

a framework for Learning Forward 2.0



2021 Approved APPR Framework Guidebook
Continuing to Imagine for a Brighter Future

North Star

Educational Commitments

Our North Star Educational Commitments were designed to foster a learning environment in which all learners will be able to develop their unique self and their capacity, and contribute to community through continuous cycles of inquiry.

Learners will develop their unique self

We believe that learning is a process of discovery through which one increases self-awareness, explores identities, finds personal joy, and clarifies core values. This involves fostering different paths to success and providing opportunities to reflect on one's life, strengths, needs, and goals.

Learners will develop their capacity

We believe that, given support and opportunities, all learners will be continually inspired to persevere and maximize their potential. We support each individual's unique way of learning, giving them an understanding of themselves as lifelong learners. We honor each learner's learning path, energize them to develop skills, expand their mind, grow in all areas, and meet current and future goals.

Learners will contribute to the community.

We believe that community means helping others through communication, engagement, connections, learning, caring, a safe environment, trust, and celebration of our diversity. We will create a safe and positive environment to prepare our learners for success at BOCES and beyond.

Learners will engage in continuous cycles of inquiry

We believe that we must develop the motivation in learners for them to investigate the world, understand multiple perspectives, and fully engage in meaningful experiences. This requires a method of setting goals, creating a plan, implementing strategies, observing, assessing, and revising. This reflection leads to new understandings, questions, and evolving collaboration.

Introduction

The events of the second half of school year 2019-2020 forced us, as well as the rest of the educational world, to reimagine the methods and effectiveness of the past practices regarding the delivery of instruction at its core. Many pre-pandemic systems and methods were no longer available. We had long recognized that many pre-pandemic practices were not effective in producing desired student outcomes for all. As such, we were, before March 13, 2020, already on the journey of reimagining and reforming classroom practice. Past considerations became pressing issues of concern.

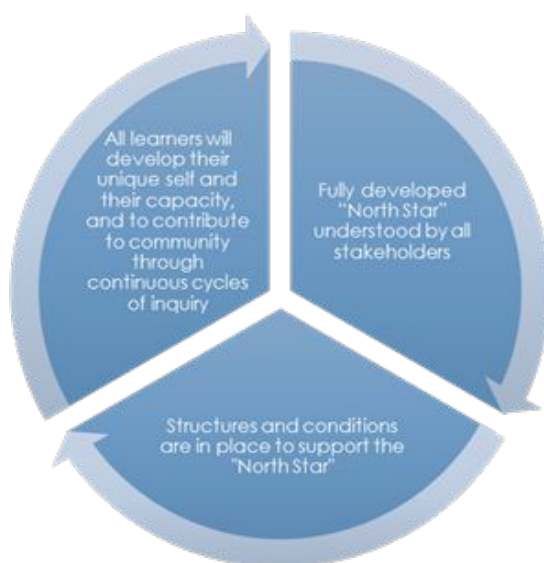
We viewed the challenges presented by the pandemic as opportunities. The pandemic provided us with the opportunity to accelerate the changes that were already underway in our programs. We focused on challenges such as classroom practice, the integration of technology as a tool to enhance the student experience, scheduling and operations, the health and safety of all students and staff, and equitable practices for our most vulnerable students.

These priorities were further complicated by new concerns such as instruction and assessment in remote and socially-distant environments and teacher support in a virtual world. Through all of this, more teachers have adapted, studied, experimented, communicated, and collaborated in ways never before imagined.

We also recognized that there would be a post-pandemic period and that the status-quo would exert tremendous pressure on all to return to the pre-pandemic practices that were ineffective in producing desired outcomes for all students in the first place. We recognized that we had to address that natural pressure.

This year, we know that our Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) system needed to pivot to better reflect the new learning and practices that many of our staff are incorporating every day. We believe that the learning experiences implemented this year will not only serve our students in Ulster BOCES in the coming year but for many years to come. Through adversity and real-life challenges, exceptional growth can take place.

Our 2020-2021 APPR Plan puts a highlight on that learning and is explicitly aligned to our North Star Educational Commitments (p.2), which are our guiding beliefs about what all learners will be able to do. It is just as explicitly aligned to our [2020-21 Professional Development Arc \(PDP\)](#) and as well as our BOCES Framework for Driving Teaching and Learning (image, below).



- Student achievement is the focus for teaching and learning.
- Student needs and qualitative and quantitative data will drive our professional development.
- Professional development is designed to improve teaching and learning that enables students to meet or exceed the expectations of the NYS standards.
- Learning is best achieved when all members of the learning community can share ideas and reflect on practice.
- To continuously improve, we will develop systems to measure performance.

Guiding Principles

The development of this plan was guided by and grounded in the following principles:

- An unwavering commitment to maximizing achievement for all students;
- Supporting teacher growth and professional learning;
- Providing learning experiences that reflect the practices outlined in our North Star Educational Commitments;
- Ensuring alignment to NYSED APPR guidelines.

The plan includes:

- Embedded professional learning through cycles of inquiry
- Observations through authentic learning experiences (remote and traditional)
- Student growth measures aligned with 2021 learning modalities
- Interactive (linked) process tools: Master Evaluation Tracker
- NYSED aligned HEDI bands, matrices, and calculations
- Outlined Appeal and Improvement Plan processes

The process to develop this plan was completed collaboratively with the Ulster BOCES Teachers' Organization. Members of the planning committee included:

- Jill Berardi
- Kelley Czermerys
- Sarah Dudley-Lemek
- David Goho
- Tonya Griffiths
- Peter Harris
- Danielle Hart
- Richard Haviland
- Gwen Kramer-Gold
- Donna Marsh
- James McNulty
- Joseph Salamone
- Jonah Schenker
- Kerri Ann Sheehy
- Amy Storenski
- Kate Weston

The pages that follow outline the components of the plan noted above as well as additional resources to support implementation.

Cycles of Inquiry: The Process

At the foundation of the plan are a series of cycles of inquiry. Participation in these learning experiences will demonstrate engagement in the teacher observation category of the APPR.

These experiences, much like those we aim to design for our learners, will engage teachers in practical application and experimentation that allows them to learn about, apply, and then reflect upon best instructional practices.

There will be three cycles of inquiry from September to June. Each one will focus on different instructional practices which aligns with our North Star. Practices chosen for the 2021-2024 school years are those that have proven to be particularly integral this year as we learn through our Cycles of Inquiry.

APPR & Cycles of Inquiry

APPR Committee

APPR & Cycles of Inquiry	
Seasons - Align with our North Star:	
Fall:	SEL (Unique Self & Community)
Winter:	Capacity (Improving our Craft)
Spring:	Cycles of Inquiry and Reflection/Continuous Learning
This becomes the system we can put any learning into	

Cycles of Inquiry

Launch

Staff will engage in professional development activities focused on the identified monthly learning topic. These activities will help establish a vision for teaching and learning about the topic and allow teachers to work together to formulate researchable questions that they can aim to answer through the inquiry cycle.

Learn

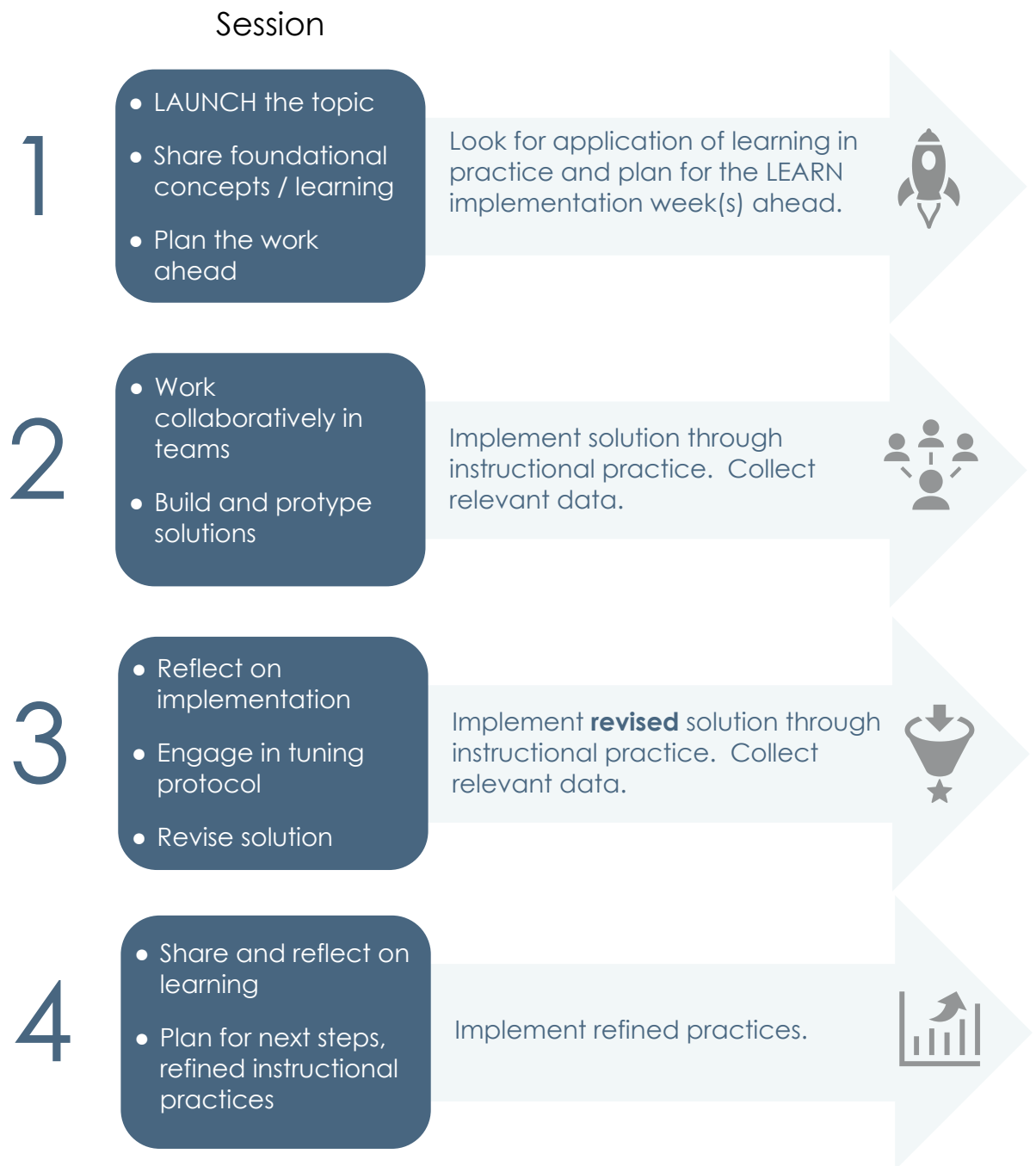
Staff will engage in a process of applying and analyzing the results of the practice. This will likely include designing instruction that utilizes the focused practices for the month, facilitating the designed instruction and collecting data on the implementation, and then analyzing the data to determine effectiveness of the practices. Collegial collaboration is critical during the Learn phase as teachers work together to plan, deliver, and assess.

Reflect

Staff will come together again to reflect on the lessons learned through the inquiry cycle and determine the implications for changing practices. Again, collaboration and shared inquiry are key tenets of this phase as colleagues learn from not only their own practices but those of their colleagues.



Cycles of Inquiry Routine



Each session our hope is to create an adult learning environment that fosters our North Star commitments: Recognizing each staff member's unique story and contribution to the work, connecting as a community, developing and growing our capacity, while committing to continuous cycles of learning and reflection.

We will:

- Open with connections;
- Make room for celebrations of what we do;
- Foster learning, reflection, & continuous improvement; and
- Embrace joy and belonging.

Reflection

During the third cycle of inquiry, teachers will engage in guided reflective practices thinking about the successes, challenges, and lessons learned through the previous cycles of inquiry they engaged in throughout the school year. Through this reflection, they will also prepare and develop their presentation of learning that will be shared in June.



As the school year concludes, professional learning time will be dedicated to celebrating the learning journey experienced through thoughtful reflection and sharing of lessons learned.

Observing Instruction

In addition to participation in the Cycles of Inquiry process, observations of teaching practice will also be considered as part of the teacher observation category of the APPR, as they have typically been in previous years.

From 2021 to 2024, each teacher's learning journey will be observed through a minimum of three walkthroughs a year. Walkthroughs may take a traditional form or may look a bit more non-traditional, such as taking place in a virtual space, looking through a teacher's Google Classroom, visiting students in breakout rooms, etc.

Following each walkthrough, building leaders will be committed to having an authentic conversation with the teacher about what was observed.

Measures of Student Growth

All learning begins with wonder and engagement. We believe the measurements we utilize in the student performance category of the APPR should reflect the engagement levels of our students and drive the interventions and instructional approaches of adults.

As we strive to engage students in their education, rather than calculating measures based on test scores, our aim will be to measure authentic student engagement in the learning process. To do this, teachers will measure student attendance daily using Ulster BOCES Engagement Rubric for Learning. Based on the analysis of the scale's measurements, personalized interventions can be developed for students and implemented in a targeted way through mechanisms like Advisory, Interventions, and PIP to drive instruction.

At the onset, teachers will begin by calculating a baseline measurement on the scale for all students. Then, on a weekly and monthly basis, growth can be measured by comparing new data to the baseline. Finally, at year's end, average growth can be calculated to determine overall effectiveness of the interventions applied.

Engagement Rubric for Learning

1	2	3	4
Student is not present, not responding to emails or phone calls, and is not attempting any learning activities. "Has not crossed the threshold of any learning environment."	Student is present but is not connecting with staff or peers in a meaningful way, is struggling to access or attempt learning activities.	Student is present and communicative, they are able to access learning activities and are making some progress towards goals.	Student is present and regularly engaged and active in learning activities, they are making gains towards their learning goals, they are connected to their peers and educators in meaningful ways.

Ulster BOCES Student Engagement, Attendance & Outreach

Leading with Engagement

As teachers track daily student engagement using the Engagement for Learning Rubric (SchoolTool), analysis of that data will identify the need for targeted interventions to support students.

Outreach has become increasingly important to support learning and provide an equitable foundation for all students. Supports and interventions as well as restorative practices can subsequently be provided after establishing points of contact.

The [Ulster County BOCES Behavioral Expectations and Supports](#) guidebook offers guidance and support that can aid the development of interventions.

Examples of Supports and Interventions:

- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Community Service (with Parental Consent)
- Conflict Resolution
- Development of Individual Behavior Contract
- Guidance Conference
- Health Education
- Individual/Group Counseling
- Individualized Support Plan
- Intervention by Counseling Staff
- Mentoring
- Parent Outreach
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Referral to Appropriate Substance Abuse Counseling Services
- Referral to a Community-Based Organization (CBO)
- Referral to Counseling Services for Bullying, Intimidation, or Harassment, including Bias-Based Bullying, Intimidation, or Harassment
- Referral to Counseling Services for Youth Relationship Abuse or Sexual Violence
- Referral to Mental Health Support Services
- Partner with the District and Pupil Personnel Teams
- Partner with Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Services
- Restorative Practices
- Short-Term Behavioral Progress Reports
- Social Emotional Learning

Examples of Restorative Practices:

- Community-Building Circles/Circle Process
- Collaborative Negotiation
- Peer Mediation
- Formal Restorative Conference
- Welcome-Back Circle

APPR Regulations

The New York State Education Department requires in Part 100.2 of the general requirements of Part 100 Regulations that each school district should develop an Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan. Ulster BOCES and the Ulster BOCES Teachers' Organization (UBTO) recognize the need to foster excellent professional practices for non-tenured teachers and to create a process for meaningful evaluation of the effectiveness of tenured teachers' performance, professional development, and contributions to the school community. The purpose of the APPR Plan is to assist teachers in developing as professionals. Instructional staff members will pursue professional growth through goal-setting, reflection, evaluation, and supervision, as well as professional development offered through induction, mentoring programs, and scheduled in-service opportunities.

On April 13, 2015, the Governor signed Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2015 to add a new Education Law §3012(d) to establish a new evaluation system for classroom teachers and building principals. The new law requires teachers and principals to be evaluated based on two categories: the Student Performance Category and the Observation/School Visit Category, each of which are explained in further detail throughout this document. Under the new law, New York State continues to differentiate teacher and principal effectiveness using four rating categories - Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, and Ineffective.

Education Law §3012(d) requires APPRs to result in a single composite teacher or principal effectiveness rating that incorporates multiple measures of effectiveness. As in the past, the results of the evaluations shall be a significant factor in employment decisions, including but not limited to promotion, retention, tenure determination, termination, and supplemental compensation, as well as teacher and principal professional development (including coaching, induction support, and differentiated professional development).

The governing body of each school district and BOCES shall ensure that the performance of all teachers and administrators providing instructional services or pupil personnel services is reviewed annually. In the 2016- 2019 school years, the new law applies to all classroom teachers and building principal/administrators.

A committee comprised of teachers and administrators collaborated for the past few months to develop an Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan for the Ulster BOCES teachers. UBTO and district administration explored the elements of an effective APPR plan and the accompanying research to develop each component. This plan is a direct response to the State's addition of Section §3012(d) to the Education Law.

HEDI Bands

The following HEDI bands will be used to determine teacher performance in the [Observing Instruction and Professional Conversations](#) and [Measuring Student Growth](#) categories of the APPR. Then, the NYSED-approved Summative Matrix will be used to calculate a teacher's final Summative Rating. Details for each category will be tracked electronically via My Learning Plan.

Observing Instruction and Professional Conversations

H	E	D	I
20-18	17-15	14-13	12-0
Completed ALL of the following: • 3 walkthrough check-ins • 2 Reflection & Presentation of Learning • Completed 2 Highly Effective Learning Activities - To be determined each year by Oct 15	Completed the following: • 3 out of 3 walkthrough check-ins • 2 out of 2 Reflections & Presentation of Learning	Completed the following: • 2 out of 3 walkthrough check-ins • 2 out of 2 Reflections & Presentation of Learning	Completed the following: • 1 out of 3 walkthrough check-ins • 1 out of 2 Reflections & Presentation of Learning

Measures of Student Growth

H	E	D	I
20-18	17-15	14-13	12-0
Participated in: • Daily tracking of engagement • Advisory • Intervention • Tracking of growth with a clear and consistent measurement (target to be set after baseline established)	Participated in: • Daily tracking of engagement • Advisory • Intervention • Positive growth	Participated in: • Daily tracking of engagement • Advisory • Intervention	Did not participate in: • Daily tracking of engagement • Advisory • Intervention

Summative HEDI Matrix

Observing Instruction and Professional Conversations					
Measures of Student Growth		Highly Effective (H)	Effective (E)	Developing (D)	Ineffective (I)
	Highly Effective (H)	H	H	E	D
	Effective (E)	H	E	E	D
	Developing (D)	E	E	D	I
	Ineffective (I)	D	D	I	I

Student Engagement Tracker

This tool can be used across a variety of instructional deliveries, such as remote, in-person, and hybrid models. Teachers will assign a 1-4 rating daily in order to monitor student engagement and to track attendance. Teachers can subsequently use this tool to track student engagement and cross-reference the findings to calculate weekly and monthly averages. Analysis of these measurements will help lead to development of needed interventions for students.

Tracking Student Engagement in the SchoolTool Attendance Screen

The screenshot shows the 'ATTENDANCE' tab in the SchoolTool interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: INFO, ROSTER, ATTENDANCE (selected), GRADES, ALERTS, SEATING CHART, and RECOMMENDATIONS. Below these, the page title is 'GLOBAL HIST & GEO 2E [Period 1] [G]'. There are input fields for 'Jump to:' (set to 'GLOBAL HIST & GEO 2E (S1,P1) [G]') and 'Date:' (set to '8/24/2022'). Below these are checkboxes for 'Show Pictures' (Yes/No), '(P)resent - 25', '(A)bsent - 0', and '(T)ardy - 1'. On the right, there are links for 'Back' and 'Help', and a 'SUBMIT' button. A green message 'Attendance has been submitted' is visible below the button. The main table lists students with columns for P, A, T, Minutes, Student, Grade, YTDA, QTDA, QTD, and Home District. Red arrows and text provide instructions: 1. Click to mass update all students to the most common engagement score (pointing to the 'Minutes' column). 2. After mass updating, manually change any students as appropriate. (pointing to the 'Minutes' column for Carolyn A. Foster). 3. Click SUBMIT to save the scores (pointing to the 'SUBMIT' button).

P	A	T	Minutes	Student	Grade	YTDA	QTDA	QTD	Home District
☐	☐	☒	0	Shawn J. Austin (Nickname) ID: 30552	10	0	0	1	
☒	☐	☐	0	Ashley J. Brown ID: 32133	10	0	0	0	
☒	☐	☐	0	Brenda V. Brown ID: 32151	10	3	0	0	
☒	☐	☐	0	Carolyn A. Foster ID: 34178	10	0	0	0	
☒	☐	☐	0	Ashley M. Hall ID: 40696	10	1	0	0	
☒	☐	☐	0	Patrick S. Hyphen ID: 30278	10	0	0	0	
☒	☐	☐	0	Andrea E. Johnson ID: 29389	10	0	0	0	
☒	☐	☐	0	Angela M. Johnson ID: 29273	10	0	0	0	



Evaluator Training

Lead Evaluator training will include training on:

1. The New York State Teaching Standard, along with their related elements and performance indicators and the Leadership Standards and their related functions, as applicable;
2. Evidence-based observation techniques that are grounded in research;
3. Application and use of the student growth percentile model and the value-added growth model;
4. Application and use of the teacher or principal/administrator rubric(s), including training on the effective application of such rubrics to observe a teacher or principal/administrator's practice;
5. Application and use of any assessment tools that the school district or BOCES utilizes to evaluate its classroom teachers or building principals/administrators, including but not limited to, structured portfolio reviews; student, parent, teacher and/or community surveys; professional growth goals and school improvement goals; etc.;
6. Application and use of any locally selected measures of student achievement used by the district to evaluate its teachers or principals/administrators;
7. Use of the Statewide Instructional Reporting System;
8. The scoring methodology, including how scores are generated for each subcomponent, the composite effectiveness score, and application and use of the scoring ranges prescribed by the Commissioner for the four designated rating categories used for the teachers or principals/administrators overall rating and their subcomponent ratings;
9. Specific considerations in evaluating teachers and principals/administrators of English language learners and students with disabilities; and
10. Inter-rater reliability.

The District Superintendent will ensure that lead evaluators participate in annual training and are recertified on an annual basis. The BOCES Network Team and or equivalent will provide the training and recertification. Any individual who fails to achieve required training or certification or recertification, as applicable, shall not conduct or complete evaluations.

Professional Improvement Plan

If a concern or issue arises at any time during the school year, a Lead Evaluator may determine it necessary for an improvement plan to be initiated. If a teacher's performance is evaluated as "Ineffective" or "Developing," the supervisor shall be required to develop a Professional Improvement Plan (PIP) in consultation with the staff member. Such Plan will be shared with and implemented within ten (10) days of the start of the school year within which the Plan will be applied. The Plan will focus on the rubric with specific improvement objectives. An action plan will be developed collaboratively with the teacher and their supervisor. Target dates will be determined to review evidence of progress and/or success. A reflection component will be included to enable both parties to reflect on the growth experience. Meetings shall be monthly with the Principal as practicable and a schedule of planned meetings will be attached to the improvement plan. The PIP Plan may include attendance at specific Ulster BOCES Teacher Academy sessions as appropriate to the Plan. A representative of their professional organization may accompany unit members to these meetings. The supervisors will clearly state in the plan the additional support and assistance the educator will receive. If additional concerns regarding compliance and/or implementation are not adequately resolved then the teacher or representative shall notify the District Superintendent of such concerns. In the final stage of the improvement plan, the teacher should meet with their supervisor to review the plan alongside any artifacts and evidence, which may be used to inform the evaluation.

My Learning Plan can be used by teachers and evaluators throughout the year to track teacher improvement plans.

Appeal Process

Any teacher may appeal an "Ineffective" rating on their annual composite APPR, and tenured teachers may also appeal a "Developing" rating.

Basis of Appeal

Appeal procedures should limit the scope of appeals under Education Law §3012(d) to the following subjects:

1. The substance of the Annual Professional Performance Review; which shall include the following:
 - a. In the instance of a teacher rated "Ineffective" on the Student Performance category, but rated "Highly Effective" on the Observation category based on an anomaly, shall be determined locally.
 - b. In the event of an anomaly as described under section 1 (a) above, the Teacher Observation rating will be the sole criteria for the Teacher's Annual Rating with the approval of both the UBTO President and the District Superintendent.
2. The BOCES' adherence to the standards and methodologies required for such reviews, pursuant to Education Law §3012(d) and;
3. The adherence to the regulations of the Commissioner and compliance with any applicable locally negotiated procedures as well as the BOCES' issuance and/or implementation of the terms of the teacher or principal improvement plan, as required under Education Law §3012(d).

Prohibition Against More Than One Appeal

A teacher may not file multiple appeals regarding the same APPR rating or teacher improvement plan. All grounds for appeal must be raised with specificity within one appeal. Any grounds not raised at the time the appeal is filed shall be deemed waived.

Burden of Proof

In an appeal, the teacher has the burden of demonstrating by preponderance of the evidence a right to the relief requested and the burden of establishing the facts upon which petitioner seeks relief.

Appeal Process

Timeframe for Filing an Appeal

All appeals will be handled in an expeditious manner in accordance with §3012(d). All appeals must be submitted in writing no later than 15 calendar days of the date when the teacher receives his or her composite score or 15 calendar days of the date of receipt of the PIP if the appeal is in regards to said PIP. A teacher may request in writing to the District Superintendent an extension due to extenuating circumstances. The District Superintendent may extend the timelines no less than five days and not more than 10 days beyond the expiration of the extenuating circumstances. Such requests for an extension will not be unreasonably withheld. The failure to file an appeal within these time frames shall be deemed a waiver of the right to appeal and the appeal shall be deemed abandoned.

When filing an appeal, the teacher must submit a detailed written description of the specific areas of disagreement over his or her performance review, or the issuance and/or implementation of the terms of his or her improvement plan and any additional documents or materials relevant to the appeal. The performance review and/or improvement plan being challenged must also be submitted with the appeal. Any information not submitted at the time the appeal is filed shall not be considered.

Timeframe for BOCES Response

Within 10 school days of receipt of an appeal, the BOCES supervisor who issued the performance review and who is responsible for either the issuance and/or implementation of the terms of the teacher's improvement plan, must submit a detailed written response to the appeal. The response must include any and all additional documents or written materials specific to the point(s) of disagreement that support the BOCES' response and are relevant to the resolution of the appeal. Any such information that is not submitted at the time the response is filed shall not be considered in the deliberations related to the resolution of the appeal. The teacher initiating the appeal shall receive a copy of the response filed by BOCES, and any and all additional information submitted with the response, at the same time BOCES files its response.

Decision Maker on Appeal

A decision shall be rendered by the District Superintendent or his/her designee, except that an appeal may not be decided by the same individual who was responsible for making the final rating decision. In such case, the President of the Board of Education shall appoint another person to decide the appeal.