

## **11/20/2022 – Board Minute: Evaluations**

Some of you may be familiar with evaluation practices and processes, while others have little experience. Board members are often asked questions about evaluations, and it can be helpful to understand the basics - what they are, their purpose, and what we aim achieve through them. There are two major functions of the valuation process: determining if performance is satisfactory and serving as a tool for growth and improvement. Although these two goals don't always complement each other, both are important. Let's delve into this further.

The legal purpose of evaluations us to serve as a tool to measure the performance of staff members. State and federal regulations mandate regular assessments to ensure that every member of the school team meets established standards. Typically conducted at least once a year (three a year for non-tenured teachers), evaluations serve as a means to document deficient areas requiring improvement. Failure to meet standards becomes a record of ongoing concern.

Notifying employee of deficiencies allows them time to address these concerns, especially if the evaluation highlights specific behaviors or needing improvement. Failure to meet standards becomes a record of ongoing concern.

If a performance issue persists or was serve enough to warrant immediate action, an employee is placed on an improvement plan. This plan identifies specifics behaviors to change, how the district will assist in improvement, and a timeline for change. Typically, an improvement plan includes multiple checkpoints and documented feedback. If no improvement occurs, it justifies termination, while improvement supports that the employee is addressing identified concerns. Legally, evaluation tools should clearly indicate when performance is unsatisfactory, often emphasizing specific numbers or satisfactory/unsatisfactory ratings.

Beyond its legal obligations, the evaluation process serves a professional purpose that is equally, if not more, crucial. Evaluations are not just about meeting minimum requirements but also fostering an environment that promotes continuous improvement and excellence.

The evaluation process is an opportunity for constructive feedback and encouragement. Staff members, with thoughtful evaluations, can identify areas for growth and development. It is essential to understand that evaluations are just assessments of the past but also roadmaps for the future. An excessive emphasis on satisfactory/unsatisfactory scales can fall short of meeting this purpose.

For promoting growth, the exact ratings of a scale are typically of minor importance. The tool serves to provide feedback and target it to specific areas of performance. In these situations, the conversation between a supervisor and the employee is more important than the exact rating on the scale.

The evaluation process is a function of the supervisors employed by a district. Board members should not view evaluation records. Viewing an evaluation record when a supervisor recommends termination may create bias before hearing arguments from both parties, leading to dismissal of the board's decision. Board members can direct the superintendent to ensure that evaluations are on done and their quality.

Both of purposes are important in the evaluation process. When done effectively, this process ensures employees meet district expectations and promotes their growth and improvement. When embedded in professional development practices and goals, it becomes a powerful tool for promoting excellence and positive change.