

## Outside Observer Frequently Asked Questions

### **Overview**

NYS regulations require that at least 10% of a teacher's observation rating be based on an outside evaluation. We hope that the following FAQs and answers will help to provide a more in depth understanding how this will be incorporated in our APPR plan.

### **Who are the outside evaluators?**

In a nutshell, an outside evaluator is a trained evaluator whose BEDS code does not link them to the same building as the teacher. This means that a building's Principal or Assistant Principal cannot be an outside evaluator for teachers in their buildings.

Please remember your announced and unannounced observations will remain the same as last year, will be completed by your principal or assistant principal, and will account for 90% of your observation rating.

For us, the outside evaluators will be our central office administrators. Specifically, they will be Melanie Ward, ASI, Jeff Cimmerer, CIO, Patricia Vaughan-Brogan, Director of Student Services, Scott Barker, Director of Athletics, Elizabeth Woods, Director of Special Education, Melissa Julian, Director of Technology and Maria Hill, CSE Coordinator. Mike Pero and the Mike Leone are not performing outside observations because they are charged with hearing any APPR appeals.

### **Why were central office administrators chosen?**

We collectively made this decision for three main reasons. First, it aligns with what our practice was prior to the NYSED mandated APPR (at least with probationary teachers). Second, the alternative would be to have principals and assistant principals from another school conduct the observations, which would require significant time out of their buildings. Third, we believe this is a wonderful opportunity for central office administrators and our teachers to continue building relationships and share the wonderful work going on in our schools.

### **When will I find out who will be conducting my observation?**

We are currently finalizing the assignments. Assignments for the first year will be done by a combination of area of practice and by building. Our target is to have the listing to principals in the next two weeks.

### **When will these observations happen?**

The outside evaluations will not start before November 1<sup>st</sup> and will be completed by April 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Will I be given advance notice of when the observation will take place?**

Yes. The outside evaluator and the building principal will meet to discuss the various days and times the outside evaluator is available. The building principal will distribute a sign-up sheet so teachers can pick the day and time that works best for them.

**How long are the observations?**

The observations are scheduled to be 15 minutes long.

**What will be the focus of the observations?**

The observations are focused exclusively on Domain 2 (classroom environment) of the Danielson rubric. I have attached the template that the outside observers will be using for providing feedback and rating.

**When can I expect to receive the outside observer's feedback once the observation occurs?**

Teachers must receive their outside evaluator's feedback form by the next school day after the observation occurs. The outside observer will give the feedback sheet to the building Principal, who will keep the original and provide a copy to the teacher.

**Has there been training for the outside evaluators so there will be consistency in ratings?**

Yes. This has included training where some of our teachers volunteered to be observed by a small group, who afterward discussed the various elements of domain 2 seen in the lesson, and further discussed ratings of the elements to make sure there was both a sense of fidelity and inter-rater reliability.

**What if an element of domain two is not able to be observed during the ten minutes?**

Observations are meant to be holistic and ratings are based on the preponderance of the evidence. If some elements are not able to be seen during the observation it will not be considered in assigning a rating. In other words, elements that cannot be seen during the observation will have no negative impact on a teacher's rating.

**Will there be a pre and/or post observation conference?**

There will not be any pre-observation conferences. There is no post-observation conference required unless the outside evaluator gives a rating of developing or ineffective. In that case, there must be a post-observation conference within 5 days of the observation.

With that being said, if a teacher or the outside observer has a question about an observation or would like to have a further discussion, we encourage contacting the other party to engage in positive discussions.

**Final thoughts**

Please know that our central office administrators care deeply about your success, and their mindset is to "catch teachers doing things right" and provide some helpful feedback. They are very excited about spending even more time in classrooms and seeing all the wonderful work you do.