

## **About the Texas Association of School Boards New Sample Superintendent Evaluation Instrument**

Local school boards in Texas are required by statute to complete a written evaluation of superintendent performance at least once a year. In evaluating the superintendent's performance, the board must look at and consider the district performance data reported on the Commissioner's Recommended Student Performance Domain Worksheet. The final criteria and instrument the board uses to assess superintendent performance, however, are left to the discretion of the local board.

Several organizations make available model or sample evaluation instruments or templates to assist the board in developing and adopting an evaluation instrument. TASB has made such a sample available to local boards for several years. The sample has undergone changes as the conditions facing districts and the demands upon a superintendent's time and efforts have changed.

The TASB sample instrument was substantially revised in 2006.

### **What stayed the same in this version of the TASB Sample Instrument?**

TASB recommends the board's evaluation instrument have two parts: a set of Priority Performance Goals for the superintendent that address major district initiatives the board feels merit special time, effort, and resources from the superintendent during the year; and a group of items that assess performance of the major, ongoing management responsibilities of the superintendent. Priority Performance Goals often change from year to year, as the board and superintendent review the current needs of the district. The items assessing ongoing management of the district generally remain the same for several years, since they assess the management of ongoing functions in the district.

The TASB sample instrument has contained these two parts for many years. The current sample retains that structure and the rationale behind it.

In addition, the recommended rating scale for assessing superintendent performance remains the same as in the previous sample. TASB encourages the use of a three-level rating scale, not tied to numbers, for rating superintendent performance.

### **What's changed in the Sample Instrument?**

The items assessing the superintendent's ongoing responsibilities as manager of the district have undergone extensive revision.

The three domains in this portion of the instrument—Educational Leadership, District Management, and Board and Community Relations—have not changed. The areas assessed—Instructional Management, Student Services Management, etc.—have also remained largely the same. In the domain "District Management," however, we have restructured the areas assessed to include a separate item on fiscal management and to incorporate activities previously assessed as "administrative management" into each of the other areas in that domain. The item previously called "Personnel Management" is now called "Human Resource Management," to allow for greater scope in the activities assessed.

The primary changes in these items lie in the indicators the board will look at in assessing performance on each item.

In previous versions of the TASB model, board members were asked to assess the superintendent's performance based on whether or not—and how effectively—the superintendent performed a series of tasks in each area that are generally acknowledged as good practices for a superintendent. For example, the item on Instructional Management read as follows:

**Instructional Management:** The superintendent

1. Establishes effective mechanisms for communication to and from staff in instructional evaluation, planning, and decision making.
2. Oversees annual planning for increased student learning and conducts periodic assessments of the effectiveness of the planning process.
3. Ensures that goals and objectives form the basis of curricular decision making and instruction and communicates expectations for high achievement.
4. Ensures that appropriate data are used in developing recommendations and making decisions regarding the instructional program and resources.
5. Oversees a system for regular evaluation of instructional programs to meet student instructional needs and to attain desired student achievement.

Although a board would expect a good superintendent to be engaging in each of these good practices, board members often commented that they, in their oversight role, had little evidence for knowing if the superintendent was performing these activities and little knowledge, from their lay perspective, about what qualifies as doing these activities well.

Similarly, board members often commented that board discussions during evaluations focus on what should count as evidence of good performance rather than on whether the evidence available matched pre-established criteria for good performance.

In response to these comments, TASB has revised the indicators of successful performance on most of the items. In place of the list of good practices a superintendent might perform in each area, we have substituted a brief list of what the board might SEE as a consequence of the superintendent's work if the superintendent is adhering to these good practices in a systematic and effective manner. On many items, one of the things the board might expect to see is progress in the effectiveness or efficiency with which a district function is carried out, based on locally decided benchmarks or measures.

**Are the domains addressed in the new sample consistent with the commissioner's rule on appraisal of administrators?**

19 TAC § 150.1021 lists 10 areas in which a board may want to evaluate its superintendent. There is not a requirement that the board explicitly evaluate the superintendent in all 10 areas, but all areas are important to superintendent performance. The TASB sample covers all 10 areas by integrating some areas (such as organizational improvement) into each of the items, rather than incorporating it as a separate item.

**What does the local board need to do to be able to use the TASB sample?**

A "one size fits all" superintendent evaluation instrument is not possible in Texas because of the vast differences in district size, complexity, and circumstances. Any sample instrument should be reviewed and modified as appropriate by the local board.

In the case of the TASB sample, the board will need to do a number of things.

1. Priority Performance Goals for the superintendent form the primary focus of the evaluation. They should be developed by the board and superintendent at the beginning of the evaluation cycle, in relation to established district goals or other priorities identified by the board. The locally developed Priority Performance Goals are simply inserted into the appropriate spaces in the sample.

For assistance in setting Priority Performance Goals, the board may wish to consult the TASB publication, *Developing Superintendent Performance Goals*.

2. The items assessing the ongoing responsibilities of the superintendent as manager of the district are intended to provide the board an opportunity to assess general management performance. They are a secondary focus of the evaluation and should be used primarily to assess ongoing improvements in the district and plan for superintendent priorities in coming years.

The board and superintendent will need to review these items on the sample instrument and decide if the types of revision that have been made to the items represent a direction the board and superintendent are comfortable with.

If the board and superintendent are comfortable with the direction of these revisions, they will need to pay careful attention to the footnotes in the items and make changes as needed.

Many of the items call for the superintendent to have developed benchmarks and standards of performance for certain functions in the district's operations and to provide monitoring reports to the board. These items assume a level of formality to the administration's management processes that may be new to the district. If the board wishes to move forward with an instrument based on the sample, the board and superintendent will need to discuss what tasks may be required of the administration to develop this degree of formalization to its management processes, whether that is desirable, and when the board can reasonably expect these tasks to have been done.

3. Once the appropriate modifications have been made and the Priority Performance Goals have been inserted, the board should formally adopt the instrument.

**Is there an editable version of the sample available so that districts can make modifications directly to an electronic file?**

Yes, an editable version of the sample may be downloaded from the TASB Web Site. Go to [www.lts.tasb.org](http://www.lts.tasb.org) and click on "Resources."

## Texas Association of School Boards Sample Superintendent Evaluation Instrument

### General Information

The Evaluation Instrument consists of two parts: Priority Performance Goals for the superintendent and items that assess performance on ongoing management responsibilities of the superintendent. In assessing performance on both the goals and the ongoing responsibilities, the board will consult data provided by the superintendent on the Commissioner's Recommended Student Performance Domain Worksheet, data referred to in the specific items, and other data the board as a whole deems relevant to the assessment.

Priority Performance Goals for the superintendent form the primary focus of the evaluation. They should be developed in relation to established district goals or other priorities established by the board for the superintendent. For assistance in setting Priority Performance Goals, the board may wish to consult the TASB publication, *Developing Superintendent Performance Goals*.

The function of the assessment of ongoing responsibilities is both to assess general management performance and to assist the board and superintendent in identifying issues and areas they may wish to address with a Priority Performance Goal during the following evaluation year. This is a secondary aspect of the evaluation and should be used primarily to assess ongoing improvements in the district and plan for superintendent priorities in coming years.

Most items in the ongoing responsibility section include:

- A measure of effectiveness that the administration uses to drive decision-making in the particular function addressed by the item.
- Indicators that the measure is being monitored.
- Indicators that the district is continually improving.
- Provision of data the board can review to feel comfortable that the above is happening. The board should use this data assessing superintendent performance.

### Rating Scale:

E	Exceptional	Progress exceeds expectations and criteria noted in the instrument
P	Proficient	Progress meets the expectations and criteria noted in the instrument
N	Needs Improvement	Progress does not meet the expectations and criteria noted in the instrument

Comments may be made on any item. Any rating of "Needs Improvement" must be accompanied by a comment indicating the nature of the deficiency or a statement of what the board expected to see in performance that was not evident.

## Priority Performance Goals

The board, in discussion with the superintendent, established the following priority performance goals for the year:

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**District Goal or Board Priority:**

(To be inserted by the district.)

**Superintendent Priority Performance Goal:**

(To be inserted by the district.)

**Rating:**

**Comments:**

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(To be inserted by the district.)

**Superintendent Priority Performance Goal:**

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**Rating:**

**Comments:**

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**Rating:**

**Comments:**

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**District Goal or Board Priority:**

(To be inserted by the district.)

**Superintendent Priority Performance Goal:**

(To be inserted by the district.)

**Rating:**

**Comments:**

## Assessment of Ongoing Responsibilities

### Educational Leadership

The superintendent provides leadership and direction for an educational system that is based on desired student achievement.

**A. Instructional Management:** The superintendent manages an assessment and improvement system for student learning in the major academic subjects<sup>1</sup> that results in the ongoing improvement in student achievement. The board shall see:

- Information on how the district determines deficiencies or areas for improvement in instruction and curriculum.
- An annual report<sup>2</sup> of instructional areas needing attention, as revealed by the system.
- Annual reports of remediation and instructional improvement efforts implemented, cost, progress, and results as they become available.
- A trend of ongoing improvement as reflected in longitudinal data on student scores<sup>3 & 4</sup>.

**Rating:**

**Comments:**

**B. Student Services Management:** The superintendent oversees a program of student services, tied to defined goals and objectives. The board shall see:

- Annual goals, targets, or benchmarks and rationale behind them, for counseling services, health and safety programs, extracurricular programs, and students' discipline<sup>5</sup>.
- Semi-annual<sup>6</sup> monitoring reports for student services programs, related to goals and targets.

**Rating:**

**Comments:**

1. The board may wish to add subjects to this item in addition to those tested on TAKS. If so, the board should specify those subjects in the item.
2. Some of the reports required by this instrument may be new for the district. The board may need to establish a phase-in schedule for seeing these reports rather than expecting to see them all in the first year this instrument is used.
3. If the district has a new superintendent the board may wish to modify this indicator to state: "a trend toward improvement as reflected in longitudinal data within three years of the superintendent's tenure."
4. The board may want to include its specific target for student achievement if it has specific targets in performance goals. If the board has chosen to monitor subjects in addition to those tested in TAKS, the board should indicate the data that will be used to measure achievement in those subjects.
5. The board should add to or subtract from this list of student services to focus on the programs most important to the district. Other student services programs include college/career planning services, community outreach programs, etc.
6. The board should specify how often the board wishes to see reports on specific programs or services and modify the indicator as appropriate. Semi-annual may be too frequent for reports, depending upon the goals being tracked.

**C. Staff Development and Professional Growth:** The superintendent oversees a program of staff development designed to improve district performance. The board shall see:

- An annual summary of the staff development plan, including goals for the program tied to district assessment data and staff appraisal data, and administration-defined measures for assessing program success.
- An annual report on the success of the staff development program as demonstrated by administration-defined measures.

**Rating:**

**Comments:**

## District Management

The superintendent demonstrates effective planning and management of the district administration, finances, operations, and personnel.

**A. Facilities and Operations Management:** The superintendent maintains a management system designed to produce ongoing efficiencies in major district operations, including transportation, food services, and building maintenance and operations<sup>7</sup>. The board shall see:

- Annual goals, targets, or benchmarks and the monitoring process, to be used by administration to assess efficiency in the targeted areas.
- An annual report on success in terms of the goals, including longitudinal data.
- A general trend toward improvement in each area, as defined by the goals, targets, and benchmarks used.

**Rating:**

**Comments:**

<sup>7</sup>. The board should modify or change this list as appropriate to reflect functions that are important for the administration to monitor, such as purchasing, construction costs, etc.



**B. Fiscal Management:** The superintendent manages a budget development, implementation, and monitoring process that reflects sound business and fiscal practices and that supports district goals. The board shall see:

- Budget assumptions and priorities, prior to development of the budget<sup>8</sup>.
- Contingency plans for addressing any anticipated changes in district circumstances that could affect district finances in future years.
- Recommended budget in line with established assumptions and district priorities.
- Quarterly financial reports showing implementation compared to adopted budget<sup>9</sup>.
- End of year results that are generally consistent with adopted budget.
- Administrative procedures instituted to reduce the risk of fraud.

**Rating:**

**Comments:**

**C. Human Resources Management:** The superintendent oversees a comprehensive human resources program (recruitment, retention, staffing organization, compensation and benefits, staff recognition and support), tied to defined goals and targets developed by administration for board review. The board shall see:

- An annual list of goals, targets, or benchmarks for human resource services, related to one or more of the major functions listed above.
- An annual report of district success toward meeting the year's goals, targets, or benchmarks<sup>10</sup>.

**Rating:**

**Comments:**

<sup>8</sup>. The board and superintendent should define the assumptions and priorities the board should expect to see embodied in the superintendent's proposed budget. These assumptions might cover issues such as fund balance level and rationale, reasonable staff compensation plan, reasonable tax collection rate, stable per pupil expenditure, contingencies for unanticipated expenditures, etc.

<sup>9</sup>. The board may wish to specify here additional financial reports that are important for the board to see, such as district's investment strategies, risk management activities, or purchasing practices. This information shall include evidence that district practices are sound, cost effective and consistent with district policy and law.

<sup>10</sup>. The board and superintendent should specify at the beginning of the evaluation cycle what data will be used to assess success in meeting human resource targets, as well as whether the board wishes to see certain standard, easily retrieved data including retention rates, numbers of teachers assigned outside their area of certification, and educator attendance rates.

## Board and Community Relations

The superintendent maintains a positive and productive working relationship with the board of trustees and the community.

**A. Board Relations:** The superintendent maintains a positive and productive working relationship with the board of trustees. The board shall see:

- Evidence that during the prior evaluation year the board was kept informed of significant issues as they arose.
- Evidence that during the prior evaluation year the superintendent responded in a timely and complete manner to board requests for information that were consistent with board policy and established procedures.
- Recommendations and appropriate supporting materials on matters for board decision.
- Evidence that the superintendent's actions appropriately supported board policy and decisions with the staff and community.

*(The board acknowledges that individual members' judgment on the indicators above may vary from member to member and from incident to incident. Differences among members of the board about superintendent performance in this area should be discussed among the board so that consistent direction and expectations can be provided to the superintendent.)*

*Board members should assess this item based on whether or not the members feel the superintendent exercised sound judgment on a **generally** consistent basis in meeting the corporate body's expectations in the above areas. The board's rating on this item should reflect the assessment of a majority of the board.)*

**Rating:**

**Comments:**

**B. Community Relations:** The superintendent maintains a positive and productive working relationship with the community. The board shall see:

- Information detailing the district's internal and external communication strategies.
- Evidence of methods for community and business involvement in schools. Evidence of methods or programs to encourage community and business participation in and with the school district.

**Rating:**

**Comments:**