

EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS

Evaluation of Teachers

The performance of teachers in the classroom is of paramount importance in the education of students. For this reason, the Governing Board requires that the evaluation process place particular emphasis upon the competence of teachers in their classroom performance.

The Governing Board directs the Superintendent to develop and propose for approval by the Governing Board a system-wide program for evaluating the instructional program as one means of ensuring quality and control of instruction. In developing and proposing this program, the Superintendent shall seek and consider the advice of certificated staff members.

The process of evaluation for certificated professional staff members shall lead to improvement of the quality of instruction and the strengthening of the abilities of the professional staff.

The following elements shall be emphasized in the District's evaluation process:

- Student learning shall be the primary focus of the of the teacher's professional time.
- The evaluation process should reinforce sound instructional practices, identify areas of improvement, stimulate professional growth, encourage teacher self-reflection, and provide for collaboration between the teacher and the evaluator. Open communication shall be considered essential to the process.
- The purpose of evaluation shall be to work toward common goals for the improvement of education. The teacher evaluation system should target those areas most critical to both learning and success of students and certificated staff within the learning environment.
- Effective evaluation depends on accurate information; therefore, input from all appropriate sources shall be used. Quantitative measures of student academic progress used to evaluate teacher performance must be valid and reasonable.
- The Arizona Professional Teaching Standards and research on best practices.
- The content taught shall align with the Arizona Common Core Standards and other curriculum requirements (e.g., International Baccalaureate®).

Advanced Placement®, or Cambridge Academy®), as applicable, but no single method of learning or teaching should be prescribed.

- Evaluation shall be continuous, flexible, and sensitive to the need for ongoing review.
- The evaluation system should identify and address instructional and professional practices that do not meet district standards. The improvement of instruction shall occur, in part, through specific recommendations mutually reviewed by the evaluator and the teacher, which bring practices into compliance with District standards.
- The evaluation system, including its instruments, should be understandable and efficient.

Evaluation of Classroom Teachers and Other Certificated (Non-Administrative) Staff Members

The District evaluation system and its instruments shall comply with the required elements of the model framework for teacher and principal evaluation adopted by the State Board of Education, to include use of the quantitative student academic progress data for fifty percent (50%) of the evaluation outcomes.

Valid and reliable student academic progress data is not available in all content areas. As a result, and in accordance with the evaluation framework established by the Arizona State Board of Education, the District's evaluation system shall distinguish between two groups of teachers in the determination of student academic progress data used for purposes of performance evaluation:

- ***“Group A” Teachers:*** Teachers who have three (3) years of valid and reliable student progress data for their student population and content area. The evaluations of these teachers shall be based upon:
 - Fifty percent (50%) upon indicators of classroom and professional performance;
 - Thirty three percent (33%) upon student progress data for students who were assigned to the teacher over a three (3) year time period; and
 - Seventeen percent (17%) upon measures of school-wide student progress data.
- ***“Group B” Teachers:*** Teachers who do not yet have three (3) years of valid and reliable student progress data for their student population and content area. The evaluations of these teachers shall be based upon:
 - Fifty percent (50%) upon indicators of classroom and professional performance; and

- Fifty percent 50% will be based on measures of school-wide student progress data.

Evaluation System Performance Classifications shall be utilized and applied through the evaluation system in a manner designed to improve principal and teacher performance. The performance classifications will be designated and defined as:

- *Highly Effective.* The Highly Effective teacher
- *Effective.* The Effective teacher
- *Developing.* The Developing teacher
- *Ineffective.* The Ineffective teacher

THESE DEFINITIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY SEPARATE BOARD ACTION FOLLOWING ATPES REVISION PROCESS

In accordance with state law, the District shall involve its certificated teachers in the development and periodic review and evaluation of the teacher performance evaluation system.

The following elements will be assured in the evaluation system and procedures:

- A copy of the evaluation system shall be given to and reviewed with each teacher in the District at the start of each school year and prior to any classroom observation.
- The Board shall receive from the Superintendent recommendations for qualified evaluators prior to naming evaluators. The Board will designate qualified evaluators by name or position.
- The best practices for professional development and evaluator training adopted by the State Board of Education.
- At least annually, the Board shall discuss at a public meeting its aggregate performance classifications of principals and teachers.

Definition of Inadequacy of Classroom Performance

A teacher's failure to overcome deficiency(ies) in classroom performance which are addressed in an Improvement Plan.

Evaluation of Administrators and Psychologists

The District shall establish a system for the evaluation of the performance of principals, other school administrators, and psychologists. The District will seek advice from District administrators and psychologists in the development of this performance evaluation system.

The Board shall make available the evaluation and performance classification pursuant to A.R.S. 15-203 of each principal in the School District to school districts and charter schools that are inquiring about the performance of the principal for hiring purposes.

Adopted: date of Manual adoption

LEGAL REF.: A.R.S. 15-203
15-502
15-503
15-536
15-537
15-537.01
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15-539 et seq.
15-544
15-549
15-918.02
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A.A.C. R7-2-605

CROSS REF: GCF - Professional Staff Hiring
GCJ - Professional Staff Noncontinuing and Continuing Status
GCK - Professional Staff Assignments and Transfers
GCMF - Professional Staff Duties and Responsibilities
GCQF - Discipline, Suspension, and Dismissal of Professional Staff Members
GDO - Evaluation of Support Staff Members

**EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS
The Purpose of Evaluation - Fundamental Concepts**

Purpose

A formal process of evaluating all certificated personnel will be implemented. The purpose of evaluation shall be the improvement of the quality of instruction. Such a process, to achieve the greater measure of success shall be predicated on the philosophy that evaluation is a cooperative process, with the evaluator and the evaluated having full knowledge of the criteria, procedures and results.

The following statements give more specific purposes for evaluation:

- Evaluations document the extent to which the teacher makes student learning the primary focus of the teacher's professional time.
- The success of the educational program is dependent upon the quality of classroom instruction, supervision, and administration.
- Evaluations are cooperative endeavor between the evaluator and the person being evaluated. Thus, open communication throughout the evaluation process is essential to its success.
- Evaluations provide a basis for motivation and for self-improvement, encouraging personnel to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses in order to improve.
- Evaluations should inform and guide the planning of in-service training and supervisory activities. Such activities can be most effective when they are based upon clear evidence demonstrated by evaluation data.
- Evaluations guide administrative decisions concerning the employment of personnel, their assignment, the granting of continuing status, promotion, demotion, or termination.
- Evaluations aid in determining the adequacy or inadequacy of classroom performance.
- Evaluations determine how well the educational objectives of the District are being carried out. The purpose of evaluation should be to work toward common

goals for the improvement of education and for the success of both students and staff members.

- Evaluation must be continuous, flexible, and easily revised in order to accommodate changing needs.
- The person being evaluated must be given the opportunity to demonstrate improvement when deficiencies are noted.
- The improvement of classroom instruction may be set in motion by specific recommendations for improvement developed through collaboration between the evaluator and the person being evaluated and, if appropriate, by the design of the Governing Board.
- Evaluators must confer with the teacher being evaluated and must provide assistance and opportunities for the improvement of that person's performance and should follow up with the person being evaluated after a reasonable period of time for the purpose of ascertaining that the teacher is demonstrating adequate classroom performance.
- Effective evaluation depends on accurate information and should therefore include consideration of input from all reliable and appropriate sources.

To accomplish the foregoing concepts, the District will maintain a uniform system of evaluation through periodic review and revision of the Amphitheater Teacher Performance Evaluation System (ATPES). The ATPES, as it may be revised from time to time, is hereby adopted and incorporated herein. Revisions to ATPES, this regulation and its corresponding policy shall be developed and proposed to the Governing Board following consultations between the administration and certificated employees, and through such committees as the Superintendent may compose, to include representatives of the Amphitheater Education Association.

Definition of Terms

The following terms shall have the specified meanings:

- *Instructional Day* means a day in which students are scheduled to attend school for instructional time.
- *Evaluation* means assessment of the teacher's classroom performance as required by Arizona law. Evaluation shall include all classroom teachers and other certificated non-administrative staff members. Such evaluation shall be based on Policy GCO and the procedures outlined in this regulation and ATPES.

- *Performance classifications* means the four (4) performance classifications, designated as “highly effective”, “effective”, “developing”, and “ineffective”, included in the model framework for a teacher and principal evaluation instrument adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to A.R.S. 15-203. The performance classifications are to be applied to the evaluation instruments in a manner designed to improve principal and teacher performance. At least annually, the School District Governing Board shall discuss at a public meeting its aggregate performance classifications of principals and teachers.
- *Informal observation* means an evaluator's observation of the teacher's classroom performance which is not prearranged or scheduled with the teacher. Informal observation of a teacher may also utilize reliable and pertinent information obtained from appropriate sources, such as the teacher, previous evaluators and supervisors, third parties, and information contained in the teacher's personnel file. Teachers will be made aware of the sources of information utilized in their evaluation.
- *Formal observation* means an evaluator's observation of various aspects of the teacher's classroom performance which is prearranged and scheduled with the teacher. Formal observations will be documented in writing and will include the opportunity for a follow-up conference.
- *Professional Growth Plan* means a plan devised for the purpose of refining skills and/or the establishment of goals for professional growth and development.
- *Improvement Plan* means a required formal plan designed to improve deficiencies in classroom performance.
- *Deficiency in classroom performance* means an evaluator rating of "1" in one or more indicators or domains of the ATPES which must be improved.
- *Inadequacy of classroom performance.* A teacher's failure to overcome the deficiency(ies) identified in an improvement plan.

Confidentiality

The evaluations reports of certificated teachers retained by the District are confidential, are not public records, and shall not be released, shown or the contents disclosed to any person except to school districts and charter schools that inquire about the performance of the teacher for employment purposes. In addition, evaluations may be released:

- to the certificated teacher about whom the report is written who may make any use of it;

- to authorized District officers and employees for all personnel matters regarding employment and contracts and for any hearing that relates to personnel matters;
- for introduction in evidence or discovery in any litigation between the Governing Board and the teacher in which either:
 - The competency of the teacher is at issue; or
 - The assessment and evaluation were exhibits at a hearing, the result of which is challenged.

Evaluators

The Governing Board shall designate qualified evaluators. The Superintendent will submit lists of persons recommended for designation as qualified evaluators to the Governing Board.

In order to be considered qualified, an evaluator will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of District and state policies, laws and rules relating to instruction, professionalism and evaluation;
- Demonstrate planning and implementation strategies relating to evaluation system timelines, content and expectations;
- Demonstrate data recording and analysis skills through simulations and/or on-site practice/feedback sessions; and
- Demonstrate conferencing and improvement planning skills through simulations and/or on-site practice/feedback sessions.

The administration is responsible for an in-service training program for evaluators. This program shall incorporate a philosophy, procedure, and techniques that ensure effective implementation of the evaluation plan.

The best practices for professional development and evaluator training adopted by the State Board of Education should be referenced as the State Board has the authority to periodically make adjustments to align with the model framework for teacher and principal evaluations with assessment data changes at the state level.

The evaluator shall be responsible for the final official statement of evaluation, which shall be in writing, and a copy of which shall be transmitted to the certificated teacher within five (5) days after completion of the evaluation. [A.R.S. 15-537]

Classroom Observations by Evaluator.

The evaluation of a teacher shall include at least two (2) actual classroom observations by the qualified evaluator of the certificated teacher demonstrating teaching skills in a complete and uninterrupted lesson. There shall be at least sixty (60) calendar days between the first and last observations of an evaluation cycle.

Procedural steps in the process of evaluation:

- At the beginning of the school year, the principal or other evaluator shall meet with the school's faculty for the purpose of orienting the teachers to the ATPES. This shall include an explanation of whether and how the evaluation is used as a criterion for establishing a teacher's compensation.
- Self evaluation by the teacher shall be encouraged.
- Observation(s) in the classroom shall be completed consistent with the descriptions set forth above.
- Within ten (10) business days after each observation of thirty minutes or more, the person observing the teacher shall provide written feedback to the teacher and a copy of this feedback shall be retained for the principal's file.
- An opportunity for a conference shall follow each formal observation.
- The official evaluation shall be reduced to writing and signed by both the teacher and the evaluator to evidence receipt of the evaluation by the teacher. (The teacher's signature shall not be construed to denote the teacher's agreement with the evaluation).
- A copy of the written evaluation shall be transmitted to the teacher within five (5) business days after completion of the evaluation, and a copy shall be retained for the principal's file. A third copy shall be placed in the teacher's personnel file.
- The teacher shall be allowed ten (10) business days following receipt of the evaluation to write and submit any comments, which shall be attached to the evaluation.

Frequency of written evaluations. Evaluations shall be made at least two (2) times per contract year for non-continuing teachers, and at least once per contract year for continuing teachers.

Evaluation Schedules

All Teachers:

- During the first week of each contract year, the ATPES evaluation procedures shall be reviewed at each school. Any teacher who is hired after the first week shall be individually oriented by the evaluator. The initial orientation of teachers each year shall include an explanation of whether and how the evaluation is used as a criterion for establishing a teacher's compensation.
- Evaluations and observations shall not be conducted within two (2) instructional days of any school break of one (1) week or more.
- Evaluations shall be conducted in accord with Governing Board Policy GCO, this regulation, and the specific format of evaluation established by the ATPES.
- Evaluations must be completed in time to be included in the notice of inadequacy of classroom performance, which may be issued by the Governing Board or its authorized representative or designee employee.
- In all cases in which a designee of the Governing Board issues a notice of inadequacy of classroom performance, the designee shall report such issuance to the Governing Board within five (5) school days.

Non-continuing Teachers:

- The first informal classroom observation of the Fall semester for each non-continuing teacher should occur by September 15.
- The Fall semester formal classroom observation for each non-continuing teacher should occur by November 15.
- The teacher and evaluator shall hold the post-evaluation conference within five (5) working days of each formal observation.
- The first informal classroom observation of the Spring semester for each non-continuing teachers should occur by January 15.
- The Spring semester formal classroom observation for each non-continuing teacher should occur by March 30.
- The Spring semester evaluation shall be completed by April 5.
- The teacher and evaluator shall hold the post-evaluation conference within five (5) working days of each formal observation.
- Evaluators may conduct additional observations or evaluation cycles beyond the required minimum. Teachers may also request additional observations or evaluation cycles.

Continuing Teachers:

- Continuing teachers shall be evaluated at least once per year.
- The first informal observation for each continuing teacher shall occur prior to January 30.
- The first formal observation for each continuing teacher shall occur prior to April 10.
- The continuing teacher's evaluation shall be completed by April 15.
- The teacher and evaluator shall hold the post-evaluation conference within five (5) working days of each formal observation.
- Evaluators may conduct additional observations or evaluation cycles beyond the required minimum. Teachers may also request additional observations or evaluation cycles.

Challenges to Evaluations

Evaluations that are used as a criterion for establishing compensation:

- *Request for hearing.* A teacher who disagrees with an evaluation of his or her performance that may be used as a criterion for establishing compensation may, within five (5) days of having received the evaluation, request a hearing by submitting a written request to the Superintendent. The basis of the appeal cannot be something that would violate the requirements of state law, Policy GCO, this regulation or the ATPES.
- *Conduct of hearing.* The hearing shall be conducted by an associate superintendent or a person to be designated by the Superintendent, but shall not be the person(s) who performed the evaluation.
- The hearing shall be conducted not less than ten (10) nor more than twenty-five (25) days after receipt of the teacher's request for hearing, but may be continued from time to time for good cause by the person conducting the hearing.
- The person conducting the hearing shall, within five (5) days of the termination of the hearing, prepare written findings and render a decision with respect to the appeal; the findings and decision shall be filed in the teacher's personnel file and be made part of the evaluation. Copies of the findings and decision shall be delivered to the Superintendent and to the teacher, or served upon the teacher by certified mail, with a return receipt requested.

- If the person conducting the hearing rules in favor of the teacher, the applicable amount of reduced pay of the teacher shall be restored, to include any backpay due to the teacher.
- The decision of the person conducting the hearing shall be final unless, within five (5) days after the service upon the teacher of the decision, the teacher files a written request for review by the Superintendent.
- The review shall be conducted by the Superintendent or designee (who shall not be the person who conducted the first level hearing or the person who performed the evaluation). The second level shall be limited to review of the written findings and decision of the first level hearing officer. The parties may present additional written material to the Superintendent as well as present oral argument. However, the Superintendent will not take new evidence.
- The decision of the Superintendent or designee shall be final and not subject to grievance and shall be entered in the teacher's personnel file and made a part of the evaluation, and delivered to or served upon the teacher as set forth above.
- Any teacher who remains dissatisfied following the hearing process may submit a brief, concise written statement rebutting or objecting to said decision, which statement shall become a part of said evaluation for all purposes.

Evaluations that may not be used as a criterion for establishing compensation:

- *Request for second evaluator:*
 - Any teacher who is dissatisfied with a performance evaluation that is not used as a criterion for establishing compensation may submit a brief, concise written statement requesting an additional evaluation by a different evaluator. The basis of the appeal cannot be something that would violate the requirements of state law, Policy GCO, this regulation or the ATPES. The written request must be submitted to the principal within five (5) working days after receipt of the evaluation. The principal will be responsible for selecting a second evaluator. The opinion of the second evaluator shall be included in the employee's personnel file but shall not replace the contested evaluation.
 - Any teacher whose evaluation is used as a criterion for establishing compensation shall follow the appeal procedure set forth above.

Written Preliminary Notice to Non- Continuing Teacher of Inadequacy of Classroom Performance (employed by the School District for less than the major portion of three [3] consecutive school years):

If the District intends to dismiss or not re-employ a non-continuing certificated teacher based on charges of inadequacy of classroom performance, the Governing Board or its designee shall give the teacher written notice of such intention to dismiss or not to re-employ. Additionally, the Governing Board or its designee shall, at least ninety (90) days prior to such notice, and no later than January 15, give the teacher written preliminary notice of such inadequacy, specifying the nature of the inadequacy(ies) with sufficient particularity as to furnish the teacher with an opportunity to correct the inadequacy(ies) and overcome the grounds for the charge of inadequacy. The written notice of intention to dismiss or not to re-employ shall include a copy of any evaluation(s) pertinent to the charges made and filed with the Governing Board. The notice shall be delivered personally or sent by registered or certified mail, bearing a postmark no later than April 15, to the teacher's place of residence, as recorded in the District's records.

The non-renewal procedures set forth in A.R.S. 15-536 and in this section of this regulation, are also applicable to each teacher who is beginning the teacher's fourth consecutive year of employment and who has been designated in one (1) of the two (2) lowest performance classifications pursuant to A.R.S. 15-203(A)(38) and who is under a contract of employment for the current school year. Such teacher will not be issued a continuing status contract and will not be entitled to the hearing described in A.R.S. 15-539(G). This teacher may be issued a probationary contract.

Written Preliminary Notice to Continuing Teacher of Inadequacy of Classroom Performance (*employed by the School District for more than the major portion of three [3] consecutive school years*):

If the District intends to dismiss or not re-employ a continuing teacher based on charges of inadequacy of classroom performance, the Governing Board, or its designee shall give the teacher a written preliminary notice of such intention and provide the teacher with no less than sixty (60) instructional days to correct the inadequacy and overcome the grounds for the charge(s) of inadequacy. The written preliminary notice shall be issued at least ten (10) instructional days prior to the start of the minimum sixty (60) instructional day period.

The written preliminary notice shall specify the nature of the inadequacy of classroom performance with such particularity as to furnish the teacher an opportunity to correct any inadequacy(ies) and overcome the grounds for the charge of inadequacy and shall include a copy of any evaluation(s) pertinent to the charges made and filed with the Governing Board.

If the teacher does not correct the inadequacies and overcome the grounds specified in the preliminary notice by the end of the period specified in the written preliminary notice issued by the Governing Board or its designee, the Governing Board shall not renew the teacher's contract and shall dismiss the teacher and give notice of the same.

If, within the period of time specified in the written preliminary notice, the teacher does correct the inadequacies and overcome the grounds for the charge of inadequacy

specified in the written preliminary notice, then the Governing Board shall offer the teacher a contract for the subsequent school year subject to nonrenewal or dismissal for other reasons, as provided by law.

Pursuant to A.R.S. 15-538.01, the Governing Board shall offer to each certificated teacher who has been employed more than the major portion of three (3) consecutive years and who is under contract of employment with the School District for the current year a contract renewal for the next ensuing school year unless the teacher has been given notice of the Board's intent not to offer a contract and to dismiss the teacher as provided in section A.R.S.15-539. The Governing Board shall offer a contract to each certificated teacher who is not designated in the lowest performance classification pursuant to A.R.S. 15-203(A)(38) and was offered a contract in the prior year pursuant to A.R.S. 15-536 unless the teacher has been given notice of the Board's intent not to offer a contract and to dismiss the teacher as provided in A.R.S. 15-539. Such teacher will not be issued a continuing status contract and will not be entitled to the hearing described in A.R.S. 15-539(G). This teacher may be issued a probationary contract.

Administrators and Psychologists

Continuous evaluation of all aspects of the total educational program, including student progress, personnel, curriculum, and facilities, will include a formal process of evaluating all certificated administrators and psychologists. The purpose of this evaluation shall be the improvement of the quality of the educational program in the District. The evaluation will be a cooperative procedure, with the evaluator and the evaluatee having full knowledge of the criteria, process, and results.

The following statements give more specific purposes for evaluation:

- Evaluations determine how well the objectives held by the school and District are being carried out. The success of the educational program is dependent upon many factors, which include the quality of classroom instruction, student evaluation, supervision, and administration.
- Evaluations provide the basis for motivation and for self-improvement, permitting administrative personnel to be aware of strengths and weaknesses in order to improve the operation of the District's programs.

The systems developed for the evaluation of the performance of principals shall meet the requirements prescribed in A.R.S. 15-203(A)(38) and in Policy GCO.

The Board shall make available the evaluation and performance classification pursuant to A.R.S. 15-203(A)(38) of each principal in the School District to school districts and charter schools that are inquiring about the performance of the principal for hiring purposes.

LEGAL REF.: A.R.S. 15-503
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