



Handbook



Washington Outcomes-Based Superintendent Evaluation

Outcomes-Based Superintendent Evaluation: A Year-Long Process

This document provides a rationale and framework for a superintendent evaluation process that takes into account the nature of the board of directors, the board's role, the superintendent's role, and how superintendent responsibility, authority, and accountability are defined, delegated, and carried out. It first lays a conceptual foundation, then describes (in outline form) a process for conducting the evaluation, and instruments to be developed and used by the district. Although participating boards agree on general assumptions and principles on which this pilot is based, they will remain true to the unique context in which each district operates as they adapt key features in this framework for their own use. Each board, with staff input, decides the process details and exact contents of these instruments as it conducts annual evaluation of the superintendent.

I. Rationale: Conceptual Foundation

The nature of the school board, its relationship with the superintendent, and the superintendent's relationship with the school district should all be taken into account when designing how the superintendent evaluation is structured and how it is conducted.

A. The Nature of the Board

1. Legal role. Board responsibility and authority are established in state law.

- a. **Responsibility.** State law (RCW 28A.150.230 and RCW 28A.405.100) assigns to each board the responsibility of establishing performance criteria and an evaluation process for its superintendent. While carrying out this responsibility, the board draws a clear distinction between its role as the superintendent's supervisor and that of a superintendent's or prospective superintendent's teacher, mentor, or professional developer.
- b. **Authority.** The authority of the board in its relationship with the superintendent is established in RCW 28A.330.100, where the board is granted the power to "employ a superintendent...and fix his or her duties..."

2. Board Qualifications. In contrast with teacher evaluation, which relies on a certificated administrator who has been professionally prepared and trained for the assessment of instruction and mentoring of teachers for professional growth, superintendent evaluation is conducted by a board of directors who have neither a requirement for nor expectation of formal preparation as an instructional leader or superintendent's mentor. To become a board member, and hence 'qualified' by virtue of holding the position to evaluate the superintendent, candidates must meet four conditions:

- a. **Citizenship** – They must be a citizen of the United States and the state of Washington
- b. **Voter Registration** – They must be a registered voter
- c. **Residency** – They must be a resident of either the school district (as a whole) or a specific director district (where director districts are designated)
- d. **Elected or appointed**

The board recognizes that, although no qualification of its members (beyond the legal requirements for

holding office) is mandated in state law, superintendent evaluation is a responsibility explicitly assigned to the board. The board accepts this responsibility and makes a commitment to provide clear and direct expectations and feedback, and support the superintendent’s professional growth.

3. Board Capacity.

- a. **Not Professional Educators.** The board is not a superintendent preparation program, nor is it the superintendent’s teacher or mentor. It does not consider its members inherently qualified through either experience or education to prepare candidates for the professional responsibilities of a superintendent, so it will not base its superintendent evaluation efforts on the assessment of, and mentoring for the professional growth of, knowledge and skills that are the focus of a superintendent preparation program.
- b. **Lay Persons.** The board does consider its members fully capable of reviewing evidence and judging, as lay persons on behalf of the community, whether or not reasonable progress toward desired organizational results have been demonstrated and whether or not the organization has reasonably complied with written board guidance*. (*in this document the word ‘guidance’ will mean any written plans, policies, directives, job description or other official documents that guide the superintendent.)

4. Board Focus. Because it considers itself qualified to judge district success but not necessarily qualified to assess and mentor the superintendent’s professional competencies (knowledge and skills) the board will focus on district performance as the subject of superintendent evaluation. The board therefore commits to the following:

- a. **Criteria for judging success.** The board commits to developing and using written criteria for successful organizational performance. Criteria will be developed for all areas to be evaluated, and will be grounded in community values and priorities. The board will ensure continuous review and improvement of those criteria to ensure they continue to reflect the community’s current values, priorities, and expectations.
- b. **Disciplined process.** The board commits to developing and following a disciplined process over the course of the year and from year to year. This process is designed to maintain:
 - Focus on organizational performance;
 - Comprehensive and systematic review of all areas of district performance;
 - Continuous improvement of organizational performance.
 - Fidelity to a data-driven decision-making process;
 - Fairness in its treatment of its primary employee;
 - Clarity in communicating the board’s expectations and judgments;
 - Consistency in the evaluation from year to year;
 - Transparency in conducting the public’s business through an open forum;



- c. **Development of evaluation competencies.** The board commits to developing its collective ability to evaluate the organizational performance of the district, to include judging whether or not the district is making reasonable progress, and whether or not the district is in compliance with community expectations as expressed in board guidance.

B. The Board's Relationship with the Superintendent

1. Superintendent Responsibility, Authority, and Accountability. Because it assigns to the superintendent responsibility for district success, the board respects the principle of unity of command, and delegates sufficient freedom of action and authority over district personnel and operations to enable the superintendent to successfully fulfill his/her responsibility for everything the district does or fails to do. The board then holds the superintendent accountable for everything the district does or fails to do. It considers superintendent performance and district performance to be identical.

The board therefore commits to the following:

- a. **Communications Link.** The superintendent is the board's sole connection to the district. Authority over staff, as far as the board is concerned, is considered to be the superintendent's responsibility.
- b. **Instructions.** All board instructions will be directed to/through the superintendent. Neither the board nor individual board members will give instructions to persons who report directly or indirectly to the superintendent.
- c. **Evaluation.** The board will not formally evaluate any staff member other than the superintendent. Authority to conduct such evaluations is delegated to the superintendent, who may, in turn, delegate authority to evaluate staff in accordance with state law.
- d. **District Success.** The board will view successful superintendent performance as identical to organizational accomplishment of desired results established by the board and compliance with the board's guidance given to the superintendent.

2. Guidance for the superintendent. The board instructs the superintendent through written guidance describing organizational results to be achieved and expectations for district operations. It will allow the superintendent freedom to reasonably interpret that guidance in order to achieve desired results.

- a. **Desired Results.** The board develops guidance instructing the superintendent to achieve desired goals or end results, each to be measured by specified criteria.
- b. **Compliance.** The board develops guidance for the superintendent regarding organizational programs and other means by which to achieve desired results.
- c. **Reasonable Interpretation.** The board will support any reasonable interpretation of its guidance. As long as the superintendent reasonably interprets the board's written guidance, he/she is authorized, within applicable statutes and regulations, to make decisions, take actions, and establish practices he/she deems appropriate to achieve desired results.
- d. **Change of Guidance.** The board may change its guidance at any time, thereby adjusting its expectations and altering the latitude of choice given to the superintendent.

II. Framework and Process for Conducting Superintendent Evaluation

A. Elements of Superintendent Evaluation.

1. Self-reflection and individualized professional growth planning. The superintendent may advise the board of individual goals and activities designed to contribute to the superintendent's own professional development. Such activities may include university courses or workshops, professional conferences, or personalized mentoring provided by individuals with superintendent or other senior management experience.

2. Prior written expectations. The superintendent contract, job description, up-to-date strategic planning directives, and other similar documents formally establish the board's expectations and guidance for superintendent and district performance.

3. Schedule . A calendar is developed and updated each year by the board, projecting dates when reports will be received and evidence will be reviewed for the major results areas and major program areas governed by board guidance.

4. Monitoring Cycle. For each area monitored, the board will employ a four-step cycle:

a. **Collection of evidence and presentation for board review.** Types of evidence include:

- Evidence that demonstrates district progress toward desired results: student achievement data, artifacts that show student progress, etc.
- Evidence that demonstrates district compliance with board guidance.
- Evidence used in evaluation may be internally obtained from reports prepared by the superintendent and staff; externally obtained from sources outside the district; or directly gathered by the board itself.

b. **Comparison of evidence with criteria.** In order to assess progress (results) or compliance (policy guidance) the board will consider evidence of 'what is' and compare it with criteria expressed as board guidance about 'what should be'.

c. **Board response.** The board will provide a written response indicating :

- Its judgment as to whether evidence shows the district is making reasonable progress toward desired results.
- Its judgment as to whether district programs/efforts are in compliance with written board guidance.
- These judgments will constitute a document that expresses the board's evaluation of superintendent performance.
- This document will also constitute the board's report to the community regarding district accountability.

d. **Updating/revising guidance for the next cycle.** In order to ensure that the superintendent has advance knowledge of what is expected, the board will update its written expectations (policy/strategic plan/job description/guidance) with criteria to be used in the next cycle of monitoring for a given area.

5. Written evaluation. The board chair will ensure a draft evaluation for the year is prepared by collating individual board responses documented over the course of the year, for board discussion and editing at year's end, then signature by both superintendent and board chair.

- The summative evaluation of the district's performance for the year becomes the superintendent's summative evaluation for the year.
- The superintendent evaluation will be the basis for planning by the superintendent for the next year.

B. The Monitoring Process.

1. Fundamental Values. Two fundamental values in superintendent evaluation are accountability and transparency.

- a. Accountability.** The board is accountable to the public for the success of the district, so it holds the superintendent accountable for everything the district does or fails to do.
- b. Transparency.** Because district accountability is a board obligation to the community, it is the board's intent to conduct superintendent evaluation in as open a forum as possible, allowing (if needed) for selected portions of the board's documented judgments to be discussed in executive session, as appropriate.

2. Monitoring Superintendent Performance. The superintendent's job performance will be monitored systematically and rigorously against two job expectations: organizational accomplishment of the board's desired results for the district, and organizational operation within parameters established in the board's written guidance.

The following process will be used in monitoring and evaluating superintendent performance:

a. Gathering Data. The board will acquire monitoring data on desired results and operating guidelines through one or more of three methods:

- By **internal report**, which begins with a description of board guidance on the topic and a statement explaining how the superintendent has interpreted board guidance, including what data the superintendent has targeted as indicators of progress or compliance that supplement any board-identified criteria contained in board documents; a second part of the report is a statement certifying whether reasonable progress or compliance has been demonstrated; in the third (major) part of the report, the superintendent provides data for use by the board in assessing reasonable progress or compliance;
- By **external report**, in which an external, disinterested third party selected by the board (for example, an auditor or a retired administrator) provides data for use by the board in assessing reasonable progress or compliance with board policy guidance;
- By **direct board inspection**, in which the board itself gathers data with which to assess reasonable progress or compliance.

b. Putting Board Judgments in Writing. The board will make the final decision as to whether

superintendent interpretation and demonstrated success is reasonable, and will provide to the superintendent a documented response (see example Monitoring Response Form, attached). The chair will ensure individual board member input is considered, but will ensure the board response represents only those judgments agreed to by the whole board.

- c. **Scheduling Monitoring.** All guidance instructing the superintendent will be monitored on a schedule according to a frequency and by a method chosen by the board. The board will ordinarily follow a schedule and method that are set at the beginning of each year.

- d. **Compiling the Summative Evaluation.** In conjunction with the conclusion of the board’s annual cycle, each June (or other month chosen by the board) the board will document completion of the annual evaluation cycle. The summative evaluation will be based on information generated during the year in board response documents that are prepared after monitoring each area. A draft summative evaluation will be prepared by compiling the contents of board responses. The board and superintendent will jointly review the draft (mainly in public, but with appropriate portions discussed in executive session, if necessary and as allowed by law) and finalize the document. The completed report will then be signed by the superintendent and board chair. The evaluation document will consist of:
 - Judgments made over the course of the year and documented in board response documents after monitoring for results and monitoring for compliance;
 - Conclusions and policy implications as to whether reasonable progress has been made toward achievement of results and whether the superintendent has operated within established board guidance;
 - Implications for revision to policy/board guidance.

Instrument(s) Used in Evaluating the Superintendent

Criterion-Based Instruments. For each of the following desired results areas, and program/policy category areas, the board will develop criteria for monitoring, on a schedule that monitors one or two areas in an individual meeting at specified times during the year:

<p>A. Desired Results (as identified by the board) Example: Academic Competence. See Appendix B etc. (e.g., categories listed at Appendix A – Schedule of Monitoring)</p>	<p>Note: Criteria will be developed (with staff input) by the board of each district. An example at Appendix B is enclosed</p>
<p>B. Operational/Program Areas (as identified by the board) Example: Budget Planning See Appendix C etc. (e.g., categories listed at Appendix A – Schedule of Monitoring)</p>	<p>Note: Criteria will be developed (with staff input) by the board of each district. An example at Appendix C is enclosed</p>



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Legal References

RCW 28A.150.230

District school directors' responsibilities.

(1) It is the intent and purpose of this section to guarantee that each common school district board of directors, whether or not acting through its respective administrative staff, be held accountable for the proper operation of their district to the local community and its electorate. In accordance with the provisions of Title [28A](#) RCW, as now or hereafter amended, each common school district board of directors shall be vested with the final *responsibility* for the setting of *policies* ensuring *quality* in the content and extent of its educational *program* and that such program provide students with the opportunity to *achieve* those *skills* which are generally recognized as requisite to *learning*.

(2) In conformance with the provisions of Title [28A](#) RCW, as now or hereafter amended, it shall be the responsibility of each common school district board of directors to adopt policies to:

(a) Establish *performance criteria* and an *evaluation process* for its *superintendent*, classified staff, certificated personnel, including administrative staff, and for all programs constituting a part of such district's curriculum. Each district shall report annually to the superintendent of public instruction the following for each employee group listed in this subsection (2)(a): (i) Evaluation criteria and rubrics; (ii) a description of each rating; and (iii) the number of staff in each rating;

RCW 28A.330.100

Additional powers of board.

Every board of directors of a school district of the first class, in addition to the general powers for directors enumerated in this title, shall have the power:

(1) To employ for a term of not exceeding three years a superintendent of schools of the district, and for cause to dismiss him or her, and to *fix his or her duties* and compensation;

RCW 28A.343.340

When elected — Eligibility.

Directors of school districts shall be elected at regular school elections. No person shall be eligible to the office of school director who is not a citizen of the United States and the state of Washington and a registered voter of either the school district or director district, as the case may be.

RCW 28A.405.100

(5) Every board of directors shall establish evaluative criteria and procedures for all superintendents, principals, and other administrators. It shall be the responsibility of the district superintendent or his or her designee to evaluate all administrators. Except as provided in subsection (6) of this section, such evaluation shall be based on the administrative position job description. Such criteria, when applicable, shall include at least the following categories: Knowledge of, experience in, and training in recognizing good professional performance, capabilities and development; school administration and management; school finance; professional preparation and scholarship; effort toward improvement when needed; interest in pupils, employees, patrons and subjects taught in school; leadership; and ability and performance of evaluation of school personnel.

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APPENDIX A – Schedule of Monitoring

Example table showing areas monitored, method and frequency for each policy area:
 (actual table will be prepared by each district based on its own decisions)

<u>Results Areas</u>	<u>Method Used</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
<i>Academic Standards</i>	<i>Internal Report</i>	<i>October</i>
<i>Character/Citizenship</i>	<i>Internal Report</i>	<i>March</i>
<i>Physical Health and Fitness</i>	<i>Internal Report</i>	<i>March</i>
<i>etc. (as desired by the board)</i>	<i>etc.</i>	<i>etc.</i>

<u>Policy/Program Areas</u>	<u>Method Used</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
<i>Relationships with Others (Parents, Students, Staff, Board Members, the Public)</i>	<i>Internal Report</i>	<i>August</i>
<i>Staff Evaluations</i>	<i>Internal Report</i>	<i>July</i>
<i>Resource Management (Budgeting, Financial Administration, Facilities Management)</i>	<i>Internal Report</i>	<i>August</i>
<i>Communications (internal/external)</i>	<i>Internal Report</i>	<i>January</i>
<i>Curriculum & Instruction</i>	<i>Internal Report & Direct Inspection</i>	<i>November</i>
<i>Safety and Security</i>	<i>Internal Report</i>	<i>April</i>
<i>Student Conduct and Discipline</i>	<i>Internal Report</i>	<i>February</i>
<i>etc. (as desired by the board)</i>	<i>etc.</i>	<i>etc.</i>

EXAMPLE ONLY



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APPENDIX B – Academic Competence (Criteria for Evaluation)

All _____ students meet or exceed high academic standards by acquiring the knowledge and skills essential for success in post-secondary education, the world of work, and citizenship. The following criteria will be used to judge academic progress in subjects for which standardized test and other data are available:

- C1. Student achievement will meet the state standard as measured by the state board-approved index of academic achievement.
- C2. Student achievement will exceed that of Washington State and the nation (demographically similar comparison group) as measured by standardized test and other available data. This standard specifically includes all standardized state and federally-mandated testing, as well as standardized college entry tests such as the SAT and ACT.
- C3. The district will make yearly progress toward eliminating the achievement gap of performance among identified student sub-groups.
- C4. Identified student sub-groups will outperform their peers when measures that yield standardized disaggregated data are implemented.
- C5. Grade level cohorts within the district will make continuous progress over time and when compared to their state peers on all available measures and indicators, including percent passing, percent passing all parts of the assessment and the improvement of performance of each quartile.

<i>Data</i>	<i>Reasonable Progress?</i>					<i>Remarks</i>
	<i>C1</i>	<i>C2</i>	<i>C3</i>	<i>C4</i>	<i>C5</i>	
On-time graduation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Reading						
3 rd grade reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4 th grade reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5 th grade reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6 th grade reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7 th grade reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8 th grade reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9 th grade reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10 th grade reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Reading (overall)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Writing						
3 rd grade writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4 th grade writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5 th grade writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6 th grade writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7 th grade writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8 th grade writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9 th grade writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10 th grade writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Writing (overall)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3 rd grade math	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4 th grade math	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5 th grade math	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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APPENDIX C – Budget (Criteria for Evaluation)

Financial planning for any fiscal year must contribute to achievement of desired results for students and protect against risk of fiscal jeopardy to the district.

<u>Indicator</u>	<u>In Compliance?</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
As presented, the budget plan will...	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1. Project anticipated spending and receipts at least 3 years into the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Be consistent with the board's established priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Be in a comprehensive summary format understandable to the board and community	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Adequately describe major budget initiatives and funding sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Compare, for each major fund type and activity, the actual expenditures for the most recent fiscal year, budgeted expenditures for the current fiscal year, and proposed budget expenditures for the next fiscal year	<input type="checkbox"/>	EXAMPLE ONLY
6. Disclose major budget development assumptions, including anticipated changes in state funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Plan for the expenditure in any fiscal year of no more funds than are conservatively projected to be received or appropriated during the year unless otherwise approved by the board in a multi-year projection	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Not allow for reduction, without approval of the board, of the unreserved and undesignated general fund balance for any fiscal year to less than 5.0 percent of total expenditures	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Provide adequate and reasonable budget support for board development and other governance priorities, including the costs of fiscal audits, board and committee meetings, board memberships and district legal fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Take into consideration fiscal soundness in future years and the building of organizational capabilities sufficient to achieve board-desired results in future years	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Reflect anticipated changes in employee compensation including inflationary adjustments, step increases, and benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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APPENDIX D – Monitoring Response

Date Report Submitted: _____

Results Area Monitored: _____

The board on the date shown above received and reviewed the (type report) _____ monitoring report of its (Desired Result Area, wording as desired by the board) _____ submitted by the superintendent (or other if external). Following its review of the report, the board concludes:

1. _____ Based upon the information provided, the board finds that the superintendent has reasonably interpreted the provisions of the relevant guidance, and the district is making reasonable progress toward achieving the desired results called for in the relevant guidance. The board commends the superintendent for exemplary performance in the following areas:

2. _____ Based upon the information provided, the board finds that the district is making some progress toward achieving the desired results called for in the relevant guidance, but a greater degree of progress is expected in the following specific areas:

3. _____ Based upon the information provided, the board finds that the superintendent has failed to provide evidence of reasonable organizational progress toward achieving the desired results called for in the relevant guidance. Accordingly, the board determines the following action to be appropriate:

4. _____ The information provided by the superintendent is insufficient for the board to decide whether reasonable progress has been made. Accordingly, the board determines the following action to be appropriate:

Signed: _____, Chair

Date: _____

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Signed: _____, Superintendent

Date: _____

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APPENDIX E – Monitoring Response

Date Report Submitted: _____

Area Monitored: _____

The board on the date shown above received and reviewed the official internal monitoring report of its guidance _____ submitted by the superintendent. Following its review of the report, the board concludes:

1. With respect to the provisions of its guidance, _____ the board of _____ concludes that the superintendent’s performance during the previous year has been:
 - a. _____ In compliance
 - b. _____ In compliance, with the following exceptions
 - c. _____ Not in compliance
2. Additional Comments

EXAMPLE ONLY

Signed: _____, Chair

Date: _____

Signed: _____, Superintendent

Date: _____

