

Principal and Teacher Accountability Laws

The 2011 Legislature enacted laws that establish principal and teacher accountability. Principal accountability requirements apply beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, and teacher accountability requirements apply beginning in the 2014-2015 school year.

A superintendent must annually evaluate school principals using a performance-based system

The principal accountability laws require a superintendent to use a performance-based system to annually evaluate each school principal assigned to supervise a school building within the school district (Minn. Stat. § 123B.143, subd. 1; § 123B.147, subd. 3; Laws 2011, 1st Spec. Sess., ch. 11, art. 2, § 47). The evaluation is to improve teaching and learning by enhancing the principal's ability to shape the school's professional environment and support and improve school performance, student achievement, and teacher quality, performance, and effectiveness. The evaluation must satisfy eight criteria:

- Support and improve a principal's instructional leadership, organizational management, and professional development, and strengthen the principal's capacity in instruction, supervision, evaluation, and teacher development
- Include formative and summative assessments
- Be consistent with a principal's job description and the plans and goals of the district and the principal, and support leadership behaviors and practices, rigorous curriculum, school performance, and high-quality instruction
- Include on-the-job observations and previous evaluations
- Allow surveys to help identify a principal's effectiveness, leadership skills and processes, and strengths and weaknesses in exercising leadership
- Use longitudinal data on student academic growth that incorporate district achievement goals and targets
- Be linked to professional development that emphasizes improved teaching and learning, curriculum and instruction, student learning, and a collaborative professional culture
- Require an improvement plan for a principal not meeting standards of professional practice or other performance criteria and specify the procedures and consequences of failing to improve performance

These criteria are meant to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate district needs and goals for developing, supporting, and evaluating principals.

A group of experts must develop a model for principal evaluations

Before implementing annual principal evaluations, the education commissioner and the associations of secondary and elementary school principals first must convene a group of specified experts and stakeholders to develop a performance-based system model, which must be presented to the legislature by February 1, 2012. The group must consider how principals develop and maintain high

standards for student performance, rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, a culture of learning and professional development, connections to external communities, systemic performance accountability, and leadership behaviors that create effective schools and improve school performance. The group also may consider whether to establish a multitiered evaluation system that supports newly licensed principals in becoming highly skilled school leaders and provides opportunities for advanced learning for more experienced school leaders.

Teachers will be evaluated under a locally agreed-upon process or a process developed by the education commissioner

The teacher accountability laws allow a school board and the exclusive representative of the teachers to jointly agree to an annual teacher evaluation and peer review process for probationary and nonprobationary teachers (Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, subds. 4, 5, 8, 9; and § 122A.41, subds. 2, 3, 5, 6). If there is no agreement, the district must implement the teacher evaluation and peer review process developed by the education commissioner and specified education stakeholders. Annual teacher evaluations are designed to develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success. All annual teacher evaluations must satisfy 12 criteria:

- Provide the requisite evaluations for probationary teachers
- Establish a three-year professional review cycle for each teacher that includes a growth and development plan, peer review, the opportunity to participate in a professional learning community, and at least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained evaluator
- Be based on professional teaching standards
- Coordinate staff development activities with the evaluation process and outcomes
- Perhaps allow school time for coaching and collaboration
- Perhaps include mentoring and induction programs
- Allow teachers to present a portfolio demonstrating evidence of reflection and professional growth that includes teachers' own performance assessment
- Use an agreed-upon teacher value-added assessment where value-added data are available and state or local student growth measures where value-added data are unavailable as a basis for 35 percent of teacher evaluation results
- Use longitudinal data on student engagement and connection and other student outcome measures aligned with curriculum for which teachers are responsible
- Require qualified and trained evaluators to perform summative evaluations
- Give teachers not meeting professional teaching standards the support to improve with established goals and timelines
- Discipline a teacher who does not adequately improve

Data on individual teachers generated under this evaluation process are defined as personnel data and are private data except as otherwise specified under law. The evaluations do not create additional due process rights for probationary teachers.

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