

Teachers Hope Township School's System

Introduction

As part of the federal requirements for states' receiving funding under Phase 2 of the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds Program, all school districts in New Jersey are providing information to the public on the procedures they use to evaluate teachers and principals. The information presented below will help you understand Hope Township School's policies and procedures for evaluating teachers and educational specialists such as librarians and counselors.

Confidentiality concerns: To protect the confidentiality of individual evaluations, districts are not required to provide a district-level statistical summary of teacher evaluation outcomes in those cases where there are fewer than 10 teachers in an entire district. Similarly, districts are not required to provide a school-level statistical summary of teacher evaluation outcomes if there are fewer than 10 teachers in a school.

Section 1. Description of Teacher Evaluation System

A. The Board of Education recognizes that the continuing evaluation of teaching staff members is essential to the achievement of the educational goals of this district. The purpose of a program of evaluation will be to promote professional excellence and improve the skills of tenured teaching staff members, improve pupil learning and growth, and provide a basis for the review of teaching staff member performance. The Board will provide leadership, adequate resources for supervision and professional development, time for the proper conduct of evaluations, and time for in-service training.

The evaluation system for teaching staff is district specific and is aligned to the board policy. It supports the district mission statement:

Hope Township School, in cooperation with our community, values the importance of a supportive, challenging education for all students delivered through an effective, contemporary curriculum that meets or exceeds the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. By fostering communication and respect in a positive educational environment, all children can realize their potential.

The Superintendent shall report to the Board on the effectiveness of the evaluation system and shall recommend such changes in the system as may be required to increase its effectiveness.

B.1 Tenured Teachers

Each tenured teaching staff member shall be evaluated annually by appropriately certified and trained administrators or supervisors against criteria that evolve logically from the instructional priorities and program objectives set forth in the teaching staff member's job description.

Each tenured teaching staff member shall also be evaluated against available indicators of pupil progress and growth.

Job descriptions state evaluation criteria for each teaching staff member position. Job descriptions will be clearly and concisely stated and will be provided to the Board for its information.

The Principal shall distribute to each teaching staff member, no later than October 1 of each school year, a copy of the policy and the teaching staff member's job description and evaluation criteria; any amendments made subsequently to these documents will be distributed no later than ten days after their adoption.

The Principal shall develop, in consultation with teaching staff members, procedures for the evaluation of tenured teaching staff members that include, as a minimum:

1. The collection and reporting of data that are appropriate to the job description and include as a minimum the observation of classroom instruction;
2. Observation conferences between the tenured teaching staff member and the evaluating supervisor;
3. The preparation of individual professional improvement plans;
4. The preparation by the supervisor of an annual written performance report, which shall include the teaching staff member's performance areas of strength and weakness, an individual professional improvement plan developed by the member and the supervisor, and a summary of the results of formal and informal assessments of the member's pupils along with a statement as to how these pupil indicators relate to the effectiveness of the overall program and to the member's performance;
5. The conduct of an annual summary conference between the supervisor and the member that will include a review of the member's performance, progress toward the objectives set forth in the professional improvement plan developed at the previous annual conference, pupil assessments and growth toward program objectives, and the written performance report prepared by the supervisor; and
6. The signing of the annual written performance report within five working days of the annual summary conference and the provision that the member may, within ten working days of the signing of the report, augment the report with additional performance data.

The observation and evaluation of tenured teaching staff members will be conducted by members of the administrative and supervisory staff who hold appropriate certification for the supervision of instruction and have been appointed by the Board of Education to observe and evaluate teaching staff members. Evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the following procedures.

Evaluation Criteria

- .1. Evaluation criteria for each position shall derive from the job description for the position and relate directly to each of the tasks described. Wherever possible each set of evaluation criteria will be:
 - a. Briefly stated and focused on major criteria of the position,
 - b. Based on observable information rather than on factors requiring subjective judgment,
 - c. Generic, covering a number of specific positions, and
 - d. Written in the same format and in a direct, simple style.
2. Each tenured teaching staff member will be sent a copy of the current evaluation criteria for his or her position annually by the Superintendent/Principal. Any revisions will be provided to each holder of that job within fifteen working days of its adoption. Suggested revisions to evaluation criteria by job holders will be referred initially to the job holder's immediate supervisor for review.

Observations

1. Tenured teaching members will be evaluated at least once during each school year.

2. Classroom instructors will be observed in the performance of their duties by a visitation to the classroom that will not be less than the duration of one complete subject lesson.
3. In the case of the tenured teaching staff member who is not regularly assigned to classroom instruction, the evaluator will confer with the employee at the beginning of each school year. They shall together determine those general duties in the performance of which the employee will be observed.
4. Each observation will be recorded on a separate form and a copy sent to the tenured teaching staff member within one day prior to the observation conference.

Evaluations

1. A written evaluation of each tenured teaching staff member in the performance of his or her duties will be prepared within fifteen calendar days of each observation.
2. In addition to the evaluation following each observation or period of observation, the evaluator shall prepare a written evaluation of each tenured teaching staff member's total performance as an employee of the school district. This evaluation shall be submitted to the evaluator sufficiently in advance of the conference to enable the evaluator to amend it. It will be appended to the evaluation based on performance observation and will be presented to the employee at the conference.

Post Observation Conferences

The post observation conference will be conducted for the purpose of confirming the accuracy of the material collected, providing a forum for feedback, and providing assistance to the teaching staff member whenever the need for such aid is indicated. In addition, the evaluator must point out the effects of the observation (if any) on the teaching staff member's annual evaluation. Sufficient time should be scheduled for a full discussion of the issues involved.

Annual Performance Conference and Report

1. An annual performance conference will be held with each tenured teaching staff member by the administrator or supervisor who prepared the annual performance report (whenever possible) before the staff member's annual performance report is filed.
2. The annual performance conference will include a review of the:
 - a. Staff member's performance based upon his or her job description,
 - b. Staff member's progress toward the objectives of his or her Individual Performance Improvement Plan developed at the previous annual conference, and
 - c. Available indicators of pupil progress and growth toward their program objectives.
3. The purpose of the annual performance conference is to provide for a total review of the year's work, to identify strategies for improvement where necessary, and to recognize achievement and good practice. Adequate time should be allotted for the conference in order to cover the required topics of discussion and to permit a full exploration of the possible solutions to any problems identified.
4. The annual performance report shall be signed by the evaluator at the time of the conference and by the tenured teaching staff member within five working days of the conference. The signature of the staff member shall not necessarily be construed to indicate assent with the report.
5. The teaching staff member will be allowed up to ten working days following the conference to add material to the report not included by the evaluator.
6. Each annual performance report will be filed in the teaching staff member's personnel file. A copy will be provided to the staff member within fifteen working days of the conference.

Review of Pupil Progress and Growth

1. A review will be made, at least annually, of pupil progress and growth in each class, for the purpose of determining whether or not changes in the performance of the teacher or in the program would lead to improved results by the pupils during the subsequent school year.
2. The review of pupil progress and growth will be made by a supervisor who is familiar with the pupils involved and the school context against indicators previously determined by the teacher and agreed upon by his or her immediate supervisor.
3. A summary of the pupil progress and growth data and its implications are to be placed in the teacher's annual performance report. The pupil progress and growth report will be one measure of the teacher's annual performance evaluation.
4. If the review of the pupil data reveals that pupils have not made the progress expected, the supervisor and staff member shall jointly determine what changes shall be made to improve pupil performance. Any such changes are subject to approval of Superintendent/Principal before being implemented.

Individual Performance Improvement Plan

(Now referred to as the Professional Development Plan)

1. An Individual Performance Improvement Plan will be prepared annually for each tenured teaching staff member to correct deficiencies and to continue professional growth. The plan will derive from the applicable evaluation criteria and focus on the most important areas of professional growth for each staff member as determined from weaknesses identified in his or her evaluation.
2. The Individual Performance Improvement Plan will be prepared in cooperation with the teaching staff member whenever possible and shall include:
 - a. Areas of required growth,
 - b. Methods of achieving that growth,
 - c. A schedule for implementation of those methods, and
 - d. The responsibility of the teaching staff member and district for implementing the plan.
3. At the time of preparation of a Performance Improvement Plan, a review will also be made of the effort by the staff member to achieve the prior year's plan.

B.2 Non-Tenured Teachers

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of implementing a program for the evaluation of non-tenured teaching staff members in accordance with law for the purposes of identifying and correcting deficiencies, improving professional competence, improving the quality of instruction received by pupils of this district, and assisting the Board in determining the member's re-employment.

The program of evaluation of non-tenured teaching staff members shall include the observation and evaluation of each such employee in the performance of his or her duties by an appropriate supervisor no fewer than three times during each school year, but not less than once during each semester. The purpose of the observation and evaluation of non-tenured teaching staff members shall be to improve professional competence, identify deficiencies, extend assistance for the correction of such deficiencies, provide a basis for recommendations regarding re-employment, and improve the quality of instruction received by the pupils served by the school(s) in the district.

Supervisors shall make every effort to assist non-tenured teaching staff members in the remediation of deficiencies disclosed by observation and evaluation and may conduct additional observations and evaluations. Supervisors should recognize the purposes of this policy cannot be realized by evaluations that do not record the weaknesses as well as the strengths of teaching staff members. Assessments that are less than honest and candid serve neither the professional growth of the employee nor the interest of the district in building a staff of highly competent, well-trained personnel.

The observation and evaluation of non-tenured teaching staff members will be conducted by members of the administrative and supervisory staff who hold appropriate certification for the supervision of instruction. Evaluations will be conducted in accordance with the following procedures:

Evaluation Criteria

1. Evaluation criteria for each position will derive from the job description for the position and will relate directly to each of the tasks described. Wherever possible each set of evaluation criteria will be:
 - a. Briefly stated and focused on major criteria of the position,
 - b. Based on observable information rather than on factors requiring subjective judgment,
 - c. Generic, covering a number of specific positions, and
 - d. Written in the same format and in a direct, simple style.
2. Maintenance of job evaluation criteria will be the responsibility of the Superintendent/Principal. Evaluation criteria will be reviewed annually and
 - a. Whenever the corresponding job description is revised,
 - b. On the request of a single job holder, or
 - c. On the request of a majority of persons holding a particular job.
3. Each non-tenured teaching staff member will be sent a copy of the current evaluation criteria for his/her position by the Superintendent/ Principal. Any revisions thereto shall be provided to each holder of that job within 15 working days of its adoption. Suggested revisions to evaluation criteria by job holders shall be referred initially to the job holder's immediate supervisor for review.

Collection of Evaluation Data

Data will be gathered any one or more of the following evaluation methods:

1. Direct observation of the teaching staff member in the course of performing an assigned duty;
2. Review of a product from the teaching staff member that results from the performance of his/her assigned duties;
3. Interviews of the teaching staff member regarding his/her knowledge of assigned duties;
4. Paper and pencil instruments (such as competency tests, pupil surveys, and the like);
5. Audio-visual monitoring of the teaching staff member in the performance of his/her assigned duties; and
6. Reference to previous performance reports.

Observations

1. Non-tenured teaching staff members will be evaluated no fewer than three times in every school year and at least once during each semester. A non-tenured teaching staff member employed fewer than sixty days in the school year may be observed and evaluated only once during the school year, and a non-tenured teaching staff employed fewer than one hundred

twenty days in the school year may be observed and evaluated only twice during the school year.

2. Classroom instructors will be observed in the performance of their duties by a visitation to the assigned work station. The visit will not be less than one class period (secondary level) or for the duration of one complete subject lesson (elementary level). There shall be no fewer than three such observations annually and at least one in each semester.
3. In the case of the non-tenured teaching staff member who is not regularly assigned to classroom instruction, the evaluator shall confer with the employee at the beginning of each three month period, the first of such periods commencing at the beginning of the school year.
4. Wherever possible, multiple observations that focus on different areas of responsibility are desirable. Multiple observations should be spread over time to allow time for improvement.
5. Each observation will be recorded on a separate form and a copy sent to the non-tenured teaching staff member within twenty-four hours prior to the observation conference.

Evaluations

1. A written evaluation of each non-tenured teaching staff member in the performance of his/her duties will be prepared within ten days of each observation or before the end of each three-month period during which a non-tenured teaching staff member not regularly assigned to classroom instruction has been evaluated.
2. In addition to the evaluation following each observation or period of observation, the evaluator shall prepare an annual written evaluation of each non-tenured teaching staff member's total performance as an employee of the school district. This written evaluation will be submitted to the Building Principal, if the Principal did not prepare the annual written evaluation, sufficiently in advance of the conference to provide the Building Principal input on the annual written evaluation. Any such input will be appended to the written evaluation.

Post Observation Conferences

1. No later than ten days after the observation of each classroom instructor and no later than the end of each three-month period of observation of non-classroom instructors, the teaching staff member and the evaluating supervisor shall hold a conference to discuss the evaluation reports prepared in accordance with paragraph D1 above.
2. The post observation conference will be conducted for the purpose of confirming the accuracy of the material collected, providing a forum for feedback, and providing assistance to the teaching staff member whenever the need for such aid is indicated. In addition, the evaluator must note the effects of the observation (if any) on the teaching staff member's annual evaluation. Sufficient time should be scheduled for a full discussion of the issues involved.
3. Two copies of the written evaluation will be prepared and both the supervisor and the non-tenured teaching staff member shall sign each copy and retain one copy.
4. The non-tenured teaching staff member shall have the right to submit his or her written disclaimer of an evaluation within ten days following the conference and such disclaimer shall be attached to each party's copy of the evaluation report.
5. Each observation report will be filed in the teaching staff member's personnel file. A copy will be provided to the teaching staff member within 48 hours of the conference.

Annual Summary Conference and Written Evaluation

1. An annual summary conference will be held with each non-tenured teaching staff member by the administrator or supervisor who prepared the annual written evaluation (whenever possible) before the staff member's annual written evaluation is filed.

2. The annual written evaluation will include a review of the non-tenured teaching staff member's total performance as an employee of the district, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Performance areas of strength;
 - b. Performance areas needing improvement based upon the job description;
 - c. An individual professional development plan developed by the supervisor and the teaching staff member; and
- d. A summary of indicators of pupil progress and growth, and a statement of how these indicators relate to the effectiveness of the overall program and the performance of the individual teaching staff member.
3. Adequate time will be allotted for the annual summary conference in order to cover the required topics of discussion and to permit a full exploration of the possible solutions to any problems identified.
4. The annual written evaluation prepared by the evaluator will be signed by the evaluator at the time of the conference and by the non-tenured teaching staff member within five working days of the conference. The signature of the staff member will not necessarily be construed to indicate assent with the report.
5. The teaching staff member shall have the right to submit a written disclaimer of such evaluation within ten days following the conference and such disclaimer shall be attached to each party's copy of the evaluation report.
6. Each annual written evaluation shall be filed in the teaching staff member's personnel file. A copy will be provided to the staff member within 15 working days of the conference.

Review of Pupil Progress and Growth

1. A review will be conducted, at least annually, of pupil progress and growth in each class, for the purpose of determining whether or not changes in the performance of the teacher or in the program would lead to improved results by the pupils during the subsequent school year.
2. The review of pupil progress and growth will be made by a supervisor who is familiar with the pupils involved and the school context against indicators previously determined by the teacher and agreed upon by his/her immediate supervisor.
3. A summary of the pupil progress and growth data and its implications will be placed in the teacher's annual performance report. The pupil progress and growth report will be one measure of the teacher's annual performance evaluation.
4. If the review of the pupil data reveals that pupils have not made the changes should be made to improve pupil performance. Any such changes are subject to approval of the Superintendent/Principal before being implemented.

Individual Professional Improvement Plan (Now referred to as the Professional Development Plan)

1. An Individual Professional Improvement Plan will be prepared annually for each non-tenured teaching staff member.
2. All new teachers with standard certificates must complete 100 clock hours of State-approved professional development every five years in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.1 et seq. and therefore, must have a Professional Improvement Plan within sixty days of the Board's approval of the employment contract.
 - a. The content of each teacher's professional improvement plan shall align with the Professional Standards for Teachers as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:9-3.3.

- b. The activities in each teacher's professional improvement plan shall align with the professional development standards as outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.2(d).
3. At the time the Professional Improvement Plan is prepared, a review will also be made of the staff member's efforts to achieve the prior year's plan.
4. Copies of the Individual Professional Improvement Plan will be placed in the teaching staff member's annual performance report and given to the teaching staff member. The degree to which the teaching staff member achieved the requirements of the previous plan will be a measure of the staff member's annual performance evaluation.
5. It is the duty of the teaching staff member to implement the plan as prepared; his/her failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- C. The district employed a comprehensive approach to evaluation process for teachers. Due to the complexity of the evaluation process, there is no single rating or level given. A narrative format is preferred. The district developed a new evaluation system for 2010-11 which is founded on current best practices including Charlotte Danielson's work on Professional Practice and the 4 Domains of Teaching Responsibility.