

# BEST PRACTICES IN SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION

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In the following report, Hanover Research describes best practices for evaluating school district superintendents, and provides an overview of three superintendent evaluation models that frame the development and implementation of superintendent evaluations.



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

## INTRODUCTION

In this report, Hanover Research describes best practices for evaluating school district superintendents and provides an overview of three different models to guide the implementation of superintendent evaluations. This report includes the following sections:

- **Section I** describes best practices in superintendent evaluations, organized around the development of performance standards, selection or development of evaluation instruments, and the implementation of evaluations.
- **Section II** summarizes three models for conducting superintendent evaluations, including the theoretical background and elements of each model.

## KEY FINDINGS

- **Developing performance goals in a collaborative process that includes both school boards and the superintendent can improve the evaluation process.** Collaborative goal development can help boards and superintendents to reach greater consensus on performance criteria and objectivity in evaluations.
- **School districts also incorporate 360-degree evaluations into their superintendent evaluation process, which represents another area for collaboration.** By soliciting feedback on the superintendent's performance from all stakeholder groups in the district, 360-degree evaluations produce a more comprehensive assessment of superintendent leadership than competency-based evaluations alone.
- **Evaluation instruments often combine multiple measures of a superintendent effectiveness.** Specific data sources may include observations, stakeholder surveys, or performance data. Multiple data sources facilitate thorough and fair evaluations and can make it easier for superintendents to act on feedback.
- **Spreading the evaluation process over the course of the year provides superintendents with continuous feedback upon which they can act.** Formative assessments carried out periodically throughout the school year enable the superintendent to update the board on progress toward the performance goals. This also enables the board to suggest mid-stream adjustments or strategies to reach performance goals. In the Policy Governance Model of evaluation, superintendents provide the school board with monitoring reports multiple times per year.
- **School districts may also consider leadership practices that support student achievement as part of superintendents' performance goals.** For instance, the following five leadership practices have been correlated with increased student achievement: collaborative goal-setting, non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction, board alignment with and support of district goals, monitoring achievement and instruction goals, and the use of resources to support the goals for instruction and achievement.

## SECTION I: BEST PRACTICES FOR EVALUATING SUPERINTENDENTS

In this section, Hanover Research describes best practices pertaining to superintendent evaluations, particularly with regard to developing performance standards, selecting or developing evaluation instruments, and conducting evaluations. This section relies on sources used in previous Hanover Research reports, as well more recently published literature.

### DEVELOPING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Effective performance evaluations inform the superintendent of the school board's expectations, identify strengths and areas for growth, and provide specific suggestions for improvement when needed.<sup>1</sup> However, superintendent evaluations can reflect subjective criteria or checklists that are not discussed with the superintendent in advance. This may leave superintendents with feedback that they do not understand or cannot use to drive future growth.<sup>2</sup> To ensure that performance goals are actionable and clear to the superintendent, Kristen K. School, the superintendent of Mendota Elementary School District 289 in Illinois, recommends that school boards:<sup>3</sup>

- Ensure that goals are clearly defined and measurable before they are approved;
- Determine who has responsibility for prioritizing goals and communicate with all board members regarding progress;
- Assess factors outside the superintendent's control which may affect progress towards goals, such as local political issues;
- Determine what evaluation instrument will be used and the feedback you need from the board; and
- Clearly define the timeline and process for the evaluation.

Collaboration is also key to developing effective performance standards. In a 2010 white paper for the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), Michael DiPaola, a professor of education at the College of William & Mary and former district superintendent, suggests that school boards and administrators collaboratively design specific performance goals and translate these goals into specific job responsibilities and performance indicators.<sup>4</sup> A 2006 survey of school district superintendents conducted by the AASA found that only 55

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<sup>1</sup> Kowalski, T.J. et al. *The American School Superintendent: 2010 Decennial Study*, (R&L Education, 2011). pp. 76–77. Accessed via Google Books:

[http://books.google.com/books?id=0epylQJEN4gC&pg=PA65&source=gbs\\_toc\\_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=0epylQJEN4gC&pg=PA65&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false)

<sup>2</sup> "A Case for Improving Superintendent Evaluation." National School Boards Association, July 2014. pp. 1-2.

<http://www.nsba.org/sites/default/files/reports/Improve-Superintendent-Evaluation.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Bulleted text adapted from: School, K.K. and M.K. McGoodwin. "When Superintendent Evaluation Is Lacking." *The School Administrator*, 68:11, December 2011. <http://www.wold.aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=21152>

<sup>4</sup> DiPaola, M.F. "Evaluating the Superintendent." American Association of School Administrators, 2010. pp. 7–8. [http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Resources/AASA\\_White\\_Paper\\_on\\_Superintendent\\_Evaluation.pdf](http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Resources/AASA_White_Paper_on_Superintendent_Evaluation.pdf)

percent of respondents indicated that their evaluation criteria had been agreed on in advance by both the board and the superintendent.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, according to Paul Vranish, superintendent of the Tornillo Independent School District in Texas, collaboratively developing performance goals that reference specific outcomes builds consensus around evaluation criteria and makes it easier for boards and superintendents to agree on what meeting performance goals looks like in practice. More specifically, Vranish suggests that evaluation indicators be described in a way that helps the superintendent understand what “good” performance looks like and that indicators should be worded (e.g., “above expectation”, “meets expectations”, “below expectations”) rather than numbered. Wording indicators rather than numbering them helps avoid disagreement over what type of performance equates to a particular score.<sup>6</sup>

DiPaola also provides examples of performance domains for superintendents used in 11 states. These domains are listed in Appendix A of this report and include areas such as communication skills, relationships with personnel and staff, and fiscal leadership, among others.<sup>7</sup> Most states maintain between three and 11 performance domains. However, most domains align to some extent with the AASA’s professional standards for school superintendents, described in Figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1: Superintendent Standards, American Association of School Administrators**

STANDARD	KEY DESCRIPTORS
Standard 1: Leadership and District Culture	Vision, academic rigor, excellence, empowerment, problem-solving
Standard 2: Policy and Governance	Policy formulation, democratic processes, regulations
Standard 3: Communications and Community Relations	Internal and external communications, community support, consensus-building
Standard 4: Organizational Management	Data-driven decision making, problem solving, operations management and reporting
Standard 5: Curriculum Planning and Development	Curriculum planning, instructional design, human growth and development
Standard 6: Instructional Management	Student achievement, classroom management, instructional technology
Standard 7: Human Resources Management	Personnel induction, development, evaluation, compensation, organizational health
Standard 8: Values and Ethics of Leadership	Multicultural and ethnic understanding, personal integrity and ethics

Source: American Association of School Administrators<sup>8</sup>

In addition to state-mandated performance standards, outside groups independently develop performance standards reflecting research on effective leadership practices. For example, the ECRA Group, a consulting firm that assists school districts in their quality improvement efforts, examined several evaluation standards for superintendents. Its review

<sup>5</sup> Glass, T.E. “Superintendent Evaluation: What AASA’s Study Discovered.” *School Administrator*, 64:6, June 2007. <http://www.aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=6674>

<sup>6</sup> Vranish, P.L. “Making Superintendent Evaluation Fun?” *School Administrator*, 68:11, December 2011. <http://aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=21138>

<sup>7</sup> DiPaola, Op. cit., pp. 12–13.

<sup>8</sup> Chart taken directly from: Ibid., p. 11.

included the AASA’s Superintendent Standards, leadership standards developed by Robert Marzano, an educational researcher and published author on superintendent leadership, and additional research on effective superintendent practices. From this research, the ECRA Group derived the performance standards listed in Figure 1.2.

**Figure 1.2: ECRA Group Standards for Effective Superintendents**

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION
Vision and Values	Items in this category measure the district leader’s commitment to excellence; the alignment of district programs to the broader mission, vision, and philosophy of the district; and the promotion and upholding high expectations for all stakeholders, including his/her own professional behavior.
Core Knowledge Competencies	Items in this category measure the district leader’s subject matter expertise in the various instructional, managerial, legal, financial, and personnel issues superintendents must face and respond to every day.
Instructional Leadership	Items in this category measure the district leader’s ability to plan, implement, and evaluate the efficacy of the school or district’s instructional and assessment programming, as well as to use that data and other sources of external research to inform district improvement practices.
Community and Relationships	Items in this category measure the district leader’s ability to involve stakeholders, particularly school personnel and the school board, in realizing the district’s vision and improving student performance.
Management	Items in this category measure the district leader’s effectiveness in aligning district systems and operations (e.g., budgeting, compliance) and organizational performance to the goals and values of the district.

Source: ECRA Group<sup>9</sup>

School districts can incorporate or tailor these ECRA Group performance domains into specific performance goals for superintendents. The optimum number of performance goals is not fixed, but Sandy Gundlach, director of management services for the Minnesota School Boards Association, recommends that districts set a maximum of five performance goals for a given year.<sup>10</sup>

### SUPERINTENDENT PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Increasingly, performance standards for superintendents focus on instructional leadership and student achievement.<sup>11</sup> However, DiPaola warns against relying directly on student achievement measures to evaluate superintendents. Because superintendents have an indirect impact on student achievement, fair superintendent evaluations examine the underlying practices that support student achievement rather than student achievement

<sup>9</sup> Chart contents taken directly from: “Effective Superintendents: ECRA Literature Review.” ECRA Group, 2010. p. 5. <http://resources.aasa.org/ConferenceDaily/handouts2011/3000-1.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Gundlach, S. “Developing a Fair and Effective Superintendent Evaluation.” *Minnesota School Boards Association Journal*, February 2008. p. 19. [http://216.114.200.148/Public/MSBA\\_Docs/DevelSuptEval.pdf?CFID=5039905&CFTOKEN=69838054](http://216.114.200.148/Public/MSBA_Docs/DevelSuptEval.pdf?CFID=5039905&CFTOKEN=69838054)

<sup>11</sup> Moffett, J. “Perceptions of School Superintendents and Board Presidents on Improved Pupil Performance and Superintendent Evaluation.” *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 6:1, January 2011. p. 3. <http://eric.ed.gov/?q=superintendent+evaluation&pg=2&id=EJ972904>

itself. However, it may be appropriate to measure changes in student performance over time in order to identify potential changes needed in instructional practices.<sup>12</sup>

Research on specific superintendent activities and behaviors that contribute to student achievement is limited, but can nonetheless inform the development of related performance standards.<sup>13</sup> For example, a 1999 article in the journal *Education Policy Analysis Archives* examined the leadership characteristics of five superintendents in high-performing California school districts through a series of in-depth interviews. Respondents identified the following attributes that contributed to their effective leadership:<sup>14</sup>

- **Vision:** Respondents indicated that the establishment of a clear vision for the district was crucial to instructional success. In addition, respondents indicated taking personal responsibility as the superintendent for setting a district vision and integrating this vision throughout the district.
- **Risk-Taking:** Respondents indicated that superintendents must be willing to take risks to drive instructional improvement. Several reported expanding or eliminating programs or removing popular but ineffective personnel, even if these actions would risk losing support from the school board.
- **High Visibility:** Respondents reported frequently visiting individual schools to demonstrate support for teachers, monitor classroom instruction, and develop a first-hand understanding of what was happening in individual schools. In addition, personal visits to schools allowed superintendents to reinforce district goals through conversations with individual teachers and principals.
- **Modeling:** Respondents reported using their position to set personal examples of valued behavior. Specific examples of opportunities to model included meetings with staff, teachers, and parents; meeting agendas; professional development activities; and the allocation of resources.
- **Cheerleading:** Respondents reported using their position to publicly recognize schools, programs, and individuals that embodied the mission and goals of the district.

In addition to the general leadership attributes identified in the *Education Policy Analysis Archives* article, the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning 2006 meta-analysis of research identifies five specific leadership responsibilities that have a statistically significant correlation to student achievement:<sup>15</sup>

- **Collaborative Goal-Setting:** Superintendents should develop a collaborative goal-setting process that includes all relevant stakeholders, particularly building-level

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<sup>12</sup> DiPaola, Op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>13</sup> "Finding the Right Fit." Education Writers Association, 2003. p. 5. <http://ewa.convio.net/docs/leadership.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Bulleted text adapted from: Petersen, G.J. "Demonstrated Actions of Instructional Leaders: An Examination of Five California Superintendents." *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 7:18, 1999. pp. 6–8. [http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/gse\\_fac/4/](http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/gse_fac/4/)

<sup>15</sup> Bulleted text adapted from: Waters, T.J. and R.J. Marzano. "School District Leadership That Works: The Effect of Superintendent Leadership on Student Achievement. A Working Paper." Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), 2006. pp. 11-13. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED494270>

administrators. While this process does not require all stakeholders to agree on the goals set, all stakeholders should agree to support the attainment of those goals once an acceptable level of consensus has been reached.

- **Non-Negotiable Goals for Achievement and Instruction:** The goal-setting process should develop non-negotiable goals in at least two areas: student achievement and classroom instruction. These goals, should include specific achievement targets for the district, individual schools, and subgroups of students. Each school should create an action plan to reach its goals, including a broad framework for classroom instruction, common instructional language or vocabulary, and consistent use of research-based instructional strategies in each school.
- **Board Alignment With and Support of District Goals:** In districts with higher levels of student achievement, the school board publicly supports achievement goals set by the superintendent in collaboration with stakeholders. The board also works to prevent other initiatives from taking attention or resources away from the district's achievement goals.
- **Monitoring Achievement and Instruction Goals:** Superintendents should continually monitor district progress toward achievement and instructional goals. Individual schools should use these goals as their primary performance indicators and adjust instructional practices as needed to meet goals.
- **Use of Resources to Support the Goals for Instruction and Achievement:** Superintendents should ensure that schools have the necessary resources, including professional development for teachers and principals, to accomplish the district's goals. Districts may need to prioritize achievement and instructional goals over additional initiatives that are not aligned with these goals.

Finally, other important improvement strategies or leadership attributes can be identified by direct conversations with stakeholders. For example, in a 2006 *Phi Delta Kappan* article, Gary Schomburg, the superintendent of Miamisburg Schools in Ohio, describes teachers' concerns in regard to the district's observation protocol and his limited visibility in schools. In response to those teachers' concerns, Dr. Schomburg and other administrators began visiting classrooms outside the formal observation process.<sup>16</sup> Responding to direct feedback can inform the identification and development of new strategies and related performance standards. This type of feedback can be elicited through the 360-degree evaluation method described in Section II of this report.

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<sup>16</sup> Schomburg, G. "Superintendent in the Classroom." *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 87:7, March 1, 2006. pp. 546–550. Accessed via Jstor



## EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Once districts have identified appropriate and relevant performance goals, they should develop or identify evaluation instruments that allow the school board to accurately measure the superintendent's progress towards these goals. Evaluation results should also be clearly communicated to the superintendent. Evaluation instruments typically consist of some combination of checklists and rating forms, essays and written summaries, analyses of objectives, and analyses of outcomes or goals.<sup>17</sup>

A 1999 book on leadership assessments, *Measuring Leadership: A Guide to Assessment for Development of School Executives*, suggests that school districts move away from informal appraisals of superintendent performance and towards formal instruments in which "leadership is assessed through systematic data in numerical form." Formal evaluations have four major advantages:<sup>18</sup>

- **Objectivity:** Objective assessments are applied in the same way to everyone. In contrast, informal evaluations are often idiosyncratic and do not reflect the same questions across evaluations.
- **Validity:** Valid instruments ensure that the criteria being used for evaluation reflect the quality being assessed. Responses on individual instruments can often be matched to performance over time, allowing users to predict future success on the job.
- **Precision:** Precision allows evaluators to make fine distinctions regarding performance, rather than the broad generalizations found in informal evaluations. This allows leaders to compare themselves with a large reference group and to identify unique strengths to develop.
- **Scope:** Formal evaluations generally include a wider range of leadership qualities than would be possible to evaluate informally. In addition, because each performance standard is measured by multiple questions or indicators, a single response is less likely to dominate an evaluation than in informal unstructured interviews.

According to DiPaola, school boards and superintendents should collaboratively determine a process for documenting and evaluating performance that relies on tangible and objective performance data. DiPaola further recommends that evaluation instruments collect data from "multiple sources of broad-based information" that accurately reflect the superintendent's responsibilities and provide the highest-quality data available. Combining data from multiple sources provides the school board with a fuller understanding of the superintendent's performance, resulting in a more thorough and actionable evaluation.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Gundlach, Op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> Bulleted text adapted from: Lashway, L. "Measuring Leadership: A Guide to Assessment for Development of School Executives." ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, January 1999. pp. 9–10.  
<http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED431209>

<sup>19</sup> DiPaola, Op. cit., pp. 8, 15–16.

## SELECTING EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

School districts can select from a variety of publicly available or proprietary evaluation instruments for superintendents. For example, the Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE) at Iowa State University contracts with school districts to provide a 360-degree evaluation (an evaluation model that will be discussed in Section II) to teachers, administrators, and other school district staff.<sup>20</sup>

In selecting an appropriate evaluation instrument, the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) provides standards on personnel evaluation, which can be applied to district superintendents.<sup>21</sup> These standards are presented in detail in Appendix B of this report, and support the development of a fair, accurate, and useful evaluation instrument.<sup>22</sup> DiPaola outlines the following requirements for evaluation instruments to meet the JCSEE standards:<sup>23</sup>

- The instrument must include a statement of purpose;
- The instrument must include clear performance criteria;
- Standards of performance must be defined by a rating scale; and
- The instrument must include specific performance measures used to collect performance data and a method to summarize this data.

Effective evaluation instruments specify performance standards within broad performance domains and provide a specific set of indicators for each standard. While some school districts incorporate tests of leadership traits or behaviors in superintendent evaluation, instruments which measure actual performance are a fairer and more effective means of evaluation than tests which measure traits or skills. Still, trait and behavioral tests may still serve to promote improvement through self-reflection.<sup>24</sup> In addition, DiPaola recommends that school boards avoid adopting evaluation instruments consisting of checklists of generic job duties. Instead, DiPaola suggests that boards look for evaluation instruments that assess a specific set of tasks or actions relating to each performance standard. Focusing on specific performance standards allow the school board to conduct a more objective evaluation with specific suggestions for improvement.<sup>25</sup>

## DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

As an alternative to selecting an evaluation instrument developed by a third party, school districts can develop their own instruments that reflect individual district needs and priorities. Fitzgerald Public Schools, located in Warren, MI, provides an example of a district

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<sup>20</sup> "360° Feedback." Research Institute for Studies in Education. <http://www.rise.hs.iastate.edu/360.php>

<sup>21</sup> DiPaola, Op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Bulleted text adapted from: Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> Lashway, Op. cit., pp. 24–27, 46.

<sup>25</sup> DiPaola, Op. cit., p. 21.

that successfully implemented a new superintendent evaluation instrument. Fitzgerald Public Schools' development of a comprehensive superintendent evaluation was featured in a 2011 article in the journal *School Administrator* by Thomas Owczarek, a member of the district's school board.

Fitzgerald Public Schools decided to reform its superintendent evaluation in 2004 after determining that the existing evaluation "focused more on the superintendent's social standing with staff and community than on education,"<sup>26</sup> and failed to incorporate student achievement. A temporary committee of three board members examined previous evaluations, research on superintendent evaluation, and identified issues important to themselves, the district, and the larger community. The committee then developed 48 indicators for the performance evaluation, grouped into the following seven performance standards:<sup>27</sup>

- Vision
- Technology/
- Culture
- Management
- Community/Organizational Needs
- Integrity/Policies/Laws/Regulations
- Board Relations

These performance standards reflect many of those described earlier in this report, including vision, management, and relationships. The Fitzgerald Public Schools also engages in a collaborative process to establish evaluation criteria as the school board and superintendent agree on specific evaluation criteria each year. Two weeks before the beginning of the evaluation process, the superintendent provides the board with a self-assessment describing his or her accomplishments over the past year, the status of district and personal performance goals, and progress towards community and staff-related objectives. The self-assessment serves to remind the board of issues raised over the previous year and provides the superintendent with an opportunity to discuss his or her own perceived progress towards the established performance goals. Board members independently rate each indicator using the scale described in Figure 1.3., on the next page. These ratings are then anonymized and color-coded to help identify agreement between raters. When board members disagree on ratings, they discuss the reasons for the disparities and whether it is necessary to participate in specialized training or workshops to better understand a particular area.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Owczarek, T. "Revamping Our Evaluation." *School Administrator*, 68:11, December 2011.  
<http://www.aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=21158>

<sup>27</sup> Bulleted text taken verbatim from: Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 1.3: Fitzgerald Public Schools Superintendent Rating Scale**

RATING	DESCRIPTION
1 — Unsatisfactory	There is no evidence that the district vision and mission are being used.
2 — Progressing	Is aware of the district vision and mission.
3 — Effective	Superintendent acts in accordance with the district vision and mission with focus on student achievement.
4 — Distinguished	Superintendent is strongly committed to supporting the district vision, mission and goals.

Source: *School Administrator*<sup>29</sup>

After the superintendent evaluation is finalized, the board meets with the superintendent to discuss the evaluation and review goals from the previous year. During this meeting, the board and the superintendent collaboratively develop forward performance goals and strategies for the coming year. Notably, the Fitzgerald Public Schools’ board is also reviewed by select administrators, staff, and itself (self-evaluation.) Like the superintendent’s evaluation, the board’s evaluation informs areas and strategies for improvement over the next year.<sup>30</sup>

## CONDUCTING EVALUATIONS

For an evaluation program to be effective, **superintendents should know what they will be evaluated on in advance, and the evaluation should reflect the superintendent’s performance goals.** According to Kristen K. School, superintendent of Mendota Elementary School District 289 in Illinois, evaluations that do not reflect performance goals for the school year may be difficult for superintendents to act upon. Kirsten School describes an evaluation in which she was given a list of areas for improvement that did not reflect her performance goals and were never discussed with her before the evaluation. As a result, she faced the challenge of working toward already-established goals and a new set of concerns expressed by board members.<sup>31</sup>

To ensure that the evaluation process is understood by all stakeholders involved, DiPaola recommends that boards develop a comprehensive evaluation policy that includes regulations and procedures for all performance evaluations. **This policy should include details of the evaluation process for each position, who is responsible for conducting evaluations, and the evaluation timeline.** School boards should assess evaluation timelines to ensure that evaluation processes require a feasible time commitment.<sup>32</sup>

According to Chuck Namit, the developer of the Stratagem performance evaluation method discussed in Section II of this report, boards need to state expectations for superintendent

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> School and McGoodwin, Op. cit.

<sup>32</sup> DiPaola, Op. cit., p. 19.

performance and determine how they will be measured for an evaluation process to function effectively. Namit suggests that school boards:<sup>33</sup>

- Develop the superintendent evaluation policy and procedure;
- Develop the superintendent evaluation instrument;
- Discuss and determine the school board goals and school district goals;
- Develop school district priorities;
- Define the criteria for the measurement of the goals;
- Require the superintendent to develop a work plan to accomplish the goals;
- Set the timing for an interim (midyear) and final evaluation;
- Determine the documents needed to conduct the evaluation; and
- Take steps to tie the evaluation of the superintendent to the district's contractual obligation to the superintendent.

School boards often conduct two to three progress meetings over the course of the school year, allowing the superintendent to update the board on progress and the board to suggest changes to help the superintendent reach the goals. According to Gundlach, these meetings prevent surprises from emerging during performance reviews, and ensure that superintendents are moving towards performance goals.<sup>34</sup> However, in a 2010 survey of district superintendents, only 13 percent of respondents reported receiving more than one evaluation each year.<sup>35</sup> School districts that only evaluate superintendents once per year may wish to increase the number of formative evaluations in the evaluation cycle.

In addition to conducting multiple formative evaluations, school boards may wish to consider conducting summative evaluations and determining whether to renew a superintendent's employment contract at separate meetings. According to Vranish, this practice will make the summative evaluation less stressful for the superintendent, reducing the superintendent's emotional reaction to feedback and making it easier for the superintendent to act on this feedback.<sup>36</sup>

Namit suggests that board members review the following materials before conducting a summative evaluation:<sup>37</sup>

- **Evaluation Instrument:** Each board member should fill out the evaluation instrument independently. The board chair or president summarizes individual evaluations and distributes this summary to each board member.

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<sup>33</sup> Bulleted text taken verbatim from: Namit, C. "Superintendent Evaluation Tool Box." *District Administration*, 44:12, 2008. <http://www.districtadministration.com/article/superintendent-evaluation-tool-box>

<sup>34</sup> Gundlach, Op. cit., pp. 19–20.

<sup>35</sup> Kowalski et al., Op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>36</sup> Vranish, Op. cit.

<sup>37</sup> Bulleted text adapted from: Namit, "Superintendent Evaluation Tool Box," Op. cit.

- **District Goals and Priorities:** The board chair or president should distribute all written documents outlining district performance goals and priorities to board members.
- **Superintendent Employment Contract:** This will be used to consider the superintendent's employment status during the evaluation.
- **Superintendent Evaluation Policy and Procedures:** The board will use this to ensure that relevant policies are followed during the evaluation.
- **Other Relevant Documents:** The board may need to review additional documents as needed.

When the evaluation is completed, the board and superintendent should discuss the superintendent's performance related to each goal. Additionally, Gundlach suggests that boards identify goals and priorities for the next school year and complete a self-evaluation before beginning the next evaluation cycle. Self-evaluations allow boards to reflect on best practice and identify strengths and areas for improvement.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Gundlach, Op. cit., p. 20.

## SECTION II: SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION MODELS

In this section, Hanover Research discusses three models for superintendent evaluations:

- **The Policy Governance Model** is a comprehensive framework for non-profit and school board governance that emphasizes the CEO or superintendent's accountability to the board for the performance of the organization. Evaluation is an ongoing process in which the superintendent submits 20 to 30 monitoring reports to the board over the course of a year.
- **Stratagem** provides an evaluation framework designed specifically for school districts. In addition to evaluating the superintendent, Stratagem includes a self-evaluation of the school board's governance processes.
- **360-Degree Evaluation** is a framework in which the school board solicits feedback on the superintendent's performance from a variety of stakeholders through stakeholder surveys.

This section includes a description of the theoretical background of each model and the elements included in each model's superintendent evaluation. Where available, this section also includes research indicating the effectiveness of each model and examples of individual school districts that have adopted each model.

### THE POLICY GOVERNANCE MODEL

The Policy Governance Model, developed by John and Miriam Carver, experts in board governance, reflects the assertion that "the board exists (usually on someone else's behalf) to be accountable that its organization works. The board is where all authority resides until some is given away (delegated) to others."<sup>39</sup> In the Carver Policy Governance Model, effective boards delegate to a single chief executive (CEO) who is accountable to the board for the performance of the organization. The board in turn is accountable to outside stakeholders (the electorate in the case of public school boards) for the success of the organization.<sup>40</sup>

This model reflects a division of roles common in corporate governance, giving the school board responsibility for overall policy and district goals, referred to as "ends", and the superintendent responsibility for the methods by which these goals are to be reached, referred to as "means". Policy Governance eliminates the practice of "double delegation," wherein authority is split between the CEO or superintendent and board committees.

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<sup>39</sup> Carver, J. and M. Carver. "Carver's Policy Governance Model in Nonprofit Organizations." The Policy Governance Model. <http://www.carvergovernance.com/pg-np.htm>

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

Instead, the CEO serves as the single point of accountability to the board.<sup>41</sup> The Policy Governance Model rests on the 10 principles outlined in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1: Principles of Policy Governance**

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION
Ownership	The board exists to act as the informed voice and agent of the owners, whether they are owners in a legal or moral sense. All owners are stakeholders, but not all stakeholders are owners, only those whose position in relation to an organization is equivalent to the position of shareholders in a for-profit-corporation.
Position of Board	The board is accountable to owners that the organization is successful. As such it is not advisory to staff but an active link in the chain of command. All authority in the staff organization and in components of the board flows from the board.
Board Holism	The authority of the board is held and used as a body. The board speaks with one voice in that instructions are expressed by the board as a whole. Individual board members have no authority to instruct staff.
Ends Policies	The board defines in writing its expectations about the intended effects to be produced, the intended recipients of those effects, and the intended worth (cost-benefit or priority) of the effects. These are Ends policies. All decisions made about effects, recipients, and worth are Ends decisions. All decisions about issues that do not fit the definition of Ends are means decisions. Hence in Policy Governance, means are simply not Ends.
Board Means Policies	The board defines in writing the job results, practices, delegation style, and discipline that make up its own job. These are board means decisions, categorized as Governance Process policies and Board- Management Delegation policies.
Executive Limitations Policies	The board defines in writing its expectations about the means of the operational organization. However, rather than prescribing board-chosen means -- which would enable the CEO to escape accountability for attaining Ends, these policies define limits on operational means, thereby placing boundaries on the authority granted to the CEO. In effect, the board describes those means that would be unacceptable even if they were to work. These are Executive Limitations policies.
Policy Sizes	The board decides its policies in each category first at the broadest, most inclusive level. It further defines each policy in descending levels of detail until reaching the level of detail at which it is willing to accept any reasonable interpretation by the applicable delegatee of its words thus far. Ends, Executive Limitations, Governance Process, and Board-Management Delegation policies are exhaustive in that they establish control over the entire organization, both board and staff. They replace, at the board level, more traditional documents such as mission statements, strategic plans and budgets.
Clarity and Coherence of Delegation	The identification of any delegatee must be unambiguous as to authority and responsibility. No subparts of the board, such as committees or officers, can be given jobs that interfere with, duplicate, or obscure the job given to the CEO.
Any Reasonable Interpretation	More detailed decisions about Ends and operational means are delegated to the CEO if there is one. If there is no CEO, the board must delegate to two or more delegates, avoiding overlapping expectations or causing confusion about the authority of various managers. In the case of board means, delegation is to the CGO unless part of the delegation is explicitly directed elsewhere, for example, to a committee. The delegatee has the right to use any reasonable interpretation of the applicable board policies.
Monitoring	The board must monitor organizational performance against previously stated Ends policies and Executive Limitations policies. Monitoring is for the purpose of discovering if the organization achieved a reasonable interpretation of these board policies. The board must therefore judge the CEO's interpretation for its reasonableness, and the data demonstrating the accomplishment of the interpretation. The ongoing monitoring of board's Ends and Executive Limitations policies constitutes the CEO's performance evaluation.

Source: International Policy Governance Association<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> "The Policy Governance Model - an Overview." Policy Governance. <http://www.carvergovernance.com/model.htm>

<sup>42</sup> Chart contents taken directly from: "Principles of Policy Governance." International Policy Governance Association. <http://www.policygovernanceassociation.org/resources/principles-of-policy-governance.html>



Policy Governance differs from management-focused models of board governance in which boards take a direct role in determining means. According to John Carver, many boards are either unnecessarily intrusive in management decisions or deferential to management.<sup>43</sup> However, the Policy Governance Model focuses the board's role on specific policies, which define the values of the board and superintendent. School boards using the Policy Governance Model typically adopt between 30 and 40 policies grouped into the following categories:<sup>44</sup>

- **Governance process policies**, which delineate ways in which the board will govern.
- **Board-superintendent policies**, which delineate the relationship between the school board members and the superintendent.
- **Executive limitation policies**, which set up boundaries for the superintendent and the means within which the superintendent will work toward achieving the district's ends policies.
- **Ends policies**, which consist of global policies outlining student outcomes and what districts are to achieve through performance goals.

Because the CEO's responsibility is to ensure that the organization fulfills its mission and goals, the board's evaluation of the CEO is the same as their evaluation of the performance of the organization.<sup>45</sup> Evaluation is an ongoing process, in which the superintendent provides 20 to 30 monitoring reports over the course of a year to update the board on the superintendent's implementation of board policies. School boards evaluate each monitoring report and assess the superintendent as in compliance, in compliance with specific exceptions, or in non-compliance.<sup>46</sup>

## CHALLENGES OF THE POLICY GOVERNANCE MODEL

Although the division of responsibilities between the superintendent and board within the Policy Governance Model is intended to clarify roles, some experts argue that school boards may be unwilling or unable to grant the superintendent the latitude envisioned by the Policy Governance model. According to a 2001 article in the journal *District Administration* by William Price, a former school district superintendent and professor of education, politically engaged school board members who see their public role as "engaging in a high-stakes form of local political activism"<sup>47</sup> on the appropriate use of taxpayer funds may desire a greater role in the day-to-day oversight of management and operations than that envisioned by the Policy Governance Model.

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<sup>43</sup> Carver, J. "Policy Governance in a Nutshell." Partners in Policy Governance.

<http://www.policygovernanceconsulting.com/the-carver-policy-governance-model/resources/articles-and-tools/38-policy-governance-in-a-nutshell-by-john-carver>

<sup>44</sup> Bulleted text adapted with minor alterations from: Namit, C. "Sharpening a District's Leadership Model." *District Administration*, 44:13, 2008. <http://www.districtadministration.com/article/sharpening-district%E2%80%99s-leadership-model>

<sup>45</sup> Carver and Carver, Op. cit.

<sup>46</sup> Namit, "Sharpening a District's Leadership Model," Op. cit.

<sup>47</sup> Price, W.J. "Policy Governance Revisited." *School Administrator*, 58:2. <http://www.aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=11194>

In addition, Price suggests that superintendents and boards may be able to tolerate a certain level of ambiguity regarding their respective roles. In working with a network of district superintendents around the Midwest, successful superintendents reported to Price that maintaining distinct roles for boards and superintendents was not always possible. These superintendents were more concerned with establishing responsibilities for board members and superintendents on a case-by-case basis, leading Price to suggest that school boards and superintendents work together to establish cooperative relationships and shared responsibility, rather than delineating distinct roles.<sup>48</sup>

## DISTRICT PROFILES

### CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Clark County School District (CCSD), located in Nevada, provides an example of a school district using the Policy Governance Model. The superintendent is evaluated on compliance with two ends policies and 11 executive limitations policies.<sup>49</sup> Each policy is evaluated in turn over a two year policy review schedule. The review process for an individual policy lasts up to four months, depending on whether review and revision of the policy are necessary.<sup>50</sup> Figure 2.2 shows the month in which the superintendent submits each respective monitoring report.

**Figure 2.2: Clark County School District Monitoring Report Schedule**

POLICY	MONTH MONITORING REPORT SUBMITTED
<b>Executive Limitations Policies</b>	
Global Executive Constraint	January
Commitment to Diversity	October
Treatment of Students and Their Families	August
Treatment of Staff	August
Financial Planning/Budgeting	November
Financial Condition and Activities	November
Emergency Superintendent Succession	March
Asset Protection	November
Compensation and Benefits	November
Communication and Support	February
Annual Report to the Public	February
<b>Ends Policies</b>	
Vision Statement	December
Student Achievement	December

Source: Clark County School District Board of Trustees<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> "Monitoring Superintendent Performance." Clark County School District Board of School Trustees, February 12, 2015. p. 3. [http://ccsd.net/trustees/pdf/governance/BSL-5\\_P.pdf](http://ccsd.net/trustees/pdf/governance/BSL-5_P.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> "Two Year Governance Policy Review Schedule." Clark County School District Board of School Trustees, February 24, 2011. [http://www.ccsd.net/trustees/pdf/governance/appendix/Board\\_Monitoring\\_Schedule.pdf](http://www.ccsd.net/trustees/pdf/governance/appendix/Board_Monitoring_Schedule.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> Chart adapted from: "Monitoring Superintendent Performance," Op. cit., p. 3.

The evaluation of compliance in CCSD may include an internal report by the superintendent, an external report by a third party selected by the board, or direct inspection by designated board members. The superintendent may be rated as one of the following:<sup>52</sup>

- **In Compliance** when a monitoring report shows evidence of the implementation of the majority of provisions for a policy;
- **In Compliance with Exceptions** if one or more provisions are not met;
- **Out of Compliance**, when a majority of the provisions have not been implemented; or
- **In Compliance with Commendation** when one or more provisions of the policy are met above and beyond the district’s goal.

If a monitoring report is rated as Out of Compliance, the board will respond based on the cause of non-compliance as shown in Figure 2.3.<sup>53</sup> If the board determines that a policy may be unclear, it begins a review and revision process that typically takes around four months.<sup>54</sup>

**Figure 2.3: Clark County School District Responses to Monitoring Reports Found to be Out of Compliance**

CAUSE	RESPONSE
Outside Factors	Require and accept a plan or timeline from the superintendent for compliance and add it to the policy.
Unclear Policy	Consider changes to the policy
Actions of the Superintendent	Ask the superintendent when he or she will be in compliance with the policy or take further action.

Source: Clark County School District<sup>55</sup>

CCSD conducts a formal summative evaluation in January. The evaluation instrument consists of each monitoring report and a summary of monitoring report ratings for the evaluation cycle. During the summative evaluation, the board discusses executive limitations and ends policies for the next evaluation cycle, and prepares a written evaluation document.<sup>56</sup> In addition to providing a summative assessment of performance, the evaluation provides an opportunity for dialogue about strengths and weaknesses, and a general evaluation of the district’s performance over the past year and focus for the next year.<sup>57</sup>

### UNIVERSITY PLACE SCHOOL DISTRICT

University Place School District, in Washington State, provides an additional example of a school district using the Policy Governance Model. According to Patricia Banks and Rick

<sup>52</sup> Bulleted text adapted from: Ibid., pp. 1–2.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> “Two Year Governance Policy Review Schedule,” Op. cit.

<sup>55</sup> Chart contents taken with minor alterations from: “Monitoring Superintendent Performance,” Op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> Namit, “Sharpening a District’s Leadership Model,” Op. cit.

Maloney, the respective superintendent and president of the board of directors of the district, enacting the Policy Governance Model has allowed the district to shift from an evaluation process focused primarily on the superintendent’s personality to an evaluation of the district itself.<sup>58</sup>

The superintendent’s evaluation focuses on two objectives: achievement of district goals described in the school board’s ends policies and avoidance of unacceptable means (i.e., operating outside of appropriate behavior).<sup>59</sup> The district maintains three ends policies and 17 executive limitations policies.<sup>60</sup> Figure 2.4 shows the assessment method and month of assessment for each policy.

**Figure 2.4: University Place School District Assessment Schedule**

POLICY	ASSESSMENT METHOD	MONTH OF ASSESSMENT
<b>Ends Policies</b>		
District Mission	Internal Report	May
Academic Competence	Internal Report	October
Contributing Citizens	Internal Report	March
Physical Health and Fitness	Internal Report	June
<b>Executive Limitations Policies</b>		
Expectations of Superintendent	Internal Report	August
Organizational Continuity	Internal Report	July
Treatment of Parents, Students, and the Public	Internal Report	August
Staff Treatment	Internal Report	August
Staff Compensation	Internal Report and Direct Inspection	April
Staff Evaluations	Internal Report	July
Budget Planning	Internal Report	August
Budget Execution	Internal Report	December
Facilities Program	Internal Report	September
Asset Protection	Internal Report	September
Communication and Counsel to the Board	Internal Report	December
Communication with the Public	Internal Report	May and December
Academic Program	Internal Report and Direct Inspection	November
Instructional Materials Selection	Internal Report	May
District Calendar	Internal Report	April
Student Conduct and Discipline	Internal Report	February
Mandatory Policies	Internal Report	October

Source: University Place School District<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Banks, P.A. and R.J. Maloney. “Changing the Subject of Your Evaluation.” *School Administrator*, 64:6, June 2007. <http://www.aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=6664>

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> “School Board / Policy Governance - Policies and Monitoring.” University Place School District. <http://www.upsd.wednet.edu/Page/31>

<sup>61</sup> Chart taken directly from: “Monitoring Superintendent Performance.” University Place School District, January 27, 2010. pp. 1–2. <http://www.upsd.wednet.edu/cms/lib07/WA01000687/Centricity/Domain/10/BSR-5.pdf>

University Place School District combines the evaluation for each policy into a final summative evaluation. The evaluation process for each policy consists of the following seven steps:<sup>62</sup>

- **Step 1:** The board develops its expectations and writes district ends and executive limitations policies to direct the superintendent. These policies are periodically revised to account for changing community expectations.
- **Step 2:** The board creates an annual agenda to monitor each policy. The board focuses on one or more specific policies each month.
- **Step 3:** The superintendent provides the board with monitoring reports for each policy. These reports include performance data demonstrating the accomplishment of district ends, and evidence showing that district means limitations have not been violated. In some cases, the board obtains additional data through external sources such as an auditor or through direct inspection.
- **Step 4:** The board determines whether reasonable progress has been made towards meeting its desired end results within desired means limitations. These board judgments are written and confirmed in a public vote.
- **Step 5:** The board completes a formal monitoring report for each policy and determines whether the policy should be clarified or adjusted. This begins the next year's monitoring cycle, in effect creating new expectations at the end of the year.
- **Step 6:** The board compiles each response to monitoring reports into a draft evaluation of the school district and the superintendent. To avoid surprises in the final evaluation, the board, the superintendent, and the general public have access to each response.
- **Step 7:** The board formally assigns its district evaluation to the superintendent at the end of the year, completing the annual evaluation cycle.

## STRATAGEM

The Stratagem evaluation system was developed by Chuck Namit, a school board member and former Assistant Executive Director for the Washington State School Directors' Association. In this capacity, Namit supervised training for school board members in governance, education reform, strategic planning, school change, continuous improvement, community engagement, collective bargaining, and online learning.<sup>63</sup> Namit himself received training in the Policy Governance Model. According to Namit, the Stratagem model "is unique in that many school board and school administrator associations...have developed assessment and evaluation instruments, but few have developed a comprehensive assessment and evaluation process."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Bulleted text adapted from: Banks and Maloney, Op. cit.

<sup>63</sup> "Chuck Namit." Windows to Leadership, LLC. [http://window2leadership.com/uploads/Chuck\\_Namit.pdf](http://window2leadership.com/uploads/Chuck_Namit.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> Namit, C. "Turning the Tables on Assessment." *District Administration*, 44:12, November 2008. <http://www.districtadministration.com/article/turning-tables-assessment>

The Stratagem framework includes a self-assessment in which the school board reviews its own governance process, and a superintendent evaluation, which considers the superintendent’s leadership style and accomplishments. Namit suggests that superintendent evaluations should clarify the relationship between the superintendent and the board, document the performance of the superintendent, indicate strengths and weaknesses, indicate whether the district’s performance goals have been met, direct the professional growth of the superintendent, and meet any applicable legal requirements.<sup>65</sup> Figure 2.5 summarizes Namit’s suggested elements for superintendent evaluations.

**Figure 2.5: Stratagem Evaluation System Model Elements of a Superintendent Evaluation**

ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Leadership and School District Culture	Develops a professional learning community through continuous improvement, team identity and high expectations
Policy Implementation and Governance as Part of the Leadership Team	Implements board policies while dealing with means issues
Communication and Community Relations	Proactively engages and learns the community's expectations for the public schools
Organization Management	Manages the day-to-day district operations
Financial Management	Stewards the district's finances
Curriculum Planning and Development	Systematically develops and implements curriculum to improve student learning
Instructional Leadership	Demonstrates role as the district's instructional leader
Human Resource Leadership	Develops and efficiently uses the district's human resources
Values and Ethical Leadership	Demonstrates ethical behavior in leading the school district
District Goals	Evaluates and implements the global, board and district-operational goals

Source: *District Administration*<sup>66</sup>

### EVALUATION TIMELINE

Namit suggests that the evaluation cycle begin in early July, after a new superintendent is hired. During this period, the board should develop an evaluation instrument and formal evaluation process, including evaluation procedures and timing. Over the course of the school year, the board should:<sup>67</sup>

- Review the district’s strategic plan;
- Establish performance goals for the superintendent;
- Define the limits of the superintendent’s authority;

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Chart contents taken directly from: Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Bulleted text taken with minor alterations from: Ibid.

- Establish the budget and set fiscal parameters; and
- Monitor the superintendent’s implementation of policies.

In January, the board conducts a mid-year evaluation, during which the superintendent briefs the board on progress towards meeting performance goals. The board then conducts a self-assessment process in March or April which examines board practices, goals, and its relationship with the superintendent. The board’s self-assessment also reviews district progress towards performance goals and begins to set goals for the next school year. The final evaluation meeting occurs in May or June. During this meeting, the board evaluates the superintendent’s performance based on the goals set at the beginning of the year, decides whether or not to renew the superintendent’s contract, and sets goals for the next year.<sup>68</sup>

### 360-DEGREE EVALUATIONS

The 360-degree evaluation system, also known as the multi-rater system, is commonly used in the private sector to provide managers and executives with feedback from multiple individuals, including peers, supervisors, co-workers, and clients. Typically, 360-degree evaluations survey different stakeholder groups and report average scores for each group, along with an overall score. This system provides more holistic feedback than competency-based evaluations, which tend to focus on technical skills or highly visible tasks rather than leadership capabilities.<sup>69</sup> In addition, feedback in a 360-degree evaluation process provides a fair and effective method for incorporating stakeholder feedback into the evaluation process.<sup>70</sup>

Although the 360-degree evaluation was designed for a business context, it has demonstrated some evidence of effectiveness within K-12 education. A 2010 article in the journal *Planning and Changing* evaluated the effectiveness of 360-degree evaluations among a sample of 27 teachers in a suburban New York State school district, which implemented the 360-degree evaluation developed by the Research Institute for Studies in Education at Iowa State University. Teachers were evaluated by parents, students, and randomly selected peers. A follow-up survey evaluated teachers’ assessments of the 360-degree evaluation and the district’s traditional evaluation process by asking them to rate their agreement with 14 statements along a four-point Likert scale. Respondents provided significantly higher ratings to the 360-degree evaluation for eight of the 14 statements, including those pertaining to teacher behaviors, student behaviors, student achievement, and the promotion of professional growth.<sup>71</sup> Likewise, a study of a Wyoming school district that implemented 360-degree evaluations found that student achievement, measured by

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Moore, B. “Improving the Evaluation and Feedback Process for Principals.” *Principal*, February 2009. p. 39. [https://www.naesp.org/resources/2/Principal/2009/J-F\\_p38.pdf](https://www.naesp.org/resources/2/Principal/2009/J-F_p38.pdf)

<sup>70</sup> DiPaola, Op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>71</sup> Mahar, J-A. and B. Strobot. “The Use of 360-Degree Feedback Compared to Traditional Evaluative Feedback for the Professional Growth of Teachers in K-12 Education.” *Planning and Changing*, 41:3/4, January 2010. pp. 149–154. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ952378>

standardized tests across multiple subjects, increased by an average of 15 percent over the five year period after 360-degree evaluations were implemented.<sup>72</sup>

### BEST PRACTICES IN 360-DEGREE EVALUATIONS

Effective 360-degree evaluations solicit feedback from all relevant stakeholders and provide valid and actionable feedback to the superintendent. The Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) suggests the following five step process for conducting 360-degree evaluations of district superintendents:<sup>73</sup>

- **Step 1:** Identify and define what goals will be evaluated and what questions will be asked. Surveys may include the following questions suggested by the OSBA:
  - Goal #\_\_ for the superintendent and district is (fill in goal). How has the superintendent done in leading the school district toward reaching this goal?
  - What is working well with regards to the superintendent's role in our district? Please list specific examples.
  - What areas offer room for improvement? Please list specific examples.
  - Has the superintendent effectively communicated with members of the community this year?
  - Are community expectations of the superintendent being met?<sup>74</sup>
- **Step 2:** Select a sample of evaluation respondents. This sample should include administrators, teachers, staff members, school board members, parents, and community members, and the number of respondents should be high enough to fairly represent each group.
- **Step 3:** Distribute the survey to the respondents with instructions and a date for return of the materials. Responses should be anonymous.
- **Step 4:** Analyze response data and create a final report. The school board will share this report with the superintendent.
- **Step 5:** Develop an action plan to improve on successes and address areas for improvement identified in the survey responses.

In a 2009 article for the magazine *Principal*, Bobby Moore, former middle school principal and district superintendent, recommends that school districts select 360-degree evaluation instruments based on their ability to provide information that can easily be interpreted and used to formulate a development plan. Moore also suggests that leaders work with a coach to create a personal development plan including target performance goals, and that development plans focus on areas where evaluation results reveal a discrepancy between stakeholder evaluations and the leader's self-evaluation.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Manatt, R.P. "Feedback from 360 Degrees: Client-Driven Evaluation of School Personnel." *School Administrator*, 1997. <http://www.aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=15598>

<sup>73</sup> Bulleted text adapted from: "Superintendent Evaluation Workbook: A Guide for School Boards." Oregon School Boards Association, September 2008. pp. 3-1 – 3-2. <http://www.mikemcmahon.info/SupeEvalOSBA.pdf>

<sup>74</sup> Sample questions taken verbatim from: *Ibid.*, p. 3-1.

<sup>75</sup> Moore, Op. cit., p. 40.



In addition, districts should ensure that survey data is reliable and valid, and reflects a fair assessment of the superintendent's performance. School boards should ensure that surveys are well-designed, properly administered, and accurately interpreted. DiPaola recommends that school boards use 360-degree evaluations surveys as one component in a comprehensive evaluation that includes additional data sources.<sup>76</sup> To ensure that 360-degree evaluation surveys are valid and reliable, Richard Manatt, director of the School Improvement Model Center at Iowa State University recommends that districts:<sup>77</sup>

- Design survey instruments collaboratively, including representatives from all stakeholder groups in the design process;
- Begin with high-level administrators such as the superintendent and members of the superintendent's cabinet before implementing 360-degree evaluations for classroom teachers;
- Pilot surveys before implementing them to ensure there are no issues with the survey procedures; and
- Avoid publicizing the 360-degree evaluations early on in the process, which may create fear of feedback among teachers and cause parents to fear retribution for critical comments.

A 2012 article in the magazine *Forbes* claims that 360-degree evaluations are often ineffective in the corporate sector because survey questions are overly vague or consist primarily of personality profiles, resulting in feedback that is personal or focused on weaknesses. An additional concern is that evaluations are not followed up with thorough development plans.<sup>78</sup> To combat these potential issues, A *Harvard Business Review* article published in response identifies the following best practices for conducting 360-degree evaluations in the corporate sector:<sup>79</sup>

- Measure leadership competencies determined by empirical research to improve performance;
- Explain the purpose of the evaluation and how the data will be used for development to participants;
- Ensure confidentiality of responses;
- Develop a survey instrument that can be completed in 15 to 20 minutes;
- Focus on discovering strengths rather than weaknesses;
- Tailor results to individuals and the needs of their positions;

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<sup>76</sup> DiPaola, Op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>77</sup> Bulleted text adapted from: Manatt, R.P. "Feedback at 360 Degrees." *School Administrator*, 2000. <http://www.aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=14530>

<sup>78</sup> Jackson, E. "The 7 Reasons Why 360 Degree Feedback Programs Fail." *Forbes*, August 17, 2012. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ericjackson/2012/08/17/the-7-reasons-why-360-degree-feedback-programs-fail/>

<sup>79</sup> Bulleted text adapted from: Zenger, J. and J. Folkman. "Getting 360 Degree Reviews Right." *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2012/09/getting-360-degree-reviews-right>

- Present results in a way that is easy for recipients to understand and use to create a development plan by presenting data in an easy to read graphical format;
- Design a final report that allows participants to compare their performance to the top quartile and top ten percent of participants; and
- Include an employee survey that allows managers to assess their relationship with subordinates.

# APPENDIX A: STATE SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION STANDARDS

Figure A.1 lists the performance domains included in each state evaluation standard. Although the number of standards or domains varies substantially from state to state, most states align their standards to some extent with the AASA’s superintendent standards.

**Figure A.1: Sample State Superintendent Standards**

STATE	PERFORMANCE DOMAINS
Alabama	Communication skills
	Collaboration process and skills
	Assessment/Measurement/Evaluation
	Organizing for results
	Planning
	Federal/State/Local laws and policies
	Problem solving
	Innovation
	Technology management
	School system management
	Fiscal leadership and management
	Management of professional responsibilities
	Leadership of human resources
California	Relationship with the board
	Administration of the school district
	Community relationships
	Staff and personnel relationships
	Educational leadership
	Business and finance
	Personal qualities
Iowa	<b>Standards</b>
	Shared vision
	Culture of learning
	Management
	Family and community
	Ethics
	Societal context
	<b>Characteristics (Standards for School Leaders)</b>
	Relationship with the board
	Administration of the school district
	Community relationship
	Staff and personnel relationships
	Educational leadership
	Business and finance
Personal qualities	

STATE	PERFORMANCE DOMAINS
Michigan	Relationship with the board
	Community relations
	Superintendent/staff relationships
	Business and finance
	Educational leadership
	Personal qualities
	Achievement of goals determined by board of education
Missouri	Leadership and district culture
	Policy and governance
	Communication and community relations
	Organizational management
	Curriculum planning development
	Instructional leadership
	Human resources and management
	Values and ethics of leadership
New York	Leadership and district culture
	Policy and governance
	Communications and community relations
	Organizational management
	Curriculum planning development
	Instructional leadership
	Human resource management
	Values and ethics of leadership
North Carolina	Assessing your educational context
	Surveying the larger context
	Addressing the barriers to learning
	Supporting personnel
	Resolving conflict
	Collaborating with families and community
Oregon	Leadership and district culture
	Policy and governance
	Communications and community relations
	Organizational management
	Curriculum planning
	Instructional leadership
	Human resources management
	Values and ethics of leadership
Texas	Educational leadership
	District management
	Board and community relations
Virginia	Planning and assessment
	Instructional leadership
	Safety and organizational management
	Communication and community relations
	Professionalism

STATE	PERFORMANCE DOMAINS
Vermont	Student learning
	Instruction
	Community relations
	Human resources
	Policy
	Finances
	Facilities
	Board relations
	Safety
	Communication
Ethics	

Source: American Association of School Administrators<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Chart contents taken with minor alterations from DiPaola, Op. cit., p. 13.

## APPENDIX B: JCSEE PERSONNEL EVALUATION STANDARDS

Figure B.1 presents the JCSEE Personnel Evaluation Standards. These standards can be used to evaluate evaluation instruments or models to ensure that the instruments and models provide a fair, accurate, and useful evaluation.

**Figure B.1: Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation Personnel Evaluation Standards**

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION
<b>Propriety Standards</b>	<b>The Propriety Standards are intended to ensure that a personnel evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of the evaluatee and those involved in the evaluation.</b>
P1 Service Orientation	Personnel evaluations should promote sound education, fulfillment of institutional missions, and effective performance of job responsibilities, so that the educational needs of students, community, and society are met.
P2 Appropriate Policies and Procedures	Guidelines for personnel evaluations should be recorded and provided to the evaluatee in policy statements, negotiated agreements, and/or personnel evaluation manuals, so that evaluations are consistent, equitable, and fair.
P3 Access to Evaluation Information	Access to evaluation information should be limited to persons with established legitimate permission to review and use the information, so that confidentiality is maintained and privacy protected.
P4 Interactions with Evaluatees	The evaluator should respect human dignity and act in a professional, considerate, and courteous manner, so that the evaluatee’s self-esteem, motivation, professional reputations, performance, and attitude toward personnel evaluation are enhanced or, at least, not needlessly damaged.
P5 Balanced Evaluation	Personnel evaluations should provide information that identifies both strengths and weaknesses, so that strengths can be built upon and weaknesses addressed.
P6 Conflict of Interest	Existing and potential conflicts of interest should be identified and dealt with openly and honestly, so that they do not compromise the evaluation process and results.
P7 Legal Viability	Personnel evaluations should meet the requirements of all federal, state, and local laws, as well as case law, contracts, collective bargaining agreements, affirmative action policies, and local board policies and regulations or institutional statutes or bylaws, so that evaluators can successfully conduct fair, efficient, and responsible personnel evaluations.
<b>Utility Standards</b>	<b>The Utility Standards are intended to guide evaluations so that they will be informative, timely, and influential.</b>
U1 Constructive Orientation	Personnel evaluations should be constructive, so that they not only help institutions develop human resources but encourage and assist those evaluated to provide excellent services in accordance with the institution’s mission statements and goals.
U2 Defined Uses	Both the users and intended uses of a personnel evaluation should be identified at the beginning of the evaluation so that the evaluation can address appropriate questions and issues.
U3 Evaluator Qualifications	The evaluation system should be developed, implemented, and managed by persons with the necessary qualifications, skills, training, and authority, so that evaluation reports are properly conducted, respected and used.
U4 Explicit Criteria	Evaluators should identify and justify the criteria used to interpret and judge evaluatee performance, so that the basis for interpretation and judgment provide a clear and defensible rationale for results.
U5 Functional Reporting	Reports should be clear, timely, accurate, and germane, so that they are of practical value to the evaluatee and other appropriate audiences.

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION
U6 Professional Development	Personnel evaluations should inform users and evaluatees of areas in need of professional development, so that all educational personnel can better address the institution’s missions and goals, fulfill their roles and responsibilities, and meet the needs of students.
<b>Feasibility Standards</b>	<b>The Feasibility Standards are intended to guide personnel evaluation systems so that they are as easy to implement as possible, efficient in their use of time and resources, adequately funded, and viable from a political standpoint</b>
F1 Practical Procedures	Personnel evaluation procedures should be practical, so that they produce the needed information in efficient, non-disruptive ways.
F2 Political Viability	Personnel evaluations should be planned and conducted with the anticipation of questions from evaluatees and others with a legitimate right to know, so that their questions can be addressed and their cooperation obtained.
F3 Fiscal Viability	Adequate time and resources should be provided for personnel evaluation activities, so that evaluation can be effectively implemented, the results fully communicated, and appropriate follow-up activities identified.
<b>Accuracy Standards</b>	<b>The accuracy standards determine whether an evaluation has produced sound information. Personnel evaluations must be technically adequate and as complete as possible to allow sound judgments and decisions to be made. The evaluation methodology should be appropriate for the purpose of the evaluation and the evaluatees being evaluated and the context in which they work.</b>
A1 Validity Orientation	The selection, development, and implementation of personnel evaluations should ensure that the interpretations made about the performance of the evaluatee are valid and not open to misinterpretation.
A2 Defined Expectations	The qualifications, role, and performance expectations of the evaluatee should be clearly defined, so that the evaluator can determine the evaluation data and information needed to ensure validity.
A3 Analysis of Context	Contextual variables that influence performance should be identified, described, and recorded, so that they can be considered when interpreting an evaluatee’s performance.
A4 Documented Purposes and Procedures	The evaluation purposes and procedures, both planned and actual, should be documented, so that they can be clearly explained and justified.
A5 Defensible Information	The information collected for personnel evaluations should be defensible, so that the information can be reliably and validly interpreted.
A6 Reliable Information	Personnel evaluation procedures should be chosen or developed and implemented to assure reliability, so that the information obtained will provide consistent indications of the evaluatee’s performance.
A7 Systematic Data Control	The information collected, processed, and reported about evaluatees should be systematically reviewed, corrected as appropriate, and kept secure, so that accurate judgments about the evaluatee’s performance can be made and appropriate levels of confidentiality maintained.
A8 Bias Identification and Management	Personnel evaluations should be free of bias, so that interpretations of the evaluatee’s qualifications or performance are valid.
A9 Analysis of Information	The information collected for personnel evaluations should be systematically and accurately analyzed, so that the purposes of the evaluation are effectively achieved.
A10 Justified Conclusions	The evaluative conclusions about the evaluatee’s performance should be explicitly justified, so that evaluatees and others with a legitimate right to know can have confidence in them.
A11 Metaevaluation	Personnel evaluation systems should be examined periodically using these and other appropriate standards, so that mistakes are prevented or detected and promptly corrected, and sound personnel evaluation practices are developed and maintained over time.

Source: Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation<sup>81</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Chart contents taken directly from: “Personnel Evaluation Standards.” Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. <http://www.jcsee.org/personnel-evaluation-standards>

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