

PAR

Handbook

Peer Assistance and Review

A Joint Partnership Between
Salt Lake Education Association and
Salt Lake City School District



SALT LAKE CITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Your Best Choice

PAR Handbook for Participating Teachers

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Preface

Welcome to the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program. As a participating teacher you will have access to support and resources that go beyond the typical mentoring experience. The purpose of this document is to help orient you with the history, rationale and processes of the PAR program including an overview of roles for all those involved.

Preamble

The Peer Assistance and Review program is a reflection of the Salt Lake City School District and the Salt Lake Education Association's joint understanding and commitment to improve the quality of teachers in Salt Lake City. It is a manifestation of the recognition that both parties, as well as all staff, share a joint interest in identifying, supporting, developing and retaining quality educators in Salt Lake City Schools. The PAR program has been developed and implemented as a collaborative model, acknowledging both parties share and own the accountability for the overall quality of teaching staff. It represents a distinct cultural change not just in the sense of a labor and management collaboration, but also in terms of their professional teaching philosophies.

PAR Program Overview

Salt Lake City School District and the Salt Lake Education Association jointly developed and implemented a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program that began in August of 2013. The PAR program is divided into two components; one for novice teachers entering the profession, and the other for veteran teachers in need of additional support. The purposes of PAR are to provide intensive support and mentoring, conduct evaluations, and to make recommendations for continued employment or dismissal. The PAR Program is chaired by an appointed facilitator who organizes meetings and serves as the primary contact for PAR Consulting Teachers (CT), Participating Teachers (PT) and the PAR Panel.

The Joint PAR Panel

The Joint PAR Panel consists of three teachers and three principals. The SLEA appoints the three teachers and the superintendent or designee appoints the three administrators. Both parties agree on all members. Consensus will be the preferred decision-making model; however, ultimately a 2/3 majority vote of the members of each party will be used to make decisions when consensus cannot be reached. Membership on the Joint PAR Panel will consist of a three-year term with one teacher and one administrator rotating off the panel at the conclusion of the school year. In order to clarify roles and procedures new members will attend the final yearly meeting, read the PAR handbook, and meet with the PAR facilitator prior to the start of their term. The role of a panel member is an important one, as decisions that are made by the Panel will affect the employment of their colleagues. This work requires all members to be attentive and appropriately sensitive to the issues at hand, making sure to maintain confidentiality of personnel matters at all times. Panel members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings throughout the school year and will be paid a stipend contingent upon missing one or fewer Joint Panel meetings per year.

PAR Panel Responsibilities

- Participate in the selection, training, and supervision of PAR Consulting Teachers
- Meet with PAR Consulting Teachers periodically to receive reports
- Make decisions for PAR participation based on PAR Consulting Teachers' reports
- Make decisions regarding participating teacher (PT) retention or dismissal
- Approve policies and procedures that govern the program

The Consulting Teacher's Role

The Consulting Teacher and the Participating Novice Teacher will conference approximately every other week. Additionally, the consulting teacher will meet with the building administrator to discuss the participating teacher's progress. Formal documentation by the Consulting Teacher will focus on mutually identified goals and growth toward those goals. The Consulting Teacher must also maintain documentation of all contact with stakeholders (i.e. Building Principal and PAR Panel). All peer assistance and review will be aligned with the SLCSO- ECAP model. The CT will report the PT's progress to the principal and the PAR Panel throughout the year. The Consulting Teacher will make recommendations regarding the novice Participating Teachers' continued employment with SLCSO to the PAR panel. For the career teachers who participate in PAR, the CT, with input from the school based administrator, will recommend if the PT should be positively or negatively released from the PAR program. ***For those teachers who self-refer or are referred by administration, their release from the program can occur any time after they have completed the minimum requirements outlined in the model intervention process document.***

PAR Consulting Teacher Responsibilities

- Support Participating Teachers:
 - support planning and preparation
 - observe lessons – take notes
 - conference based on observations
 - provide written and verbal feedback, resources and tools during conferences
 - provide model teaching demonstrations and co-teach with the PT on occasion
 - participate in new teacher orientation
 - provide training and support for participating teachers on pedagogy, pupil relations and classroom management
 - assess colleague performance and make recommendations to the PAR Panel regarding performance
- Complete all required evaluation/leadership training
- Serve for a maximum of three (3) years
- Have an initial caseload of approximately 10 novice Participating Teachers, and one struggling veteran teacher at a time, as needed, up to a maximum of five per year.

Selection Criteria

The criteria for the selection of PAR consulting teachers will include the following:

- Current classroom teacher with a minimum of five years teaching in SLCSO Schools.
- Demonstrated outstanding classroom teaching ability and effectiveness
- Demonstrated talent in written and oral communications
- Demonstrated ability to work cooperatively and effectively with other professional staff members
- Extensive knowledge of a variety of classroom management and instructional techniques

Selection Process

HR will post the position of PAR Consulting Teacher. Applications will be accepted from those who meet the selection criteria.

In addition to submitting a completed application, each applicant is required to submit a resume.

Human Resources and SLEA leadership will complete a qualifications screening and determine the list of individuals to be interviewed. Candidates invited to interview will accept one or more unannounced classroom observation visits

PAR Consulting Teacher and PAR Panel Training

PAR CT's will be required to attend the evaluation training facilitated by the Evaluation Specialist to gain context and deep understanding of the Utah Effective Teaching Standards rubrics and ECAP tools. They will also receive training throughout the school year.

Confidentiality

PAR Consulting Teachers, PAR Panel Members and staff are the guardians of the reputations of those professionals with whom they work. The success of Peer Assistance and Review depends upon a relationship of mutual trust between the Consulting Teacher and the Participating Teachers. The Participating Teachers will depend upon the Consulting Teacher's professional expertise, and just as importantly, upon their professional discretion. Discussions regarding Participating Teachers must be in strictest confidence, and only with building administrators, members of the PAR Panel, and other Consulting Teachers.

The CT will report the PT's progress to the PAR Panel throughout the year. The Consulting Teacher will make recommendations regarding the novice Participating Teachers' continued employment with SLCSO to the PAR panel. For the career teachers who are recommended to participate, the CT, with administrator input, will recommend if the PT should be positively or negatively released from the PAR program at the end of the intervention.

Rapport

Beginning with the initial contact, the PAR Consulting Teacher and Participating Teacher must work towards establishing positive rapport. By working on Peer Assistance and Review; the CT and PT will have a much more productive relationship if it is a cooperative one. The role of the CT is not that of a supervisor or an administrator; the primary tenet of the PAR program is that the CT, a fellow teacher, works to assist and support other professionals.

Evaluation

PAR Consulting Teachers will be trained in the SLCSO- ECAP evaluation program. This tool is the basis for reviews conducted by PAR CT's. All supports will be aligned to ECAP. ***The building administrators will remain the formal evaluator of all teachers, including participating teachers. PAR CT's will not participate in the final effectiveness rating.*** The PAR Consulting Teacher will maintain close communication with the building administrator in regards to making a final recommendation for continued employment or dismissal to the PAR panel. Typically, a recommendation will be made to either positively or negatively release a teacher from PAR services on an annual basis or at the end of an intervention period.

PAR Consulting Teachers who participate in the PAR program will be evaluated by HR personnel with input from SLEA leadership.

Participating Teachers

Participating Teachers include:

- Novice (1st year) teachers

- Career teachers who self-refer or are referred by their principals after unsuccessfully completing a Collaborative Intervention process

All Participating Teachers receive regular observations and/or conferences from a PAR Consulting Teacher. The identified goals based on the Utah Effective Teaching Standards will be the basis for the PAR CT's work with the PAR Participating Teacher. The intervention portion of the PAR program will provide intensive supports needed for those participating career teachers. These teachers will be required to participate in the PAR program until they are positively or negatively released from the program. ***Should the teacher refuse services, the PAR Panel will submit a negative release from the program to administration. If a teacher refuses supports available via the PAR program they are still responsible to achieve an Effective or Highly Effective rating on the Teacher Evaluation Model. Refusal to participate in the PAR program will be indicated by a signed PAR Participation Refusal document.*** Teachers may either self-refer or be referred by their Principal to the PAR program for intervention if they are deemed to be experiencing extreme difficulty in the classroom and a collaborative intervention process has been unsuccessful. In either case, the PAR Panel will evaluate all requests for acceptance to the program and render decisions. Because intervention candidates may enter the program at any time during the school year, recommendations for their release from the program can occur any time after a formal review and determination by the PAR Panel.

The Participating Teacher's Role

- Work with the Consulting Teacher to achieve Effective or Highly Effective rating(s) in the Effective Teaching Standards noted in the identified goals.
- Maintain clear evidence of progress toward completion of identified goals.
- Conference with the Consulting Teacher and administrator on a regular basis.
- Complete the PAR Participating Teacher Goal Setting Agreement which will identify goals for the year.

The Administrator's Role

The administrator will need to be aware of the assistance that the CT is providing to the Participating Teacher. The administrator remains the formal evaluator for all teachers and is expected to stay abreast of conditions in each classroom within the school. It is the administration's responsibility to observe formally and informally in order to be aware of teaching conditions and the learning environment in each class. The CT will establish and maintain contact with the principals in the buildings. Administrators need to make time available to CT's for debriefing and to allow time to be set aside for Novice PTs to meet with their CT. ***At the end of the school year or the close of an intervention, the principal will complete a Principal's Input Form and have a final conference with the Consulting Teacher to share all pertinent data.***

Participating Novice Teacher Preparation

Prior to the start of the school year Participating Novice Teachers will be invited to attend a new teacher orientation where teachers new to the district will receive essential information and all PAR participating novice teachers will receive an overview of the PAR program.

Peer Assistance:

Types of Assistance

The following is a non-exhaustive list that suggests kinds of help commonly offered:

- Classroom observation and conferencing including specific feedback
- Opportunities to observe other classrooms. The PAR Consulting Teacher may request a substitute so that a participating teacher may have released time to observe in other classrooms and buildings.
- Contact with resource personnel, e.g., content area coaches, directors, SLEA, PAR Panel members
- Assistance in setting professional goals. Goal Setting Forms can be found in this manual and are also available in the PAR Office
- Professional readings and conversation
- Suggestions about helpful workshops, in-service programs, and university courses
- Help in effective lesson planning
- Suggestions for improving classroom atmosphere and environment
- Encouragement for seeking another professional with whom the Participating Teacher may share ideas and experiences
- Making arrangement for participating teachers to be videotaped to be used for Participating Teacher self-reflection.
- Video analysis of model teaching
- Written materials

Purposes of Observation

The goal of observation is feedback. The goal of feedback is improvement. But very often, observation of teachers is part of the formal personnel evaluation and is viewed with apprehension. The need for professionals to receive meaningful observations and feedback in order to improve their practice is illustrated through the following example: A novice archer might have a coach and a book of instructions, but if the archer shoots every arrow into dense fog without knowing whether it is getting closer to or farther from the target, interest in improving the technique will be hard to sustain, and improving aim will be virtually impossible. Teaching is seldom aimless, but teachers rarely get a systematic look at their techniques with respect to their aims. Observation can be an excellent means for providing feedback for teachers to improve their instruction and will be used extensively in the PAR process following the protocol outlined in the ECAP procedures.

Consulting Teacher Conferences

Establish a routine of conferencing prior to an observation, observation, and a conference following an observation. As the Participating Teacher's skills develop, he/she should assume a more direct role in the conferencing process.

Conference Prior to an Observation

The Consulting Teacher may facilitate Participating Teacher growth by beginning with a conference prior to an observation with such questions as, "What special concerns do you have?" or "What would you like me to look for during my next observation?" During the pre-conference, the Participating Teacher is encouraged to choose a specific focus for the upcoming observation.

Some examples of focal points for observations may include:

- Student engagement
- Time management and transitions
- Behavior management
- Use of space and grouping
- Essential content / lesson objectives

- Questioning
- Differentiation
- Instructional strategies
- Procedures for student response / assessment

Follow-up Conferences

During the follow-up conference, observation notes are shared to help the Participating Teacher analyze the gleaned data in respect to the pre-established focus of the observation. The PAR Consulting Teacher's role is to guide the PT in using the data to inform future instruction and teaching strategies. The Consulting Teacher should reference a conference prior to an observation, helping the Participating Teacher to focus on concerns and to interpret observation findings.

Conference Format

The Consulting Teacher uses the ECAP observation/evaluation tools and other resources as needed during the observation.

The Participating and Consulting Teachers analyze and interpret the lesson as evidenced by the data. They recognize and acknowledge instances of best practice and areas for growth. Together they develop possible alternative approaches emulating best practices.

Types of Conferences

ALL conferences should be guided by the use of the observation tool. Identified goals must be aligned to the Utah Effective Teaching Standards and the ECAP evaluation in order to make certain that all supports given will ensure clear focus on best practices as identified in ECAP.

Reinforcement: Identify, label and explain the Participating Teacher's effective instructional behavior. This practice will guide the Participating Teacher toward identifying and continuing the use of effective teaching techniques. The focus is only on those aspects of instruction which were effective thus bringing effective behaviors to a conscious level.

Expansion: Another type of conference is designed to stimulate the development of a repertoire of effective teaching responses so the Participating Teacher is not limited to those most frequently used. This will generate alternatives to behaviors which were effective in the observed lesson in case they should be less effective in a different situation.

Remediation: Another type of conference encourages Participating Teachers to identify those parts of a lesson which were not successful. With the Consulting Teacher's assistance, the Participating Teacher may develop strategies for reducing or eliminating future unsatisfactory outcomes. The Participating Teacher will identify solutions for changing aspects thought to be unsatisfactory. The Participating Teacher should have the first opportunity to suggest solutions. This conference poses tremendous potential for Participating Teacher growth in instructional effectiveness.

Unsafe Classroom Environment

There may be occasions when a Consulting Teacher witnesses unsafe situations within a classroom. Below are some examples of unsafe conditions within classroom environments along with suggested steps/procedures to address the situation.

Examples of an Unsafe Classroom Environment

- Students poking pencils, scissors, or other pointed objects at each other
- Fighting
- Threats of violence towards self, teacher or other students
- Gang signs and symbols
- Threat of sexual acts
- Participating Teacher leaving the classroom unattended
- Mishandling of school equipment

Addressing an Unsafe Classroom Environment

- Instruct the student or students to stop.
- Inform a building administrator.
- Conduct a follow-up conference as soon as possible with the Participating Teacher to discuss unsafe classroom environment and intervention options.

Documentation & Reporting: Reports to the Joint PAR Panel

The Consulting Teachers will meet with the Joint PAR Panel to discuss issues regarding the PAR program. At these meetings, policies and procedures will be reviewed and any necessary changes will be presented to the PAR panel for approval. The Consulting Teachers will provide formal written and verbal reports to the PAR panel on the progress of the Participating Teachers. These formal PAR Panel Report Meetings will occur in October, January early-March and May of each year. The Consulting Teachers should be prepared to give an assessment of the teachers' progress and review details of all support offered. A copy of the Goal Setting Agreement will be attached to the PAR Panel Report which will show the progression of growth (or lack thereof) towards the agreed upon goals. The January meeting is the mid-year report on all Participating Teachers. Tentative recommendations will be made at the January meeting regarding future employment of novice teachers. The early-March report will include summative narratives and final recommendations for each teacher. The March meeting will be scheduled in time to complete recommendations in conjunction with the ECAP requirements for provisional teachers. The May meeting will serve as a year-end summary where CTs will report on each PT's overall progress, a comprehensive list of resources provided, and total number of observations/conferences conducted over the course of the school year. Sample copies of Goal Setting Agreements and PAR Panel Reports are provided in the appendix of this manual. The PAR Consulting Teachers will meet regularly with the PAR chairperson.

Documentation

One of the most vital aspects of the Consulting Teacher's job is documentation, because the recommendation for renewal or non-renewal is largely their responsibility. It is imperative to keep written records which document Participating Teachers' level of progress made and support given. In order to ensure consistency, all CT's will use the forms provided in the appendix of this manual. It is necessary to be prepared to provide documentation for all of the following:

- Copies of all formal reports.
- Copies of goal setting agreements
- Observation notes and dates of observations; observation notes should include name, observation number, date, “running time”, and Consulting Teacher’s signature
- Detailed written conference reports and dates of conferences with Participating Teachers, and PAR stakeholders.
- Record of assistance provided
- Copies of emails and written communication with PT, administrators, and other relevant district personnel

Additional Documentation (If Applicable)

- Copies of representative tests, student handouts, etc.
- Copies of Participating Teachers’ representative lesson plans, discipline plans, reading program progress (elementary), communication with students' parents, etc.
- Other lines of evidence as needed

Non-Discrimination Statement

No district employee or student shall be subjected to discrimination in employment or any district program or activity on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status. The district is committed to providing equal access and equal opportunity in its programs, services and employment including its policies, complaint processes, program accessibility, district facility use, accommodations and other Equal Employment Opportunity matters. The district also provides equal access to district facilities for all youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United State Codes, including scouting groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries and complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation: Kathleen Christy, Assistant Superintendent, 440 East 100 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84111, 801-578-8251. You may also contact the Office for Civil Rights, Denver, CO, 303-844-5695.

PAR

Program

Documents