

Professional Growth, Supervision and Evaluation

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Accountability for professional competence is a shared responsibility. All teachers, including school leaders, have the responsibility to review periodically their own effectiveness and to seek improvements as part of the continuing process of their professional development. The profession has a responsibility for developing adequate programs of professional growth, supervision and evaluation. School boards have a responsibility for the provision of adequate resources to implement programs of professional growth, supervision and evaluation. Three distinct processes—professional growth, supervision and evaluation—provide the basis for procedures that facilitate professional competence. The Association supports the principle that this process is based on a standard of practice established by the profession.

Professional Growth Plans

All teachers, including school leaders, have a responsibility for their individual and collective continuing professional growth. Professional growth plans are self-authored and growth directed and reflect an assessment of the individual's professional learning needs. Teachers, school leaders and system leaders must not be expected to adopt a school's or school system's improvement goals or format for their individual professional growth plans.

Professional growth is a career-long process which involves individual reflection and dialogue with colleagues about professional practice. In developing the written growth plan, teachers and administrators reflect on their own learning needs, focus on goals that are consistent with the applicable professional practice standard and modify their plans over the school year as they share and review them with colleagues. The professional growth plan should have clear expectations, processes, timelines and opportunities for reflection.

Professional growth plans are the responsibility and property of the individual. Although a copy may be kept in the supervising administrator's office, the plan should be returned to the author at the end of the school year. A professional growth plan may not be used for evaluation unless the author requests that it be used for this purpose. The ownership and use of the plan should be clearly established with the author.

Resources used for professional growth programs have a significant potential to improve professional practice; therefore, school boards, in allocating resources to the three processes—growth, supervision and evaluation—should ensure that the largest portion is directed to professional growth programs and that teachers have opportunities for self-directed professional development.

Supervision

The overall goal of supervision is to promote professional learning and development. The purpose of supervision is to provide support, guidance and collaborative development opportunities; observe and receive information from qualified sources; provide direct, constructive feedback about professional practice; identify professional behaviour and practices that should be recognized as exemplars; identify professional behaviours and practices that may require an evaluation; and support school improvement and staff development. It is important that the appropriate purpose for supervision is clearly established in collaboratively developed school division policy.

The process followed during supervision for all of these purposes must be characterized by a climate of trust and support, an ongoing process and a shared responsibility. The process should be based upon a collegial, collaborative model that includes direct and differential approaches and individual input into methods and processes. Relevant information and observations should be shared on an ongoing basis that includes copies of any notes or documentation taken during supervision.

Supervision programs should be utilized for all certificated staff. Supervision of teachers is conducted by school principals; supervision of school principals and central office certificated staff is conducted by the superintendent.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a formal process whereby information that is gathered and recorded over a specified period of time and subjected to reasoned judgment (including the consideration of context) is ultimately used to make a judgment about the teacher's employment status or certification. The results of the judgmental function may be used for making decisions for purposes of employment, such as continuing contracts, promotion, transfer or termination, or for making decisions about certification, including permanent certification, suspension of certification or decertification. Another result of the judgmental function may be to make decisions when through supervision there is reason to believe that the individual's professional practice does not meet the established standard.

Evaluation policies and procedures in a school jurisdiction should be developed by a collaborative process involving superintendents, trustees, administrators and teachers. It is important that teachers and school leaders have a clear role in the development of policy.

An evaluation may be conducted for the following purposes: (a) upon written request of the individual, (b) for the purpose of gathering information related to the employment decisions of a teacher who does not hold a continuing contract or a permanent teaching certificate or a school or school division leader who does not hold a continuing designation and (c) when there is reason to believe that an individual's professional practice does not meet the established standard.

Evaluation of teachers is the responsibility of the principal and evaluation of principals is the responsibility of the superintendent. Should it be necessary to include another member of the school or central office leadership team in the evaluation, the individual's role must be outlined in writing prior to the commencement of the evaluation. An independent evaluator may be appropriate in some instances and may be requested by the teacher or school leader to undertake the evaluation of that individual's professional practice.

Evaluations must follow a procedure that begins with the reasons for the evaluation, as well as a statement of the process, criteria and standards to be used. The procedure should be completed within reasonable timelines, include discussion of written reports that are discussed with the individual and contain the right of appeal.

An effective teacher evaluation process must, in reflecting the rules of natural justice, be based only on evidence gathered during the evaluation. The process conducted within a reasonable timeline should include pre- and post-visitation conferences and observations of the teacher's teaching and other activities related to the teacher's assignment. Further, the process should, while providing the teacher with ongoing feedback, culminate in a formal written report which the teacher has opportunity to discuss and to which a written response may be appended before it is placed in the teacher's personnel file. Access to the personnel file, which contains all the information concerning the teacher, is limited to the teacher and certificated personnel with administrative responsibilities directly related to that teacher. The evaluation procedure should also provide for an appeal

process and be conducted in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct. Evaluations should not be based upon extracurricular activities, assessment by parents or students, the use of student achievement data or the teacher's community involvement.

An effective evaluation process for school leaders must be reasonable, based on the rules of procedural fairness and natural justice, and involve the school leader as a full participant. The process conducted within a reasonable timeline should start with providing the school leader with written notification of the evaluation and reasons for it. The evaluation must be based on identifiable data which is made available to the school leader and reflects the Leadership Quality Standard.

Quality leadership occurs when the school leader, through ongoing analysis of the school context, demonstrates professional actions, judgments and decisions that are in the best educational interests of students and supports the provision of optimum teaching and learning opportunities. The school leader must be advised when expectations for the position are not being met, be provided with appropriate assistance and time to address performance deficiencies and be informed of the possible outcomes of a failure to improve performance. In keeping with the principle that growth, supervision and evaluation should pertain to all certificated staff in a school division, teachers have a role in the evaluation of school-based and central office leaders. The Code of Professional Conduct would apply to the process as to all supervision and evaluation processes.

Evaluations that are initiated when the supervising principal or superintendent, through supervision, has reason to believe that an individual's practice does not meet the established standard must adhere to a comprehensive process. First, the supervising principal or superintendent meets with the individual to discuss concerns identified through supervision. This meeting results in a continuation of the ongoing supervision process or issuance of a notice of evaluation. Where a notice of evaluation is issued, the notice must include the reasons for and purpose of the evaluation; the process, criteria and standards to be used; reasonable timelines; and possible outcomes of the evaluation. Following the completion of the evaluation process as outlined in the notice, an evaluation report is issued, which may determine that the individual meets the established standard and continues with the ongoing supervision and growth process, or does not meet the established standard and an additional evaluation period is necessary or does not meet the established standard and a notice of remediation may be issued. Where a notice of remediation is issued, the notice outlines expectations for improvement and may remove the individual from the growth plan process. The notice contains support and assistance that is available, allows for adequate time to meet expectations and provides notice of a subsequent evaluation within 100 school days. The subsequent evaluation report may result in a range of possibilities, including return of the individual to the ongoing supervision and growth process, an additional period of remediation, a change of assignment or a recommendation that the individual's contract of employment or leadership designation be terminated. If, on completion of an evaluation, the superintendent concludes that the teacher's suitability for certification is in question, the superintendent shall report to the executive secretary to initiate a professional practice review hearing.

The professional growth, supervision and evaluation policies and procedures are three distinct processes which, carefully implemented, provide the basis for establishing, developing and maintaining a standard of professional practice.