

B/SE-1: BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

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Board of School Trustees

CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Balanced Governance Superintendent Evaluation Protocols

Introduction

When you evaluate a Superintendent, you are evaluating leadership and the effect of leadership. You are considering both influence and results. Summative leadership indicators are increasingly relevant after the first two years of a Superintendent's tenure. Summative leadership indicators reveal the outcomes of implemented actions. Formative leadership indicators are always relevant. Formative leadership indicators suggest how the Superintendent influence may affect the school district outcomes in the future.

For example, the Superintendent's style of communication with the board, staff, and community members influences the culture and favorability of others toward the school district and is considered a formative indicator. The summative indicators of a particular communication style over time are detected in measurable data from staff satisfaction surveys, indicators of community support, and student outcomes. Similarly, the effects of curriculum adoption and staff assignments are recognized over time. It is important that the board provide clear and specific feedback with opportunity for growth on formative indicators in the first few years of a Superintendent's tenure and focus more on summative indicators later in the Superintendent's tenure.

Superintendent tenure matters for student success. In most school systems, the longer the Superintendent stays, the better the district performs. Waters and Marzano (2006) found a relationship between Superintendent tenure and student outcomes beginning as early as the second year. Alsbury (2008) found that board stability directly influences Superintendent tenure and student learning. Superintendent evaluation provides an opportunity for the board to come together in agreement and provide clarity and guidance to the Superintendent regarding the work of the district. Done well, you might think of Superintendent evaluation as the centerpiece of your work together as a board and your relationship with your Superintendent.

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Purpose for Evaluation

Superintendent evaluation provides an opportunity for improving school governance. Throughout the evaluation process, the board and Superintendent can calibrate and clarify expectations for the school district, the board, and the Superintendent's leadership. This can help unite the board and stabilize the work of the governance team. Effective evaluation creates a basis and framework for decisions on retaining the Superintendent, extending the contract, and adjusting the Superintendent's compensation. Superintendent evaluation provides a critical opportunity for improving student outcomes. Research by Lorentzen and McCaw (in Alsbury and Gore, 2015) suggests that evaluating a Superintendent on student learning goals may relate more with improving student learning than any other action of a board. Evaluation also provides an opportunity to improve leadership skills of Superintendents.

The Board's Responsibility

School boards display responsibility when they consider choices, understand consequences, and make decisions that produce good outcomes. How board members think about their responsibility influences how they evaluate a Superintendent. If board members think of themselves as responsible for the physical well-being of students, they may have an increased interest in evaluating the Superintendent based on the safety and security of students. If they think of themselves as responsible for the working conditions of staff, they might be more interested in input from staff members than in the concerns of parents, students, or the community. If board members consider themselves responsible for improving nutrition, and emphasize that in their election, they may be more interested in the school lunch program than improvement to learning and teaching.

Board members feel responsible to a wide variety of stakeholders – from students and parents to business and special interest groups. Board members and Superintendents often describe their primary objective as educating children to their full potential. Some board members may see themselves as responsible for student performance on tests intended to measure knowledge and application of mathematics and literary skills. At the same time, a community may hold board members responsible for educating children with the social and citizenship skills necessary for sustaining a democratic society. Board members constantly seek to balance the public good and the individual good of students.

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Balanced Governance Model

A balanced approach for Superintendent evaluation calls for more feedback from the board on soft skills (or formative indicators) during the first few years and a stronger focus on measurable district outcomes over time.

Superintendent Tenure	Formative Indicators	Summative Indicators
Year One	100%	0%
Year Two	85%	15%
Year Three	70%	30%
Year Four	55%	45%
Year Five and after	40%	60%

The Balanced Governance Model for Superintendent Evaluation includes two significant concepts: *growth* and *consultancy*. By growth, we mean that the instrument and process are designed to promote improvement-focused conversation among the board and Superintendent about what the Superintendent can do to lead the system toward highly effective performance. In this sense, the Balanced Governance Model promotes a consultancy relationship between the board and Superintendent where the Superintendent and the board propose ideas and clarification for what improvement looks like for the Superintendent and district.

Process of Evaluation

There is one evaluation of the Superintendent—not seven. It is imperative that the Board speak as one clear voice when evaluating the Superintendent. Whenever possible, the board wants to work toward consensus on all matters pertaining to the evaluation, including the process, criteria, evidence, and final report. If consensus cannot be reached, the board needs to vote on items when necessary and reach a decision of the board. Minority or dissenting opinions need to be kept within closed session, so that the board is giving clear review and direction to the Superintendent and district. The Evaluation Cycle section below provides further guidance on the evaluation process.

Criteria for Evaluation

As outlined in policy, any changes to the District Vision, Strategic Goals, or Annual Goals must have been completed in alignment with the Superintendent’s contract or by the start of the school year. For any changes, the effective dates of the monitoring report were noted on the policy.

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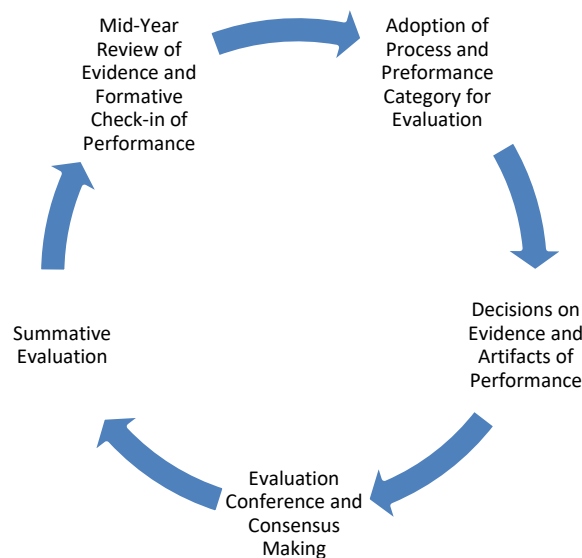
In alignment with the Superintendent’s contract and/or between the end of the school year and the beginning of the following school year, the Board conducts the formal summative evaluation of the Superintendent. The summative evaluation is based upon data collected during the previous school year from the monitoring of Board policies on progress of the agreed upon Annual Plan or Strategic Plan focal areas included in the superintendent evaluation. This also provides an opportunity for the Board and Superintendent to discuss the Strategic Plan focal areas to use for assessing Superintendent performance in the upcoming school year.

The Superintendent evaluation includes the following required two design characteristics:

1. A focus on the district’s Strategic and Annual Plan Goals agreed upon by the Board and Superintendent to be included in the current evaluation.
2. Measurable data showing reasonable progress toward achievement of the selected Strategic/Annual Plan goals and agreed upon by the Board and Superintendent to be included in the current evaluation.

The Superintendent and the Board president shall sign and date the completed Superintendent appraisal following the performance evaluation meeting.

Evaluation Cycle



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1. Adoption of Process and Performance Categories for Evaluation

As a condition of adopting this process the board together with the Superintendent, using a third-party facilitator, shall review and come to a consensus on the framework and processes to be used for the evaluation, including any general performance categories to be evaluated; and selecting and prioritizing the Strategic and annual goals to be included in the evaluation. In alignment with the Superintendent's contract and/or between the end of the school year and the beginning of the following school year, the board ensures that any changes to the Board Vision and District Strategic Goals, or Annual Goals for the coming year are complete and adopted. These would apply to the upcoming school year and not the current school year.

2. Decisions on Evidence & Artifacts of Performance

The Board and Superintendent shall develop a thorough and shared understanding of the evidence and artifacts of performance for use in evaluating the Superintendent during the upcoming school year. Data gathered by the Superintendent and staff for the purpose of evaluation typically includes state test scores, MAP testing, student surveys, parent surveys, and staff climate and culture surveys. In addition, Board Reports brought to Board meetings and focused on progress checking comparing the measurable data and the base metrics of the Strategic and Annual goals are an obvious set of data evidence to include in the summative evaluation. Within each evaluation category in the evaluation framework, the board and Superintendent need to agree in advance on which sources of evidence and artifacts of work throughout the year may be included. Any additional data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly identified at this meeting along with the methods used to collect the data. For example, staff grievances or concerns should be collected through anonymous surveys sent to all staff. Community concerns or inputs should be collected in a centralized database over the course of the entire year to allow for the detection of consistent or systemic concerns.

In addition, Trustees and Superintendent shall agree on the meaning of the rating scores. For example, does a 2.5 rating represent **Developing to Proficient** or **Developing**. Also, rounding rules should be established at this stage.

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3. Evaluation Conference & Consensus Making

To the greatest extent possible, the board shall work for consensus and develop agreement on which rating best applies for the Superintendent's performance in each theme. Where the board may be unable to reach consensus, the board shall make a decision by majority. In no case, is a minority opinion or divided opinion on the Superintendent's performance presented in the Summative Superintendent document. The Board must come to a decision on the Superintendent's evaluation in each theme, preferably by consensus, and by majority vote when necessary. The following steps can help guide this process:

- A. Each trustee receives a copy of the evaluation instructions and framework.
- B. The board receives the written and oral self-evaluation from the Superintendent with evidence of performance.
- C. Board members reflect individually on the Superintendent's performance rates in each performance category and write Suggested Areas for Growth.
- D. An external third party averages the rating scores and compiles the Suggestions for Growth list. Suggestions for Growth statements should be revised to represent an action and represent a growth suggestion rather than an evaluative comment, personal remark, or the presentation of additional evidence.
- E. These Suggestions for Growth should be rated by each individual Trustee as to whether the item should be included in the final summative evaluation. The same third party should list the Suggestions for Growth statements that represent acceptance by the consensus of the whole Board.
- F. The Board meets with the Superintendent and comes to consensus or votes on Suggestions Areas for Growth using the prepared list of the consensus suggestions created in Step E above. It is recommended to include 4-6 Suggested Areas of Growth as a manageable number of improvements for any educational leader. This document is provided to the Superintendent for preparation for the upcoming evaluation discussion.

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The summative evaluation is based upon data collected during the previous school year from the monitoring of Board policies on progress of the Strategic or Annual Plan focal areas. The Board and Superintendent shall also discuss the Strategic or Annual Plan focal areas, and components of the Superintendent Evaluation policies that the Superintendent performance shall be judged in the upcoming school year.

4. Summative Evaluation

The Board President shall ensure that the Board has a thorough discussion of the Superintendent's performance with him/her prior to completion of the annual cycle. The following steps shall be taken:

- A. The board meets with the Superintendent to discuss the summary evaluation ratings and Suggestions for Growth. The Superintendent can challenge Suggestions for Growth statements. The Board must come to consensus or vote on any challenged evidence or Statements for Growth.
- B. A third party compiles the Summative Evaluation document representing the consensus or vote by the Board in the discussion in Step F above.
- C. The Summative evaluation draft shall be sent to the Trustees. Individual Trustees may request substantive changes in the document, but modifications would need to be approved by the whole Board. If four Trustees determine that substantive changes need to occur, an additional meeting will be held to vote on any revisions to the Summative Evaluation. Otherwise, the Summative Evaluation is now considered official and final.
- D. The official and final Summative Evaluation shall be sent to the Superintendent.
- E. The Board President shall meet with the Superintendent to deliver the final Summative Evaluation and answer any questions or provide guidance regarding the next steps of the process.

The board president and Superintendent shall sign the final annual evaluation document, and the Superintendent shall have the opportunity to provide written response to the board's evaluation. Completion of the evaluation cycle signals the beginning of the next cycle for evaluation. The board, in consultation with the Superintendent, shall discuss what worked well and what should be adjusted for the next cycle. Discussion should include input from the Superintendent regarding the fairness, accuracy, and helpfulness of the recent evaluation process. Remember, this is a conversation about growth. The discussion needs to include to what extent the evaluation process provided clarity in understanding the board's expectations and was helpful for professional growth of the Superintendent.

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5. Formative Check-in of Performance

In order to provide consultative feedback to the Superintendent on their performance during the current school year, the board and Superintendent shall discuss the extent to which artifacts and evidence provided to-date are appropriate and sufficient for use in evaluation and demonstrates sufficient progress. The board and Superintendent shall consider which evidence to retain when performing the summative evaluation and which additional sources of evidence may be needed. Any additional evidence not agreed upon in Step #2 of this evaluation process, can be added only if agreed upon by both the superintendent and a consensus of the Trustees.

Rating Categories

The Balanced Governance Evaluation instrument uses four tiers, similar to promising practices for teacher and principal evaluations. The tiers are **Ineffective**, **Developing**, **Effective**, and **Highly Effective**. If a board deems a Superintendents' performance has been unsatisfactory in one or more themes, a discussion and plan to remediation in that area is required. A new Superintendent may be developing in several themes, and that is not inherently a bad thing. A typical Superintendent's performance may often be developing in some themes, proficient in most themes, and rarely highly effective in more than one theme. Since this instrument is designed to promote growth in the Superintendent district outcomes, the highly effective category is an extremely high bar for most themes. Highly effective should imply that the Superintendent's performance is so extraordinarily exceptional that the Superintendent should be writing books and teaching other Superintendents in that theme. In a healthy and exemplary school district, the Superintendent shall be performing in the proficient category across most themes with one to a few areas that are truly high effective.

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Rounding Ratings

When determining the final evaluation tier of the Superintendent it is necessary to put values on each tier and follow a consistent rounding of the ratings. In this evaluation:

- Ineffective = 1
- Developing = 2
- Effective = 3
- Highly Effective = 4

In the evaluation template, each performance standard included shall be rated by each individual Trustee (Step 3C above). The average of all Trustee ratings in a performance category will be calculated and rounded to the nearest tenth space. The number will be rounded up if the number in the hundredths space is 5 or above. To calculate the overall rating score, all rating numbers will be averaged rather than taking an average of each performance category. Performance categories will not be weighted unless specified in the agreed upon processes from Step 2 above. The overall rating will be rounded to the nearest tenths place using the rounding process noted above for the individual performance categories. The performance level (Ineffective, Developing, Effective, and Highly Effective) will be selected as follows:

Overall Rating Score	Performance Level
0 – 1.4	Ineffective
1.5 – 2.4	Developing
2.5 – 3.4	Effective
3.5 – 4.0	Highly Effective

Use of Evidence

To the greatest extent possible, the board needs to agree in advance—and together with the Superintendent—on the evidence the board uses for evaluating the Superintendent. Evidence may include formal and informal reports or communication from the Superintendent and staff. Evidence may also include student achievement data, attendance data, staff satisfaction data, staff retention, budget reports, community satisfaction, and any other artifacts of performance or sources of information that the board agrees to include.

In particular, the board may want to agree with the Superintendent to ongoing evaluation of performance throughout the year, based on progress reports on Strategic Goals. Artifacts and evidence created from these reviews at regular scheduled board meetings can combine into a portfolio clearly tied to board meeting agenda items and the theme and categories of the Superintendent evaluation instrument. This portfolio of evidence will be available to the public.

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Special Guidance for Compiling the Final Summative Evaluation

The Board should take care to ensure that the final evaluation instrument is a true reflection of the consensus of the board. It should not include statements that a majority of the board cannot support. Narratives should be consistent and with one clear voice to give a complete and accurate description of the Superintendent's performance, as agreed upon by the board. Concentrate on actionable items for Suggestions for Growth.

As the Board President or designee leads the conversation with the board about the Superintendent's performance, the Board should consider the aggregate of the weight of evidence. The Board should look for patterns, not isolated examples, and describe patterns with concrete examples. This is a key opportunity to promote growth in the system and in the Superintendent.