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Principal Evaluator's Manual
for the Instructional Feedback Observation

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Principal Evaluation MANUAL | Instructional Feedback

Principal Evaluator’s Manual

for the Instructional Feedback Observation

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INTRODUCTION

Principal observation offers powerful information about principal performance (Reeves, 2005; Waters & Grubb, 2004). Such observations should focus on routine leadership tasks that have great potential for improving teaching and learning. Observing what principals do and say during principal-teacher interactions following a principal's observation of a classroom lesson offers powerful information about a principal's skill level at helping individual teachers improve their practice and raise student achievement scores.

Observing principals giving instructional feedback to teachers provides performance information on an essential and required aspect of instructional leadership (Clark, Lotto, & McCarthy, 1980; Conley, 1991; Goldring et al., 2009; Knapp, Shields, & Turnbull, 1993; Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2006). Most principals are now required to evaluate and provide feedback on teacher effectiveness during annual formative and summative teacher-evaluation conferences. As a result, principals' feedback to teachers can influence the quality of instruction in a school.

Although certain teacher evaluation systems may be well designed, these systems will not be effective unless principals—who commonly evaluate teachers—follow procedures and provide teachers with data-based feedback on performance in a manner that supports collaboration, planning, and development (Clark & McCarthy, 1983; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Research indicates that principals vary in the quality and impact of performance feedback given to teachers (Balcazar, Hopkins, & Suarez, 1986; Kluger & DeNisi, 1998; Shute, 2007). These variations occur in three areas: trustworthiness of feedback data, focal point of feedback (i.e., task-centered versus person-centered), and the way that feedback is provided (i.e., constructive criticism versus blaming). By implementing a structured process of observing principals and evaluating their instructional feedback conferences, principal evaluators have new opportunities to help make principals' feedback to teachers more consistent and the impact on classroom performance more reliable.

Observing and providing feedback to principals on their work with teachers, therefore, holds potential for improving instructional quality. The ***Instructional Feedback Observation*** is designed to be fully customizable for any district's needs.

About This Manual

The ***Principal Evaluator's Manual for the Instructional Feedback Observation*** provides an overview of the process for observing a principal who is providing instructional feedback to a teacher. The separate ***Principal Evaluator's Toolkit for the Instructional Feedback Observation*** provides forms that you (as a principal evaluator) will need to complete for each observation.

Together, the manual and toolkit provide an instrument for you to use when assessing a critical aspect of principal practice: the principal's evaluation of teachers and feedback given to teachers on their instruction. The manual and toolkit should be used only when observing a principal during a postobservation conference, when a principal and teacher meet to discuss the teacher's classroom observation and the principal provides feedback, ratings, and information on planning for improvement.

The tools in this instrument require the completion of training before you can use them to generate fair, valid, and reliable ratings of a principal's performance.

This manual provides a five-step process for observing a principal's work and explains how to use several observation tools. The manual—and its accompanying toolkit—were designed by American Institutes for Research (AIR) to reflect best practices in personnel evaluation and research on instructional leadership. The manual is organized into three sections. The first section (this introductory portion) provides an overview of the observation process. The second section introduces a rubric, which you will use to assess the principal's performance as he or she provides instructional feedback to a teacher. The third section introduces the five-step process for collecting and using the observation evidence to evaluate a principal's ability to provide instructional feedback to teachers.

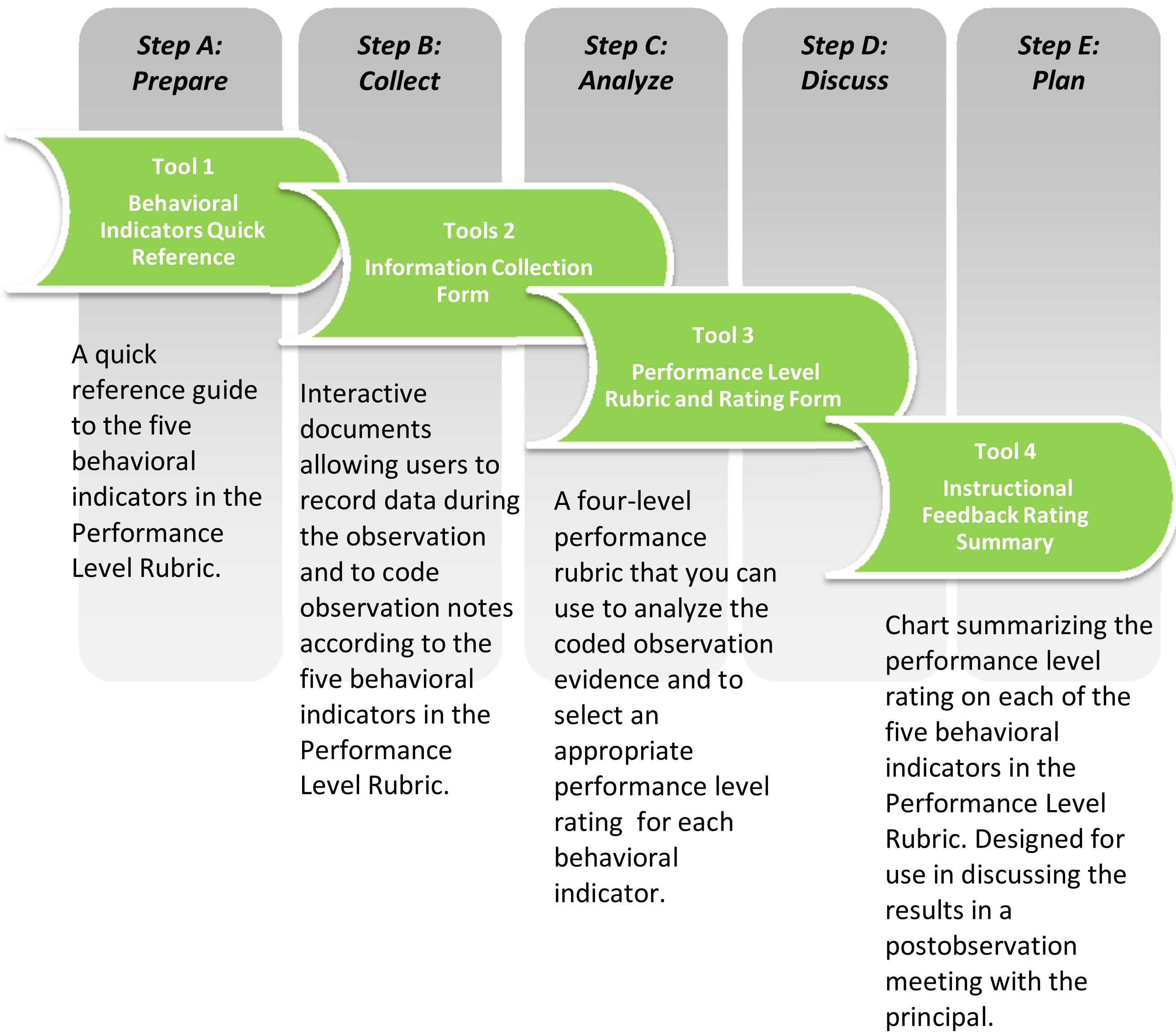
The manual should be used in conjunction with the tools provided in the ***Principal Evaluator's Toolkit for the Instructional Feedback Observation***. Together, the manual and toolkit allow superintendents, assistant superintendents, human resource directors, and other evaluators to record information about a principal's performance in providing instructional feedback during a teacher evaluation; assess the principal's performance level rating on five behavioral indicators (evidence use, professional interactions, differentiated questioning, leading conversations, and written feedback); and determine a final summative observation score.

Overview of the Observation Tools

The four tools (provided in the ***Principal Evaluator's Toolkit for the Instructional Feedback Observation***) are designed to help you complete the five-step observation process (see Figure 1), which ends with an assessment of a principal's performance as a teacher evaluator. These tools will help you capture data and evidence during the observation; analyze the evidence; make valid decisions about a principal's level of performance; give thoughtful, targeted feedback; and help the principal to plan for improvement in specific areas. The observation process provides evaluators with evidence of a principal's skill in providing instructional feedback to teachers.

Each tool is described in more detail in the sections that follow, but you should note that these tools are designed specifically for the purpose of observing and rating a principal's performance *when conducting a postobservation conference with a teacher.* The tools should not be used to make observations in other contexts (e.g., faculty meetings, classroom walk-throughs, brief one-on-one conversations) or for other purposes.

Figure 1. Overview of the Instructional Feedback Observation Process and Tools



Overview of the Observation Process

As an observer, your work is organized in five steps: prepare, collect, analyze, discuss, and plan. Figure 2 provides an overview of the steps. Your observation of principal practice will be fair and consistent only to the extent that you carefully prepare for and follow the procedures outlined in this manual. AIR recommends that complete a minimum of two instructional feedback observations for each principal.

Figure 2. Overview of the Five Steps

Step A: Prepare

- Meet with the principal and use the Preobservation Meeting Form.
- Review **Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form** and **Tool 1: Behavioral Indicators Quick Reference**.
- Schedule two observations (or recordings); provide information to teachers and request their consent.

Step B: Collect

- Establish the right conditions to observe.
- Review Tool 1 as a reminder of behaviors to watch for.
- Take detailed notes using **Tool 2: Information Collection Form**.

Step C: Analyze

- Soon after the observation, analyze your notes (Tool 2) and write a summary (Tool 3). Refer back to Tool 2 as needed.
- Use the mark-up functions in Microsoft Word to code your notes.
- Use **Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form** to analyze performance and record a rating for each behavioral indicator. Fill in “Evaluator’s Notes” sections as needed.
- Complete **Tool 4: Instructional Feedback Rating Summary**. Determine the principal’s overall rating in providing instructional feedback (final observation only).

Step D: Discuss

- Meet with the principal to provide feedback on practice and, after the final observation, to discuss summative scores. Use the Postobservation Meeting Forms to guide your conversation.
- Ask the principal to self-assess using Tool 3.
- Insert the principal’s self-rating into Tool 4. Compare with your own findings.
- Reinforce the principal’s strengths.
- Build on the self-reflection and evidence in the observation notes to give formative feedback on areas for growth.

Step E: Plan

- Use the formative feedback, summative scores, and observation discussions to assist the principal in identifying goals and resources to plan for improvement. Document the decisions in the Professional Growth Plan.

THE PERFORMANCE LEVEL RUBRIC: THE FOUNDATION

As part of the principal evaluation process, you will be assessing the degree to which principals are strong teacher evaluators and specifically provide teachers with actionable feedback. You might want to think about the following questions: What does good instructional feedback look like? What is the difference between instructional feedback that seems to generate no change and instructional feedback that leads to steady improvements in teacher practice? What effective practices do instructional leaders use in generating collaborative, productive conversations with teachers about their performance?

Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form describes key practices that principals should use when conducting postobservation conferences with teachers to review observation results and provide feedback. The rubric translates these practices into five concrete behavioral indicators (evidence use, professional interactions, differentiated questioning, leading conversations, and written feedback) that are described across four levels of performance (basic, developing, proficient, and distinguished). As an evaluator, you will use this rubric as the foundation for the instructional feedback observation process.

The rubric provides you and the principals you evaluate with a common language and framework for discussing individual strengths and weaknesses and for identifying concrete steps that a principal can take to improve his or her instructional feedback. The rubric also helps to ensure that your ratings and feedback are evidence based, and it enables you to more efficiently assess the quality of feedback that principals give to teachers—for example, whether it is the principal's performance on "evidence use" or the principal's "professional interactions" that need more attention in coaching and professional development planning.

Figure 3 shows the behavioral indicators for the instructional feedback observation.

Figure 3. Behavioral Indicators for Instructional Feedback

The rubric uses a four-point scale to score principals:

1. **Basic.** The principal demonstrates the *practices and behaviors that are minimally necessary* to provide teachers with useful instructional feedback.
2. **Developing.** The principal demonstrates basic levels of proficiency and a *partial command of the practices and behaviors* necessary to provide teachers with useful instructional feedback.
3. **Proficient.** The principal demonstrates basic levels of proficiency and a *full command of the core practices and behaviors* necessary to provide teachers with useful instructional feedback.
4. **Distinguished.** The principal demonstrates a *full command of the core practices and behaviors* necessary for providing teachers with useful instructional feedback and demonstrates *additional practices and behaviors* to ensure that teachers receive the support necessary to improve their instruction and achieve professional goals.

The performance descriptions that define each level are purposely developmental and focus on informed practice. By describing concrete practices and skills at different levels of performance, the rubric enables evaluators and supervisors to gather precise data on principal performance and use those data to give feedback to principals. A principal and his or her supervisor can use the practices and skills described in the *proficient* and *distinguished* categories to build on strengths or to strategize ways to improve in areas of weakness.

The rubric supports principals' efforts at leading learning by providing evidence that principals are knowledgeable about and can do the following: focus teachers' attention on making instructional decisions based on data or students' needs; ask probing questions of teachers that lead to deeper understandings about what they must know and be able to do to teach well; offer task-centered instead of person-centered feedback; and plan for improvements in student learning, teacher reflection, and professional growth. This rubric addresses Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standard 2: "An education leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth" (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 14).

COMPLETING THE OBSERVATION PROCESS: FIVE STEPS

The process of observing a principal for evaluation purposes consists of five steps:

- Step A: **Prepare** for the observation.
- Step B: **Collect** information at the observation.
- Step C: **Analyze** the information.
- Step D: **Discuss** the results with the principal.
- Step E: **Plan** for continuing improvement.

Each step is discussed in the following pages.

Step A: Prepare

Evaluating instructional feedback requires attention to planning and careful preparation to ensure you have the knowledge, skills, and materials required to complete the observation process with fidelity. Observing instructional feedback must be done carefully and requires that all parties agree to and understand the purpose of the observation. Respecting and ensuring confidentiality is a central concern in observing a principal during a principal-teacher instructional feedback conference. Teachers rightfully may not wish to have a third party present when receiving formal feedback from their principal. The presence of a principal evaluator during the conference could influence both participants and their interactions in unexpected ways. In addition, teachers understandably may be concerned that information about their performance is being made available to a third party.

Materials Required

- ✓ **Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form** (Toolkit)
- ✓ Principal's job description
- ✓ **Preobservation Meeting Form**
- ✓ **Appendix: Common Rating Errors and How to Avoid Them** (pages 26–28)

The following sections describe the strategies in **Step A: Prepare** for an in-person observation. To help address confidentiality concerns, you can ask the principal or another person to videotape the instructional feedback conferences rather than observing the conferences directly. If this approach is adopted, however, you must follow the same steps for communicating, scheduling and obtaining teacher permission that are described under Step A.1.

Before using this instrument, district leadership, teacher representatives, and individual teachers must agree to willingly participate in the observation process.

!

Confidentiality

Principals should have the opportunity to conduct an instructional feedback conference in a confidential manner. The information collected by the principal's evaluator should not be made available to anyone except the principal. Similarly, the collection of teacher evaluation data is confidential and is used by the principal's supervisor only to give formative feedback to the principal.

The teacher is a participant in the instructional feedback conference and is not being evaluated; the evaluator's rating of the principal's performance during the teacher evaluation meeting should never be used to influence a teacher's evaluation

You should prepare school staff by ensuring that the principal and teachers being observed are fully informed and understand the purpose and importance of the observation, when it will occur, how long it will take, how the observer will be involved, and the expected outcomes. It is particularly important that teachers understand that you will be observing the *principal's* work and will not be evaluating the teacher's work.

Before you begin your observations, you should complete the following steps:

Step A.1: Communicate

- **Meet with the principal** for the preobservation meeting. You should use the **Preobservation Meeting Form.**
- **Orient the principal** to the observation process for instructional feedback, which includes **Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form**, so that he or she thoroughly understands performance expectations and procedures (first observation only).
- **Explain to teachers and principals in advance why you are observing.** Teachers will be concerned that you are attending their instructional feedback conference, and this situation can influence what occurs during the conference. You should notify the teacher beforehand and explain to him or her that you will be observing this conference and that the purpose of your visit is to evaluate the principal, not the teacher. Several weeks in

If you choose to videotape the meeting rather than observe in person, you still must communicate this information to the teacher and obtain his or her permission. !

advance, ask the principal to provide the teacher with a letter explaining the observation, when it will occur, details on any and all teacher evaluation evidence being collected as part of the observation, how the teacher evaluation evidence will be used, and what steps are in place to ensure that the teacher's confidentiality will be protected. As a final reminder, e-mail or call the teacher at least one week in advance of the observation to obtain his or her verbal consent and to answer any questions or concerns that he or she might have.

Step A.2: Schedule

- **Arrange a time to observe the principal in postobservation conferences** during which the principal provides observation results and feedback to an individual teacher. You should select conferences with both new and experienced teachers or teachers whose evaluation ratings are both high and low. You will want to observe a principal providing instructional feedback in these varied settings—to ensure consistency and to ensure that the principal can give effective feedback that meets teachers' individual needs. Although coaching low-performing teachers is often a core focal point in instructional leadership, giving good instructional feedback to the strongest teachers is equally important in helping principals to continually improve and to reaffirm a culture of learning and professional growth among administration and instructional staff. Because this observation focuses on instructional feedback given by the principal to a teacher, be sure to select conferences in which the focus will be on sharing instructional feedback rather than addressing disciplinary or other issues.

  To generate valid feedback and ratings, you should observe a principal at two different instructional feedback conferences. The first observation is *informative*, which means that it is intended as feedback for principals and does not contribute to human capital decisions. The second observation is *summative*, which means that results will contribute to human capital decisions. If your principal does not evaluate two or more teachers annually, this instrument should not be used to rate the principal's performance.

> ! *To generate valid feedback and ratings, the instrument requires you to observe a principal* ***at a minimum of two different teacher evaluation conferences.***

- **Dedicate 45 minutes** of time (in addition to the time needed to observe) to complete all required forms for each observation and to analyze the observation data to prepare formative feedback for the principal.

> ***Remember: Do not surprise the principal and teacher by showing up unexpectedly to observe a principal-teacher postobservation conference!***

- **Schedule a 30-minute, postobservation meeting** for each observation cycle (one informative and one summative) with the principal to share feedback about his or her performance. During the informative postobservation meeting, do not show or discuss your specific ratings with the principal, but discuss areas in which the principal is performing well or could improve based on the observation data you collected.

Step A.3: Review

- **Make sure that you understand the five behavioral indicators** for instructional feedback. Study **Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form** carefully and keep **Tool 1: Behavioral Indicators Quick Reference** available for a quick check.

- **Make sure that your use of the rating system** is objective. Carefully read the **Appendix: Common Rating Errors and How to Avoid Them** (pages 26–28) before beginning your observations and making ratings. Having knowledge about rating errors will help you to ensure that your ratings are fair, accurate, and free from bias.

- **Review the principal's job description** or other materials that describe the primary job duties of the principal you are evaluating. You also should talk to the principal about his or her role as a teacher evaluator to better understand the role played by the principal in these evaluations. These steps are important for ensuring that you understand the actual (not assumed) job duties of the principal you are evaluating and that your use of this form is appropriate.

- **Review all the tools used in the observation.** In particular, you should review the procedures for taking notes in **Tool 2: Information Collection Form**, summarizing your observation and assessing principal performance using **Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form**, and converting your assessment to **Tool 4: Instructional Feedback Rating Summary**. Review the "Questions for Consideration" that are provided to guide your data collection in Tool 2.

Step B: Collect

Collecting and recording accurate information is essential in a principal's performance evaluation. In particular, a detailed observation is more likely to result in accurate and fair performance ratings and also is more likely to be technically sound and legally defensible.

Step B.1: Establish the Right Conditions to Observe

Materials Required

- ✓ **Tool 1: Behavioral Indicators Quick Reference** (Toolkit)
- ✓ **Tool 2: Information Collection Form** (Toolkit)
- ✓ Teacher observation forms

- Before the observation session begins, **do a quick review of** appropriate behaviors for providing instructional feedback. Use **Tool 1: Behavioral Indicators Quick Reference**.

- Before the observation session begins, **complete basic information** about the context of the observation in the appropriate section of **Tool 2: Information Collection Form**, which should be open on a laptop computer. This tool allows users to type notes into the provided sections and save the data for later review and analysis. In the space provided, describe the context of the situation that you are observing. In particular, you should take notes about the teacher's level of experience, the students' prior achievement and achievement goals, school-specific initiatives for curriculum and instruction that may be relevant to the instructional feedback, and other factors. You should provide as much information as possible so that the situation can be clearly described in your narrative summary and the behavior of the principal can be evaluated within the context you have provided.

- When you arrive for the observation, **ask the teacher if he or she has any questions or concerns** about your presence and verify that the teacher received the earlier notifications about the observation. Again, ask the teacher for his or her verbal permission for you to sit in on the postobservation conference and to obtain a copy of the teacher evaluation data used as part of the conference.

- **Position yourself in a place where you can clearly see the principal, the teacher, and their interaction.** You should avoid sitting so close to the principal or teacher that you become part of the instructional feedback conference; however, you should sit close enough that you can clearly see and hear everything.

REMEMBER!

During the observation, be like a fly on the wall: Strive to maintain a presence that is unobtrusive and, to the extent possible, unnoticed. Remember that you should not become involved or participate in the session. Also refrain from any verbal or facial expressions that can be interpreted by the teacher and principal during the observation.

Step B.2: Take Detailed Notes

- **Take notes during the observation session**. You can have **Tool 2: Information Collection Form** open on a laptop computer. This tool allows users to type notes into the provided sections and save the data for later review and analysis. Specific "Questions for Consideration" are provided in each section of Tool 2 as prompts to guide you in recording information during the postobservation conference.

Questions for Consideration preview:

- *Did the principal discuss the meaning of his or her teacher evaluation ratings with the teacher?*
- *Describe the types of feedback the principal provided to the teacher about his or her performance.*

- **Take as many notes as possible** so that your summaries are detailed and accurate; however, you should be careful to balance note taking with observing nonverbal gestures and interactions between the teacher and principal.

- **Create a running record of the interaction.** Describe what the principal says, what the teacher says, and what information or materials are used during their interactions. Pay careful attention to capturing the questions the principal asks, the teacher's responses, and the sources of evidence that the principal and teacher include in the discussion.

- **Describe any outcomes of the postobservation conference**, such as any follow-up actions taken by the principal or the teacher. Record these outcomes in Section 2.3 of Tool 2. Note any relevant outcomes that may provide information about the principal's performance or could have an impact on the principal's future performance—for example, if the principal set up additional coaching or feedback conferences with a teacher.

Figure 4 shows an example of the completed Tool 2.

Figure 4. Example of Information Collection Form

Running Record (p. 1)

Principal says…	Teacher says…
At preconf, you mentioned trying to use grading rubrics with your kids. Risky—with observer in room. Admire you took that risk.	
How has that evolved?	
	Took 2 days to develop the student rubric. Longer than I thought.
Really? You didn't seem thrown off. Telling me about your planning?	
	Combined rubrics from 2 classes into single rubric, made copies and handed out to each class. But meat of rubric developed by each class. Students grasped the lesson, seemed to like it.
So, think about how you prepared, where do you think you were on the rubric?	
	I think it went well, think I was proficient.

Evidence Use

Professional Interactions

Differentiated Questioning

Leading Conversations

Written Feedback

General Tips for Conducting Observations

- ***Focus only on the principal's comments, questions, or references to classroom data or student-teacher interactions.*** *Do not think about or rate the principal on other aspects of his or her practice that you are not observing. If you do, you will miss critical information or will include extraneous information in your ratings.*

- ***Record only information that you observe.*** *Do not assume that other practices are occurring, and do not "fill in the blanks" on missing behaviors or information. You should record and rate only what you observe, and you should not include information from teachers or other school administrators that you cannot verify or have not observed yourself. By relying only on what you observe, your ratings will be more accurate and fair.*

- ***Avoid incorporating extraneous performance.*** *The focus during your observation should be on the actual performance of the principal you are observing. You should avoid incorporating the performance of other individuals into your ratings. In addition, the outcomes of the performance should not be incorporated into your ratings unless these outcomes reflect the performance of the principal.*

StepB.3: Gather Additional Evidence, and Summarize the Findings

- **Collect copies of the teacher observation forms** to document the observation session. Behavioral indicator 5 requires you to assess how the principal has provided written feedback. You should collect a copy of the teacher observation file in order to verify that the correct evidence was accurately presented to the teacher. As outlined in the **Step A: Prepare** section, you must explain to the teacher *in advance of the observation* that you will be requesting copies of his or her observation forms, detail exactly how the data will be used, and indicate how his or her confidentiality will be protected. You should obtain the teacher's written permission before receiving a copy of the evaluation file.

- **Return to your notes *immediately* after the observation session** so that you can add any information you may not have had the time to write down during your observation. Review the "Questions for Consideration" for each section, and incorporate any additional evidence or details into your notes to ensure that you have captured all relevant information from the session.

- **Write your narrative summary** of the observation session and the performance of the principal in **Tool 3: Narrative Summary of the Observation Session**. Use the notes you took during the actual observation session. Include as much detail as possible.

Data Security

After completing an observation, you should digitally and physically secure all data you collect to ensure that teacher and principal confidentiality are respected. When possible, store the data that you collect in a password-protected file on your computer.

In addition, follow these guidelines:

- *Before you send a file containing observation data via e-mail, password-protect the file.*
- *Store all digital files on a secure server provided through your school district. Do not relocate files to your home or personal computers, which may lack important security protections.*
- *Store any print copies of documents, including copies of teacher evaluations, in a locked file cabinet in your school office. Do not take these documents home, and avoid removing these documents from your office except for postobservation meetings with the principal.*

Step C: Analyze

Analyzing the observational information that you collected is an essential step in the principal evaluation process. You will need to allocate some time to reflect upon the notes you took (Tool 2) and the narrative summary you wrote (Tool 3). Be sure to review all of these materials before assigning performance ratings to the principal (Tool 4). Spending this additional time reviewing your materials is essential if you want to accurately evaluate the principal's performance.

Materials Required

- ✓ **Tool 1: Behavioral Indicators Quick Reference** (Toolkit)
- ✓ **Tool 2: Information Collection Form** (Toolkit)
- ✓ **Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form** (Toolkit)
- ✓ **Tool 4: Instructional Feedback Rating Summary** (Toolkit)
- ✓ Teacher observation files

To assist in the analysis process, **Tool 2: Information Collection Form** is designed to work with the mark-up features in Microsoft Word. You can decide to use the highlight feature or shapes feature (or any additional feature you prefer) to link observation information with the behavioral indicators listed to the right of the note-taking box in the various sections of Tool 2. Although "coding" the data in this manner will greatly ease the process of quickly locating information to review when considering a performance level ranking for each indicator, the core activity in an analysis process requires you to carefully read your observation notes, interpret the data, and compare them with the performance level descriptions provided in **Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form**.

Remember: To avoid forgetting details of the event, make time to code the observation notes and complete **Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form** ***within hours of completing each observation.***

The following guidelines will help you to analyze the data and make your performance ratings:

Step C.1: Be Ready to Analyze

- **Analyze soon after observing.** Although you have taken notes and completed a summary of the event, you will be partially relying on memory to rate the principal. Completing the required documentation and making your ratings soon after completing your observation will help to ensure that your ratings are fair and accurate.

- **Keep in mind the desired behaviors for instructional feedback.** Refer often to **Tool 1: Behavioral Indicators Quick Reference** to help you as you make decisions about what information in your observation notes applies to each of the six behavioral indicators.

Print this page out and keep it next to you, or open it up as a separate document on your laptop so you can toggle back and forth between it and your observation notes

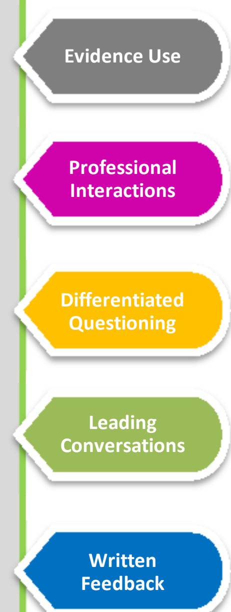
Step C.2: Code the Observation Notes

- **Use the mark-up functions in Microsoft Word to code your observation notes** in Tool 2. Figure 5 demonstrates one approach for coding: code the text by using the highlight feature and changing the default color to match the corresponding tab color for the relevant behavioral indicator. Other options are possible, depending on your personal preferences.

Figure 5. Example of Coded Observation Notes

Running Record (p. 1)

Principal says…	Teacher says…
At preconf, you mentioned trying to use grading rubrics with your kids. Risky—with observer in room. Admire you took that risk.	
How has that evolved?	Took 2 days to develop the student rubric. Longer than I thought.
Really? You didn't seem thrown off. Telling me about your planning?	Combined rubrics from 2 classes into single rubric, made copies and handed out to each class. But meat of rubric developed by each class. Students grasped the lesson, seemed to like it.
So, think about how you prepared, where do you think you were on the rubric?	I think it went well, think I was proficient.



- **Review your materials and coding.** Before marking your performance ratings in Tool 3, start by reviewing all relevant materials (such as **Tool 2: Information Data Collection Form** and teacher observation files). This approach will help you to recall your observations and also may help you to identify where you should add more information to your notes.

Step C.3: Choose a Rating for Each Indicator

- **Open Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form**, and scroll to the first behavioral indicator: evidence use. Review the performance level descriptors for this indicator. Refer to Tool 2 to review all notes you have coded as relevant for that behavioral indicator.

- **Compare your observation information to the performance level description.** Use your coded notes to make judgments about the level of performance you observed. By comparing the performance you observed and recorded in your notes with the level of performance described in Tool 3, you should be able to assign the principal one of the four ratings (basic, developing, proficient, and distinguished) for that indicator.

- **Look back at your observation notes (Tool 2) and narrative summary of the observation session (Tool 3) for pertinent information** about specific practices, behaviors, or evidence that you want to share with the principal when providing him or her with formative feedback during the postobservation meeting. Copy these notes to the "Evaluator's Notes" section at the bottom of each indicator in Tool 5. After the postobservation meeting, you also can note here any information (e.g., clarifications, plans for improvement) for future postobservation meetings with the principal.

- **For behavioral indicator 5, review the teacher observation file you collected.** Consider the following questions, and note any relevant information for formative feedback in the notes section for those indicators:
  - Are the examples or data that the principal cited during the postobservation conference accurately reflected in the teacher observation forms?
  - Did the principal provide feedback on the most important aspects of the teacher's performance, as detailed in the observation forms? In other words, did the principal fail to discuss any key deficiencies or unique strengths that are documented in the forms?
  - Is there any evidence that the principal misinterpreted data or evidence when communicating feedback to the teacher?

- **Determine the ratings for each indicator and mark the appropriate checkboxes** in Tool 3. When assigning a rating, be sure to examine the behavioral anchors for a higher and lower value than the rating you think should be assigned. This approach will help you to target which rating you should give. You should also review the "Rating Tips" in Tool 3 for additional guidance on selecting ratings.

Step C.4: Determine a Final Overall Rating (only after final observation)

In preparation for the summative postobservation meeting with the principal, you will need to determine a final overall rating for the principal on his or her ability to provide instructional feedback during a teacher evaluation. Use **Tool 4: Instructional Feedback Rating Summary** to record your scoring decision. You should bring a copy of this document with you to the summative postobservation meeting. Unlike statistically based rating forms, the instructional feedback observation requires evaluators to look at a principal's performance *holistically* and over *both observations* to make a final rating decision based on qualitative, professional judgments about the principal's performance. In determining an overall rating, you should do the following:

- **Complete Tool 4: Instructional Feedback Rating Summary** except for the final rating**.** Refer to the ratings on each of the behavioral indicators in Tool 3, and add them to Tool 4. (This rating summary also includes a column to record the principal's self-assessment rating during the postobservation meeting and the option to identify the need for more information on a particular indicator.) If you are unable to rate a particular performance dimension (for example, because you were not able to observe the principal performing the specified behaviors), please mark the "not enough information" option on the rating scale in Tool 4. Although it is better to mark this option than to provide an inaccurate rating, please try to use this option only when you believe you are unable to provide a rating.

- **Consider only the *actual performance* of the principal in the postobservation conference that you observed in the final observation.** Do not incorporate into your ratings any other information (such as the prior observation you conducted earlier or the results of your informative postobservation meeting with the principal). This information, although important, is not relevant to the ratings you are assigning.

- **Do *not* determine the principal's overall rating by computing a sum of the ratings you made on each behavioral indicator.** Although your overall rating should closely reflect the ratings you provided on individual indicators, a mean score that takes into account a few outliers (either a very high or very low rating) on some behavioral indicators can have a large impact on your overall rating.

- **Make a final rating decision** based on qualitative, evidence-based professional judgments about the principal's overall performance in providing instructional feedback. Enter this rating in Tool 4.

Figure 6 shows an example of a completed Tool 4.

Figure 6. Example of Instructional Feedback Rating Summary

Instructional Feedback Rating Summary						
Indicator	1 Basic	2 Developing	3 Proficient	4 Distinguished	Not Enough Information	Principal's Self-Rating
1 **Evidence Use**			✓			2
2 **Professional Interactions**			✓			3
3 **Differentiated Questioning**		✓				3
4 **Leading Conversations**				✓		3
5 **Written Feedback**		✓				4
Final Rating	**3 Proficient**					

Principal's Comments (Optional):

Evaluator's Comments (Optional):

Principal's Signature: JD
Date: April 29, 2012
Evaluator's Signature: MD
Date: April 29, 2012

Step D: Discuss

You should conduct a postobservation meeting after each observation. For the first observation, you should use the Informative Postobservation Meeting Form. At this meeting, you will discuss the informative observation and provide formative feedback.

After the final observation, you should use the Summative Postobservation Meeting Form. At this meeting, you will discuss the final observation, provide summative feedback, and discuss your summative scoring decisions.

Materials Required

- ✓ **Tool 2: Information Collection Form** (Toolkit)
- ✓ **Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form** (Toolkit)
- ✓ **Tool 4: Instructional Feedback Rating Summary** (Toolkit)
- ✓ **Postobservation Meeting Forms for Cycle 1 and Cycle 2**
- ✓ Principal's self-evaluation (optional)
- ✓ Teacher observation files

Giving a principal good feedback, especially when combined with regular coaching, helps a principal identify and develop behavioral adjustments or skills that are crucial for improving leadership practice (Goldring et al., 2009). As noted in the **Step A: Analyze** section, you will have prepared for this meeting by reviewing and coding your notes (Tools 2) and completing **Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form** and **Tool 4: Instructional Feedback Rating Summary**.

Just as principals often vary in their skill levels at delivering evaluative instructional feedback to teachers, superintendents or their designees often vary widely in their level of comfort and their training for providing feedback and coaching to principals. The following strategies will assist you in giving formative feedback to the principal.

Step D.1: Prepare for the Discussion

- **Review your coded observation notes and the summary notes** in Tool 2 and Tool 3; also review the Evaluator's Notes you made in Tool 3.
- **Determine the principal's major areas of strength and weakness** that were demonstrated in the instructional feedback observations. Use your notes as evidence.
- **Ask the principal to self-assess his or her performance** at providing instructional feedback. The principal will use his or her copy of **Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form** to indicate a self-rating that will be discussed at the postobservation meeting.

Step D.2: Conduct the Discussion

- **Meet with the principal** in a private and comfortable office to discuss the results of the observations and the ratings.

- **Use the appropriate postobservation meeting form** to structure your discussion.

- **Prompt the principal to share his or her reflections from the self-assessment.** Do not explicitly discuss and compare your ratings with the principal's self-assessment ratings; however, when the principal's self-assessment of his or her performance on an indicator is significantly different from yours, ask the principal to describe his or her interpretation of the behavioral indicator and how the principal feels it was reflected in his or her performance during the instructional feedback conference. Draw on your coded observation notes to clarify any misunderstandings the principal may have about a behavioral indicator and to base the conversation on strengths or weaknesses that the principal may have overlooked in his or her own self-assessment.

- **Insert the principal's self-assessment ratings** into Tool 4.

- **Reinforce the principal's strengths.** Diligently cite evidence from your observation notes that highlight what the principal did particularly well during the instructional feedback conference.

- **Build on the principal's self-reflections and the evidence in your observation notes** to discuss areas of weakness and specific practices and behaviors that were not demonstrated. Ask the principal to reflect on how he or she might approach the particularly challenging aspects of the previous instructional feedback conference in a different way in future conferences.

- **Use the evidence in the teacher observation forms and your observation notes** to point out instances where the principal made good use of evidence during his or her explanations. If you encountered any inconsistencies or deficiencies in the principal's use of the teacher observation evidence, point these out and ask the principal to explain his or her reasoning.

- **If applicable, note any progress** (or lack thereof) that the principal has made in areas identified as an area for growth in previous postobservation meetings.

Step E: Plan

Helping principals to develop clear goals and feasible plans for improving their instructional feedback skills is a crucial step in the formative process (Finnerty, 2008; Hooijberg & Lane, 2009; Whitmore, 2004). After providing the principal with formative feedback during each postobservation meeting, set aside time to assist the principal in developing goals and identifying resources to meet those goals. Offer a variety of resources, strategies, and exercises for each behavioral indicator to help your principal map out a strategy for improvement.

Materials Required

- ✓ **Tool 2: Information Collection Form** (Toolkit)
- ✓ **Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form** (Toolkit)
- ✓ **Tool 4: Instructional Feedback Rating Summary** (Toolkit)
- ✓ **Professional Growth Plan Form**
- ✓ Teacher observation files

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APPENDIX
COMMON RATING ERRORS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

When observing and rating a principal's job performance, raters can easily make errors that reduce the accuracy and objectivity of the ratings. These errors also can limit the validity, fairness, and reliability of ratings. For accurate performance appraisal, it is essential for raters to minimize these errors as much as possible.

Following is a list of several common rater errors. In addition to a brief definition of each error, this list provides some general suggestions for minimizing their impact on your ratings. Please examine these rater errors and refer back to them periodically during your ratings to avoid making these errors.

Central Tendency

Definition: A rater evaluates the principal using points on the middle of the scale and avoids extremely high or low ratings.

How to avoid this error: Make sure to pay careful attention to the behavioral anchors that define job performance at each scale point. Compare information about an employee's performance with these behavioral examples. Also, keep in mind that behavioral anchors are examples. Thus, if a candidate does not display every single behavior for a particular rating, this situation does not prevent you from using that rating.

Contrast Effect

Definition: A rater directly compares the performance of one principal to the performance of another principal. This contrast effect is exacerbated when the performance levels of the compared principals differ significantly. This effect may lead to higher ratings for above-average principals and lower ratings for poorer performing principals.

How to avoid this error: When making performance ratings, do not compare principals. Instead, compare the performance of principals to the anchors on the rating scale.

Focusing on One or Two Incidents

Definition: A rater bases ratings on a few particularly effective or ineffective principal behaviors. As a result, ratings of performance are based on just a few instances rather than on the full range of that principal's behavior.

How to avoid this error: Although some principal behaviors—such as very effective or very ineffective behaviors—may stand out in your mind, remember to take into account the full range of performance you observe. Taking detailed notes and frequently referring to the performance dimensions, especially the behavioral indicators, can help to avoid this error.

Frame of Reference

Definition: A rater's personal performance standards inappropriately take the place of the job requirements outlined by the school or district.

How to avoid this error: Carefully examine the rating scale for each dimension. In particular, you should focus on the behavioral anchors associated with each performance level. Prior to making your ratings, review the official job description for the principal position. Try to avoid incorporating your personal standards or feelings about what should constitute effective job performance.

Halo Error

Definition: A rater allows ratings on one behavioral indicator to influence ratings on another behavioral indicator.

How to avoid this error: Remember that behavioral indicators are independent. Therefore, your ratings on one behavioral indicator should not influence ratings on another behavioral indicator. Instead, consider a principal's performance on each behavioral indicator separately. Use only information that is relevant to the behavioral indicator that you are rating.

High Potential Error

Definition: A rater gives higher ratings to a principal than he or she actually deserves. The higher rating is given because the rater believes that the principal has the potential to one day be an excellent principal. Alternatively, this error also could occur when a rater believes that the principal has low potential; in this situation, the rater gives that principal lower ratings than he or she deserves.

How to avoid this error: Remember to consider *all* instances of an employee's *actual* job performance. Ratings should be made based only on an employee's behavior. Ratings should not be made based on an employee's anticipated improvements or declines.

Leniency and Severity

Definition: A rater gives mostly high (lenient) or low (severe) ratings to a principal in a manner that is inconsistent with the principal's actual performance.
How to avoid this error: Make sure to pay careful attention to the scale anchors when making your ratings. Also, review the anchors in order to understand how performance is defined at each scale point. You should not try to intentionally be an "easy" or "hard" rater.

Recency Bias

Definition: A rater is inclined to remember recent events better than those that occurred in the past. In this situation, the rater often places greater emphasis or weight on what a principal has done most recently. This error results in ratings that are often based on a smaller sample of work.

How to avoid this error: When making performance ratings, consider all of the principal's performance over the entire rating time period. This approach will help to ensure that a complete group of behaviors is considered. Remind yourself that the level of performance at the beginning of the time period is just as important as more recent performance.

Similar-to-Me Bias

Definition: A rater provides higher ratings to principals who are similar to themselves, and lower ratings to principals who are dissimilar. A related bias occurs when raters allow how much they like or dislike a principal to influence the principal's performance ratings.

How to avoid this error: Avoid incorporating personal feelings or perceptions about a principal into your performance ratings. Only actual job performance should be used to make ratings, and other pieces of information should not be used.

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