

Albemarle County Public Schools

Overview of the Administrator Performance Appraisal

Vision

All learners believe in their power to embrace learning, to excel, and to own their future.

Mission of the Teacher Performance Appraisal

Albemarle County Public Schools' Administrator Performance Appraisal provides a systematic structure to build and ensure a culture of professional learners committed to meeting the educational needs of all students.

Our Beliefs about Administrator Performance Appraisal

School Leadership Matters

Let us begin by stating the obvious. Your leadership matters. Everything you do and say as a school leader either moves your students and staff toward lifelong learning or not. As I have perused the research on school leadership, attended training on Virginia's newest approaches to performance appraisal, and participated in discussions with national advisory groups and gurus on this topic, I have been exposed to numerous studies correlating principal leadership to teacher and student success and school improvement. Further, it is just about impossible to talk about a child's or teacher's accomplishment, and not include the role the principal played in making it happen. In short, for the time and place in which you are serving as a school principal or assistant principal, the quality of the work you do and the leadership you provide will have an impact that transcends that time and place well into the future and far beyond the boundaries defined geographically.

Your Growth Matters

As it will suffice to say that you matter to the success of your school, it is imperative that you have opportunities to grow professionally and to improve your practice. Principals have a challenging task in meeting the educational needs of an educationally diverse student population, and good appraisal is necessary to provide the principals with the support, recognition, and guidance they need to sustain and improve their efforts.ⁱ A meaningful appraisal focuses on professional standards, and through this focus and timely feedback, enables teachers and leaders to recognize, appreciate, value, and develop excellent leadership. The benefits of a rigorous appraisal system are numerous and well documented. Goldring and colleagues noted that when the process of appraisal is designed and implemented appropriately, it can be valuable for improvement of leadership quality and overall organizational performance in several ways, including:

- as a benchmarking and assessing tool to document the effectiveness of principals for annual reviews and compensation;
- as a targeting tool to help principals focus on performance domains and behaviors that are associated with student learning;
- as a tool of continuous learning and development to provide both formative and summative feedback to principals, identify areas in need of improvement, and enable principals to make informed individualized decisions regarding professional development in order to bridge the gap between current practices and desired performance; and
- as a collective accountability tool to set the organizational goals and objectives of the school leader and larger school wide improvement.

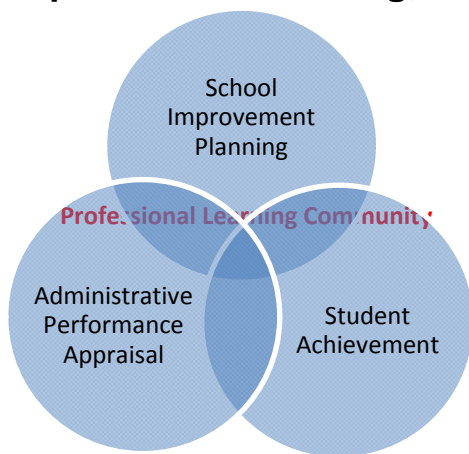
Time for an Update

During the spring of 2013, we surveyed school administrators in Albemarle County regarding their experience with our current appraisal system. If our goal is to have a system with which our principals are highly satisfied based on its meaningful components, self-appraisal, goal setting, ongoing conversations with the evaluator, goal attainment, staff surveys, and reflection, we are doing a mediocre job. We found that there are several areas we can improve to enhance the experience and promote the kind of growth we seek. It is timely to update our model, due to changes in the *Code of Virginia* highlighted at the end of this document, and we should do so thoughtfully and through the focus of the continuous improvement model we have embraced. It is important to recognize that while our own appraisal model may be flawed, this is part of a national concern. The following are some flaws that our Commonwealth is attempting to address, and they are also local items to consider.

- an absence of meaningful and timely feedback from appraisal to most principals;
- a lack of impact and consequence of appraisal;
- an absence of clear communication of criteria and standard protocols in principal appraisal;
- a lack of relevance of the appraisal to enhance principal motivation and improve performance; and
- inconsistencies in appraisal instruments that do not align with professional standards, which could produce role conflict and subsequent role strain as principals find it challenging to comprehend what they should focus their attention on.

Much of the remainder of this document is provided directly from Virginia's [Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals](#). After a thorough review of these guidelines and having experienced a few variations of performance appraisals as a school administrator (including our current model), the ACPS Office of Organizational and Human Resource Leadership adopts the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) model as the basis for integrating what works with our current model, rather than the converse of this design. Partnering with our Human Resources and Instruction Departments, we will work to merge the direction from VDOE into the formats and rubric design that we have developed for our current Teacher Performance Appraisal.

Connecting the Administrator Performance Appraisal, School Improvement Planning, and Student Achievement



The improvement planning process provides a framework to ensure continuous improvement in each school/department and alignment with the [vision, mission, goals, and values](#) of the overall school division. Improvement plans are completed at the start of each school year by Division leaders to provide focus in planning for continuous improvement. They are updated on a quarterly basis using key performance indicators that demonstrate progress towards stated goals. Within schools, principals work with their School Improvement Team (SIT) to develop their

improvement plan. The SIT's purpose is to support the school and the school division through the school improvement planning process. This team is comprised of faculty and staff, parents, students, and other community stakeholders. The primary objective of the SIT is to coordinate the development and implementation of the school's goals, objectives and strategies in support of student success and a positive school community.

Characterizing principal effectiveness is important because there is a substantial relationship between the quality of the principal and student achievement. Principal leadership plays an important role in the selection, support, and success of school-level instructional process. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty conducted a meta-analysis of research on effects of principal leadership practices on student achievement. After analyzing studies conducted over a 30-year period, they found that the effectiveness of a school's leadership is significantly associated with increased student academic performance. For instance, a number of leader behaviors related to vision, such as establishing clear goals and fostering shared beliefs, were associated with student learning. They found the average effect size between leadership and student achievement is .25. That means a one standard deviation improvement in leadership effectiveness can translate into an increase of ten percentile points in student

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achievement on a standardized, norm-referenced test. It is important to recognize that effective principals influence student learning, either directly or indirectly. It is also important to understand the ways and means by which principals influence their schools' educational programs. Therefore, a rigorous principal appraisal system should be able to discriminate the performance of principals and provide informative feedback for improvement.

When principals work in collaboration through structures and systems indicative of a *Professional Learning Community*, teachers are more likely to engage in authentic professional learning, resulting in higher levels of learning for all students. Collaborative inquiry, analysis, and reflection are central to quality professional learning among Albemarle County educators.

Albemarle County educators attempt to create professional learning contexts that cause administrators and teachers to apply the best available knowledge and skills within and across schools. By creating opportunities for educators to connect with one another in meaningful ways through structures that support development of Professional Learning Communities, we all work together to clarify questions posed by Richard & Rebecca DuFour and Robert Eaker –

- *What is it we want all students to learn?*
- *How will we know when each student has mastered the essential learning?*
- *How will we respond when a student experiences initial difficulty in learning?*
- *How will we deepen the learning for students who have already mastered essential knowledge and skills?*

The Albemarle County Public Schools Administrator Performance Appraisal acknowledges that, in order to be successful, educators must work within a culture of professional learners committed to meeting the educational needs of all students.

Purposes of Administrator Appraisal

The primary purposes of a quality principal appraisal system are to:

- optimize student learning and growth;
- contribute to the successful achievement of the goals and objectives defined in the vision, mission, and goals of the school division;
- provide a basis for leadership improvement through productive principal performance appraisal and professional growth; and
- implement a performance appraisal system that promotes collaboration between the principal and evaluator and promotes self-growth, leadership effectiveness, and improvement of overall job performance.

A high quality appraisal system includes the following distinguishing characteristics:

- benchmark behaviors for each of the principal performance standards;
- a focus on the relationship between principal performance and improved student learning and growth;
- the use of multiple data sources for documenting performance, including opportunities for principals to present evidence of their own performance as well as student growth;
- a procedure for conducting performance reviews that stresses accountability, promotes professional improvement, and increases principals' involvement in the appraisal process; and
- a support system for providing assistance when needed.

Purposes of the ACPS Appraisal System

This system is designed specifically for use with school principals and assistant principals. For the purpose of our system, the term principal will be used to reference both principals and assistant principals. The Virginia Board of Education is required by the *Code of Virginia* to establish performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers, principals, and our superintendent to serve as guidelines for school divisions to use in implementing educator evaluation systems.

Key Concepts of the Administrator Performance Appraisal

The Administrator Performance Appraisal is built upon several *key concepts*:

1. Self-assessment is fundamental to reflective practice that informs on-going professional growth.
2. *Student Academic Progress goals, School Improvement Goals and Professional Growth* goals are directly related to school outcomes.
3. Differentiated supervision is determined by multiple sources of data and reflective conversations.
4. Effective feedback is on-going and occurs through collaboration based on multiple sources of data.

1. Self-Assessment

Self-evaluation is a process by which one may judge the effectiveness and adequacy of his or her performance, effects, knowledge, and beliefs for the purpose of self-improvement. By thinking about what works, what does not work, and what type of changes one might make to be more successful, the likelihood of knowing how to improve and actually making the improvements increases dramatically. Evidence suggests that self-evaluation is a critical component of the evaluation process and is strongly encouraged. Furthermore, self-evaluation can help a principal to target areas for professional development. A sample *Principal Self-Evaluation Form* is provided on the following pages.

2. Student Academic Progress and Professional Growth Goals

Student Academic Progress goals and *Professional Growth* goals written in the SMART format are directly related to student outcomes. The Administrator Performance Appraisal utilizes a SMART Goal structure as a specific tool to sustain the efforts of continuous improvement. The SMART Goal process requires that we monitor and adjust our actions as needed in the service of student outcomes such as habits of mind, higher order thinking, and academic achievement. Through the process of self-assessment, administrators should develop a *Student Academic Progress* goal written in the SMART format that is aligned with the School Improvement Plan. It is recommended that the *Student Academic Progress* goal be attainable during the current school year. Teachers may also develop a *Professional Growth* goal that may evolve over the time until the next recertification year.

3. Differentiated Supervision: The Performance Appraisal Supervision Continuum

Differentiated supervision is determined by multiple sources of data and reflective conversations. Administrators bring varied levels of expertise to their work with students, regardless of their experience levels. Administrators' reflection on their own knowledge and leadership practice - guided by research-based rubrics that describe a continuum of best practices - is central to the formative Administrator Performance Appraisal process. Through goal-setting conferences, administrators work collaboratively with central leadership to establish growth goals and to identify strategies to meet those goals. Superintendent / designee-principal and principal-assistant principal interaction, as well as the superintendent / designee's supervisory approach, is adjusted along the Performance Appraisal Supervision Continuum as new formative information or data becomes available during the process.

At the final performance appraisal meeting, the principal and superintendent / designee reflect on and discuss growth and goal attainment. The superintendent / designee and principal once again determine the supervisory approach that will guide interaction with the principal for the next year's appraisal cycle.

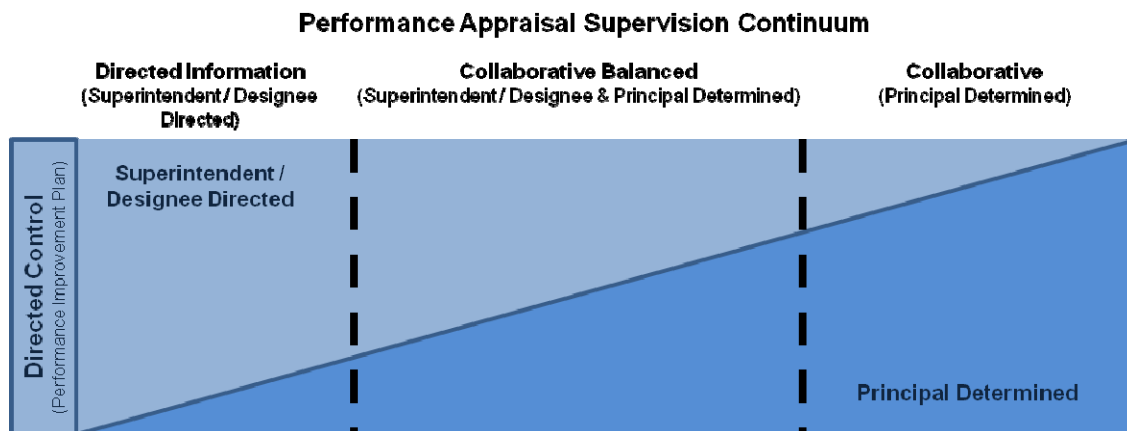
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- Collaborative/Principal Determined:** The superintendent / designee functions as a facilitator in this approach that fosters interaction through which the principal reflects, draws conclusions, and constructs or develops his or her own ideas. Outcomes should result from the principal's autonomous decisions, but the principal may use peers as key "critical friends" to support the growth process. This approach works best with experienced, knowledgeable principals or those less experienced principals who are self-directed and well on their way to developing expert practices.
- Collaborative Balanced/Superintendent / Designee and Principal Determined:** This model extends from shared decision-making and works best with principals who are shifting from Applies to Integrates practice. Through reflective interaction, the superintendent / designee encourages the principal to develop his or her own ideas to maximize ownership while using brainstorming and problem solving to determine mutually accepted next steps. Disagreement may occur through the superintendent / designee fostering of challenge and risk taking by the principal.
- Directed Information/Superintendent / Designee Directed:** This approach is used primarily with a principal who must develop the knowledge, expertise, or confidence essential for collaborative discourse. This principal seeks advice or needs directions from the superintendent / designee who can provide expert information and experienced guidance. In this model the superintendent / designee will initiate suggestions and propose alternatives then encourage the principal to revise, refine, or innovate with his or her own ideas.
- Directed Control/Performance Improvement Plan:** The superintendent / designee makes decisions and tells the principal how to proceed. This model is suited to performance improvement plan, in which a principal needs focused direction from the superintendent / designee regarding areas that require improvement.



5. Effective Feedback/Multiple Data Sources

The role of a principal requires a performance evaluation system that acknowledges the contextual nature and complexities of the job. Multiple data sources provide for a comprehensive and authentic “performance portrait” of the principal’s work. The sources of information described in here were selected to provide comprehensive and accurate feedback on principal performance.

Suggested Documentation Sources for Principal Evaluation

Data Source	Definition
Self-Evaluation	Self-evaluation reveals principals’ perceptions of their job performance. Results of a self-evaluation should inform principals’ personal goals for professional development.
Informal Observation/School Site Visits	Informal observations/school site visits, applied in a variety of settings, provide information on a wide range of contributions made by principals. Informal observations/school site visits may range from watching how a principal interacts with others, to observing programs and shadowing the administrator.
Portfolio/Document Log	Portfolios/document logs provide documentation generated by principals as evidence of meeting the seven performance standards.
Teacher/Staff Survey	Climate surveys provide information to principals about perceptions of job performance. The actual survey responses are seen only by the principal who prepares a survey summary for inclusion in the portfolio/document log.
Goal Setting	Principals, in conjunction with their evaluators, set goals for professional growth and school improvement.

Note: All recommended data sources may not always be necessary in a principal evaluation system. Rather, options are provided from which local decisions can be made to design the evaluation system in a manner that best fits local needs.

To address the contextual nature of the principal’s job, each principal should provide a school profile narrative to his or her evaluator. This may be done via the *Student Academic Progress Goal Setting Form*. It is strongly recommended that the principal also discuss the unique characteristics of the school with the evaluator.

Alignment of Performance Standards with Data Sources

Whether a principal is meeting the performance standards may be evidenced through multiple data sources. This figure shows the alignment of performance standards by data sources.

Aligning Multiple Data Sources with Performance Standards

Performance Standard	Self-Evaluation	Informal Observation/School Site Visits	Portfolio/Document Log	Teacher/Staff Survey*	Goal Setting
1. Instructional Leadership	/	/	X	X	
2. School Climate	/	X	X	X	
3. Human Resources Management	/		X	X	
4. Organizational Management	/	/	X	/	
5. Communication and Community Relations	/	X	X	/	
6. Professionalism	/	X	X	/	X
7. Student Academic Progress			X		X

* Survey summaries are part of the portfolio/documentation log.

X = Primary Data Source / = Secondary Data Source

The Code of Virginia: The Legal Basis for Our System

The *Code of Virginia* requires (1) that principal evaluations be consistent with the **performance objectives (standards)** set forth in the Board of Education's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* and (2) that school boards' procedures for evaluating principals and assistant principals address student academic progress.

Section 22.1-253.13:5 (Standard 5. Quality of classroom instruction and educational leadership) of the *Code of Virginia* states, in part, the following:

B. Consistent with the finding that leadership is essential for the advancement of public education in the Commonwealth, teacher, administrator, and superintendent evaluations shall be consistent with the performance objectives included in the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents*. Teacher evaluations shall include regular observation and evidence that instruction is aligned with the school's curriculum. Evaluations shall include identification of areas of individual strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for appropriate professional activities....

Section 22.1-294. (Probationary terms of service for principals, assistant principals and supervisors; evaluation; reassigning principal, assistant principal or supervisor to teaching position) states, in part, the following:

B. Each local school board shall adopt for use by the division superintendent clearly defined criteria for a performance evaluation process for principals, assistant principals,

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and supervisors that are consistent with the performance objectives set forth in the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* as provided in § 22.1-253.13:5 and that includes, among other things, an assessment of such administrators' skills and knowledge; **student academic progress** and school gains in student learning; and effectiveness in addressing school safety and enforcing student discipline. The division superintendent shall implement such performance evaluation process in making employment recommendations to the school board pursuant to § 22.1-293.

The *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* set forth seven performance standards for all Virginia principals. Pursuant to state law, principal evaluations must be consistent with the performance standards (objectives) included in this document.

The *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* provide school divisions with a model evaluation system, including sample forms and templates that may be implemented “as is” or used to refine existing local principal evaluation systems. Properly implemented, the evaluation system provides school divisions with the information needed to support systems of differentiated compensations or performance-based pay.

The *Code of Virginia* requires that school boards' procedures for evaluating principals address student academic progress. The *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* call for each principal to receive a summative evaluation rating and that the rating be determined by weighting the first six standards equally at 10 percent each, and the seventh standard, Student Academic Progress, account for 40 percent of the summative evaluation.

For more information about the APA including timelines and supporting resources, please visit <http://www.k12albemarle.org/tpa>.

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