

PRINCIPAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW: A SYSTEMS APPROACH

The process of coaching a principal is a very important tool in the entire improvement effort of a school district. It defines expectations, enhances communication, prioritizes district goals and encourages supervisors to focus their attention on the principal's role in improving achievement for all students.

Principal evaluation should reflect a systems approach. Such an approach should be guided by a set of ethics, values, and beliefs that undergird the work so both the principal and his/her supervisor can operate in an integrity-filled manner.

The following system of evaluation is a model which can be adopted for such a purpose. Senate File 277, enacted by the 2007 Iowa Legislature, requires that principals be evaluated annually based on the six Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL). The minimum requirement of Iowa law is that persons new to administration have a comprehensive evaluation during their initial year of employment. Best practice is for administrators who assume a new administrative position to have a summative evaluation during their first year in the new position. After the initial comprehensive/summative evaluation the law requires an annual formative assessment around the principals' Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP). The three-year summative evaluation requires documentation of competence on the six ISSL 'standards, meeting of district expectations drawn from the district's CSIP and building improvement plan, Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) attainment, and other supporting' documentation.

Operating Principles

A comprehensive principal performance review process must:

1. Align with the Iowa School Leadership Standards and Criteria Rationale: The Board of Educational Examiners, the State Board of Education, and the Iowa Department of Education have all endorsed the Iowa Standards for School Leaders as the framework for expectations for building principals.

2. Be intended to acknowledge strengths and improve performance.

Rationale: An effective evaluation process is predicated on a spirit of providing feedback for growth.

3. Connect academic, social, emotional and developmental growth for all students in the building/system.

Rationale: Multiple indicators for all types of student growth must be included in the definition of accountability.

4. Recognize the importance of a principal's role in improving the culture of the learning community.

Rationale: Research is very clear that the quality of leadership in a building has a direct correlation to positive relationships and the achievement levels of all learners.

5. Have research-based criteria about effective principal behaviors which are substantiated by measurable data from multiple sources, and are legal, feasible, accurate and useful.

Rationale: Examples may include self-assessment, a portfolio compiled by the principal, 360 degree feedback, the school improvement plan, artifacts that address previous goals, and meeting agendas.

6. Provide opportunities for personal and professional growth as a facilitator/leader of learning.

Rationale: Evaluation processes must consider the needs of the whole professional and be oriented toward continuous improvement.

7. Be ongoing and connected to school improvement goals.

Rationale: An evaluation is a process, not a once a year conversation, and must be connected to Comprehensive School Improvement plans.

8. Align building and district goals with community members' vision for education.

Rationale: Goals cannot be developed in isolation; district and building goals must reflect the community's highest hope for their public schools.

9. Timelines for Principal Leadership Performance Review

SUGGESTED TIMELINE ACTION

Late Spring	1. Principal and superintendent/designee clarify vision, mission and district goals.
	2. Superintendent/designee and principal will review job description and performance review process, forms, indicators, timelines and possible supporting documents/information/data to be used to measure performance.
Early Summer	3. Principal in collaboration with superintendent develops Professional Development Plan. Goals should be measurable and attainable. Writers can use processes such as QIC decide of SMART goals, etc. To identify goal targets. (Sample goals can be found on SAI's website under "Resources" @ www.sai-iowa.org)
Prior to the Start of School	4. Review processes and forms with new administrators.
Quarterly or Early Winter	5. Principal and supervisor discuss progress reports regarding Individual Professional Development Plan goals.
Early Spring	6. Principal completes a self-assessment of performance on the leadership standards and criteria. Documents and data used to support the measurable outcomes are prepared and presented to the superintendent/designee.
	7. The official performance review document(s) is shared, Clarified and discussed with the principal. Changes may be made as a result of the discussions. Remediation Targets (if any) will be included as a part of the final document(s) as a confidential, personnel record
	8. A copy of the final written performance review form is placed in the principal's personnel folder.