

New Fairfield Public Schools  
Superintendent Evaluation Form  
Instructions

(2018-2019)

# Preface

In December 2017, the New Fairfield Board of Education Superintendent Search Committee set out to develop a new superintendent evaluation form. Our goal was to replace the prior, open-ended form with a detailed form that follows best practices.

The prior evaluation form defined six broad performance standards, each with only a few loosely defined performance criteria. Each standard was rated on a scale of 1 to 10. This combination of unspecified detail and a very granular rating scale made it difficult to evaluate the superintendent properly:

- A full evaluation was just six numeric scores, and with little context in which to judge those scores, was not very meaningful.
- Evaluations could vary greatly from board member to board member, making it hard to combine them meaningfully.<sup>1</sup>
- The superintendent had little guidance as to expectations and goals.
- The superintendent was deprived of valuable feedback to improve job performance.
- The community did not know to what criteria the superintendent was being held accountable.

To fix those problems, we developed an evaluation form with detailed performance criteria, each of which is rated on four-point scale.

Our new form consists of nine performance standards, six of which are the same as in our old form. (The old form had a comment section relating to goals and objectives; we turned it into a standard.) Each standard has up to a dozen or so performance indicators, each of which is rated on the scale *Ineffective*, *Partially Effective*, *Effective*, *Highly Effective*. Broadly, our form most closely resembles the model form published by the New York State School Boards Association.

The ultimate form of superintendent evaluation would be a rubric having detailed descriptions of *Ineffective*, *Partially Effective*, *Effective*, and *Highly Effective* for *each* indicator. However, this type of form would have taken tremendous effort (and expertise) to create — and maintain. Given our resources, we opted for a form — like the New York State model — that has four generic descriptions applying to every indicator.

In the model we chose, a lot of the lost description ends up captured in the indicators, so it is still very effective. Although it may result in more subjectivity, it is still detailed enough to lay out the requirements of the position and assess them.

<sup>1</sup> The highest and lowest ratings for each standard were dropped before averaging, presumably to reduce the effect of outliers on the results. With the four-point rating scale in our new system there will be less variability, which allows us to include the ratings from every board member.

## Sources

We based the format and content of our evaluation form on many sources:

- Our prior superintendent evaluation form.
- New York State School Boards Association's model superintendent evaluation form.
- Michigan Association of School Boards model superintendent evaluation form.
- Massachusetts Association of School Committees model superintendent evaluation form.
- Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) model superintendent evaluation form.
- "Evaluating the Superintendent" by the American Association of School Administrators.
- Chapter 8, "Evaluating the Superintendent," from the National School Boards Association publication "Becoming a Better Board Member."
- "AchieveNJ: Teacher Evaluation Scoring Guide" by the State of New Jersey Department of Education.
- Evaluation forms from various school districts across the country.
- Our new vision, mission, and core values.
- Our superintendent search leadership profile.
- Our superintendent search flyer.
- Policy 2131: Administration, Superintendent of Schools.
- Policy 2400: Administration, Evaluation of Superintendent.
- Comments included in our superintendent's 2016-2017 evaluation.
- Study of board member and superintendent roles and responsibilities.
- Observations of prior board dynamics.

## Process was tested

We tested these instructions by doing a mock evaluation using one of the standards (standard F). We found the process to be straightforward. We liked how going through each performance indicator sparked group discussion and kept us focused on specific criteria.

# Overview of the Evaluation Process

The Board of Education evaluates the superintendent formally once a year, in accordance with the superintendent's contract and board policy. (Please refer to the contract and policy for details surrounding this process.) This document specifies the instructions for filling out the evaluation form.

When evaluation time approaches, the superintendent performs a self-evaluation, using the evaluation form. The superintendent attaches documentation highlighting his or her achievements and gives the form and documentation to the board. Each board member consults that information, along with his or her own notes and observations, and fills out an evaluation form of their own. Finally, as a group, the board compiles the individual members' evaluations into a single evaluation form, which will become the superintendent's evaluation.

In order to participate in the evaluation process, a board member must have been seated on the board no later than December 1 of the school year for which the evaluation is being done.

## Performance Standards

The superintendent is evaluated on nine performance standards — eight standards that describe the ongoing requirements of the position, and one standard that describes district goals, which can vary from year to year:

- A. Professionalism
- B. Educational Leadership
- C. Organizational Management
- D. Business and Fiscal Management
- E. Policy and Governance
- F. Relationship with the Board
- G. Personnel Relationships
- H. Relationship with the Community
- I. Annual District Goals

The standards are laid out in rubrics<sup>2</sup>, each of which contains a number of performance indicators.

<sup>2</sup> We refer to the layout of our performance standards as "rubrics," even though they are not the kind of rubric with individual descriptions for every rating for every performance indicator.

## Rating Scale

Each indicator is rated on the four-point scale *Ineffective*, *Partially Effective*, *Effective*, and *Highly Effective*.

<b>Ineffective</b>	<b>Partially Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Highly Effective</b>
<b>Performance does not meet the criteria and requires significant improvement</b>	<b>Performance is inconsistent and partially meets the criteria</b>	<b>Performance consistently meets the criteria</b>	<b>Performance has continually exceeded the criteria</b>
<i>The superintendent's performance has not met expectations, having no positive impact on students, personnel, the board, and/or the community.</i>	<i>The superintendent's performance has partially met expectations, having some positive impact on students, personnel, the board, and/or the community.</i>	<i>The superintendent's performance has met expectations, having a positive impact on students, personnel, the board, and/or the community.</i>	<i>The superintendent's performance has had an exceedingly positive impact on students, personnel, the board, and/or the community.</i>

A rating of *Effective* means the superintendent is meeting the expectations of the job.

# Filling out the Evaluation Form: Individual Board Members

Each board member fills out an evaluation form, which is then used by the board to compile the superintendent's evaluation. Members are advised to keep detailed notes throughout the year (perhaps on a copy of the form) to be used during evaluation.

For each performance indicator, place an 'X' in the box that best describes the superintendent's performance. If you feel you don't have enough information to give a rating, leave the box blank temporarily; ask for the information before the board meets to compile the results, or even wait until the meeting to do so.

Individual members *do not* compute overall ratings, so leave them blank<sup>3</sup>. They are done by the full board when aggregating all board members' ratings into the composite evaluation, the document given to the superintendent.

In the comments section, cite relevant sources of data or other supporting information, make commendations, and make suggestions for improvement, as appropriate. Record anything noteworthy not otherwise captured in the rubrics. Attach additional pages if necessary.

<sup>3</sup> You *could* compute overall ratings for your own use, but they will not be used. The board will go through each indicator, compute an average for each, and then use *those* to compute overall ratings. This has three advantages: 1) It forces a group discussion on each indicator, 2) It prevents "rounding errors" that could occur when averages fall halfway between two ratings, and 3) It relieves individual members from making any calculations.

## Example

Here is an example, using standard F:

<b>F</b>	<b>Relationship with the Board</b>	<b>Ineffective</b>	<b>Partially Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Highly Effective</b>
F1	Prepares for, attends, and participates in all regular and special board meetings				X
F2	Offers advice to the board regarding emerging educational and district issues, making appropriate recommendations to address them			X	
F3	Informs the board regularly with complete, accurate, and timely information			X	
F4	Informs the board about new federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations			X	
F5	Informs board members promptly of incidents involving students, personnel, or other board members, and gives them timely status updates of ongoing cases		X		
F6	Maintains a collaborative, team relationship with the board			X	
F7	Understands roles and responsibilities vs. those of the board, and works with the board to define them			X	
F8	Gives the board information they request, and is forthcoming with that information, positive or negative			X	
F9	Shares information equally with all board members, and provides information requested by one board member to all board members			X	
F10	Orients new board members and supports their professional development by seeking out and communicating development opportunities		X		
<b>Overall rating:</b>					

*Comments: The superintendent is an asset to the board. He attends all board meetings, is punctual, provides valuable input, and is always willing to provide follow up information.*

*I have on occasion not been informed of important issues involving personnel. For example, on November 27, 2018, a science teacher at the middle school performed an experiment that caused some chemicals to spray onto the desks of a few students. Although there was no damage, and no one was hurt, I still would have appreciated not having heard about this first from a parent at the supermarket.*

*I also feel that, with the superintendent's experience, he could do more in helping new board members get oriented, and inform all board members of best practices he observed in boards at other school districts in which he's served.*



# Filling out the Evaluation Form: Superintendent's Composite Evaluation

*(It is not necessary for individual board members to understand this process before the board meets; an experienced board member will explain it at the meeting.)*

The superintendent's evaluation is done on the same form, and is a compilation of the board members' individual evaluations. As a group, with the board chairman moderating, the board will go through each performance indicator, computing an average rating for each. Then for each standard, the chairman will average the average ratings, giving an overall rating for the standard.

For the purposes of averaging, each of the four performance ratings are assigned a numeric value:

<i>Ineffective:</i>	1
<i>Partially Effective:</i>	2
<i>Effective:</i>	3
<i>Highly Effective:</i>	4

Averages are rounded to the nearest whole number to assign the corresponding rating.

## Indicator ratings

To compute the rating for a performance indicator, add up the numeric score corresponding to each board member's rating for that indicator and divide by the number of ratings. (If a member's rating is blank, make sure they fill it in first.) For example, let's say these are the nine ratings for performance indicator F5:

- Member 1: *Effective* = 3
- Member 2: *Effective* = 3
- Member 3: *Partially Effective* = 2
- Member 4: *Effective* = 3
- Member 5: *Highly Effective* = 4
- Member 6: *Partially Effective* = 2
- Member 7: *Effective* = 3
- Member 8: *Effective* = 3
- Member 9: *Effective* = 3

The average is  $(3 + 3 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 2 + 3 + 3 + 3)/9 = 26/9 =$  approximately 2.89, which rounds to 3. That corresponds to *Effective*, so mark an 'X' in the *Effective* box.

## Ties

An average rating could end up halfway between two ratings; that is, 1.5, 2.5, or 3.5. (This only occurs when an even number of ratings are averaged.) This represents a tie between the two ratings. For example, if the average score is 2.5, you can round to 2 (*Partially Effective*) or 3 (*Effective*). The chairman, with board input, can use her discretion to break the tie, taking into account factors related to the indicator but not captured explicitly in its description.

## A faster way to compute the averages

On a whiteboard or scrap paper, record the count of each rating for each indicator for each standard, by polling each board member. Then, go through each indicator and compute the average, grouping together similar ratings. For example, for standard F:

<b>F</b>	<b>Ineffective (1)</b>	<b>Partially Effective (2)</b>	<b>Effective (3)</b>	<b>Highly Effective (4)</b>	<b>Average</b>
F1			8	1	$(8 \times 3 + 1 \times 4) / 9 = 3.11 \Rightarrow \mathbf{3}$
F2		2	7		$(2 \times 2 + 7 \times 3) / 9 = 2.78 \Rightarrow \mathbf{3}$
F3		2	7		$(2 \times 2 + 7 \times 3) / 9 = 2.78 \Rightarrow \mathbf{3}$
F4		1	8		$(1 \times 2 + 8 \times 3) / 9 = 2.89 \Rightarrow \mathbf{3}$
F5		2	6	1	$(2 \times 2 + 6 \times 3 + 1 \times 4) / 9 = 2.89 \Rightarrow \mathbf{3}$
F6		4	5		$(4 \times 2 + 5 \times 3) / 9 = 2.56 \Rightarrow \mathbf{3}$
F7	1	4	4		$(1 \times 1 + 4 \times 2 + 4 \times 3) / 9 = 2.33 \Rightarrow \mathbf{2}$
F8	1	6	2		$(1 \times 1 + 6 \times 2 + 2 \times 3) / 9 = 2.11 \Rightarrow \mathbf{2}$
F9			7	2	$(7 \times 3 + 2 \times 4) / 9 = 3.22 \Rightarrow \mathbf{3}$
F10		2	7		$(2 \times 2 + 7 \times 3) / 9 = 2.78 \Rightarrow \mathbf{3}$

For the evaluation form, this translates to

<b>F</b>	<b>Relationship with the Board</b>	<b>Ineffective</b>	<b>Partially Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Highly Effective</b>
F1	Prepares for, attends, and participates in all regular and special board meetings			X	
F2	Offers advice to the board regarding emerging educational and district issues, making appropriate recommendations to address them			X	
F3	Informs the board regularly with complete, accurate, and timely information			X	
F4	Informs the board about new federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations			X	
F5	Informs board members promptly of incidents involving students, personnel, or other board members, and gives them timely status updates of ongoing cases			X	
F6	Maintains a collaborative, team relationship with the board			X	
F7	Understands roles and responsibilities vs. those of the board, and works with the board to define them		X		
F8	Gives the board information they request, and is forthcoming with that information, positive or negative		X		
F9	Shares information equally with all board members, and provides information requested by one board member to all board members			X	
F10	Orients new board members and supports their professional development by seeking out and communicating development opportunities			X	
<b>Overall rating:</b>				X <sup>4</sup>	

4 Calculation described below

## An even faster way to compute the averages

In many cases you can just “eyeball” the average rating without doing a calculation. For example, F3 in the example has two *Partially Effective* ratings and seven *Effective* ratings; the average is obviously *Effective*. In fact for the entire example standard, you can do all the indicators by eye. (Hopefully this will often be the case — that members’ ratings are clustered.) When in doubt though, just do the calculations.

## Overall ratings

Computing the overall rating for each standard follows a similar process: add up the numeric values for all the indicators and divide by the number of indicators. Here’s the overall rating in our example:

F1 = *Effective* = 3

F2 = *Effective* = 3

F3 = *Effective* = 3

F4 = *Effective* = 3

F5 = *Effective* = 3

F6 = *Effective* = 3

F7 = *Partially Effective* = 2

F8 = *Partially Effective* = 2

F9 = *Effective* = 3

F10 = *Effective* = 3

The average is  $(3 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 2 + 2 + 3 + 3)/10 = (8 \times 3 + 2 \times 2)/10 = 28/10 = 2.8$ . This rounds to 3, so mark an ‘X’ in the *Effective* box next to *Overall rating*. (Again, this result is obvious; no calculation is necessary.)

## On *Partially Effective* and *Ineffective* ratings

An overall rating of *Partially Effective* for any standard should be accompanied with comments making suggestions for improvement. An overall rating of *Ineffective* for any standard requires the implementation of an improvement plan (see the superintendent’s contract for details).

## On changing individual board member ratings during this process

It's possible, while discussing an indicator, that evidence is brought to a board member's attention that changes his or her rating. When this happens, the member should change the rating on their form, and that rating should be used for averaging.

## Combining Comments

If there are several similar comments on individual board member forms they should be combined into one comment. Isolated comments should also be included, unless the group decides they are outliers and not appropriate. Ultimately, inclusion of individual board member comments is at the discretion of the chairman.

## Evaluation Summary

For the evaluation summary, simply copy in the overall ratings from each of the standards.