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policies and maintains accurate evaluation records.

- Makes recommendations related to promotion and retention consistent with established policies and procedures and with student learning as a primary consideration.
- Involves teachers and staff in designing and implementing Professional Development Plans.

¹ Stronge, J. H., Richard, H. B., & Catano, N. (2008). *Qualities of Effective Principals*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

² Stronge, J. H. (1995). Balancing individual and institutional goals in educational personnel evaluation: A conceptual framework. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 21, 131-151.

³ Hinchey, P. H. (2010). *Getting teacher assessment right: What policymakers can learn from research*. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. Retrieved from <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/getting-teacher-assessment-right>.

⁴ Stronge, Richard, & Catano, 2008.

⁵ Stronge, 1995, p. 136.

⁶ Poston, W. K., Jr., & Manatt, R. P. (1993). Principals as evaluators: Limiting effects on school reform. *International Journal of Educational Reform*, 2(1), 41-48; Stronge, J. H., & Tucker, P. D. (2003). *Handbook on teacher evaluation: Assessing and improving performance*. Larchmont, NY: Eye On Education.

⁷ Cotton, K. (2003). *Principals and student achievement: What the research says*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

⁸ Helm, V. M., & St. Maurice, H. (2006). Conducting a successful evaluation conference. In J.H. Stronge (Ed.) *Evaluating teaching: A guide to current thinking and best practice (2nd ed.)* (pp. 235-252). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

⁹ Tschannen-Moran, M. (2004). *Trust matters: Leadership for successful schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

¹⁰ McLaughlin, M. W. (1990). Embracing contraries: Implementing and sustaining teacher evaluation. In J. Millman and L. Darling-Hammond (Eds.), *The new handbook of teacher evaluation: Assessing elementary and secondary school teachers* (pp. 403-415). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

¹¹ Goe, L., Bell, C., & Little, O. (2008). *Approaches to evaluating teacher effectiveness: A research synthesis*. Washington, D.C.: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

¹² Stronge, J. H., & Tucker, P. D. (2003). *Handbook on teacher evaluation: Assessing and improving performance*. Larchmont, NY: Eye On Education.

¹³ Hinchey, 2010.

¹⁴ Grissom, J. A., Loeb, S., & Urban Institute (2009). Triangulating principal effectiveness: How perspectives of parents, teachers, and assistant principals identify the central importance of managerial skills. Working Paper 35. *National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research*, Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

¹⁵ Beteille, T., Kalogrides, D., Loeb, S., & Urban Institute (2009). Effective schools: Managing the recruitment, development, and retention of high-quality teachers. Working Paper 37. *National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research*, Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

¹⁶ Painter, S. R. (2000). Principals' efficacy beliefs about teacher evaluation. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(4), 368-378.

¹⁷ Painter, 2000.

¹⁸ McGrath, M.J. (2006). Dealing positively with the nonproductive teacher: A legal and ethical perspective on accountability. In J.H. Stronge (Ed.) *Evaluating teaching: A guide to current thinking and best practice (2nd ed.)* (pp. 253-267). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

**Georgia Department of Education
Leader Keys Effectiveness System**

**Leader Self-Assessment Checklist
Performance Standard 6: Teacher/Staff Evaluation**

Quality		Level IV	Level III	Level II	Level I
Communication	Fosters mutual trust between the evaluator and the teacher being evaluated.				
	Encourages two-way communications where both parties share ideas and interpretations.				
	Focuses on growth and accountability.				
	Participates in both formal and informal conferences.				
Documentation	Uses multiple data sources to document standards.				
	Conducts walkthroughs and formative observations.				
	Offers feedback following observations.				
	Uses evaluation as a means to remediate or remove low-performing or unsatisfactory teachers.				
Legal Considerations	Adheres to district guidelines regarding teacher evaluation.				
	Documents adherence to designated standards.				
	Maintains objectivity during the evaluation process.				
	Describes existing deficiencies clearly.				
	Offers remediation actions for identified deficiencies.				