

## Teacher Improvement Process

Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.40 and 122A.41 state that the teacher evaluation model “must give teachers not meeting professional teaching standards...support to improve through a teacher improvement process that includes established goals and timelines; and must discipline a teacher for not making adequate progress in the teacher improvement process...”

A teacher who receives an “Unsatisfactory” rating on a summative evaluation enters a teacher improvement process. This activity replaces the individual growth and development plan for that teacher. The purpose of the teacher improvement process is to provide support and assistance to teachers who are not meeting standards of performance. A teacher remains in the teacher improvement process until:

- The teacher improves in all areas identified in the improvement plan; or,
- The teacher has had sufficient time and resources to meet performance standards and has not done so.

In the case of improved performance, the teacher returns to the three-year professional review cycle and completes an individual growth and development plan.

### *Role of the exclusive representative of teachers*

There are constitutional, statutory, and contractual language to ensure that due process is followed. The district is responsible for determining whether a teacher's performance is such that he/she should be subject to discipline or placed in the teacher improvement process. The union shall not have any role in that decision and retains its right to grieve any discipline of a teacher.

### *Role of the administrator (summative evaluator)*

A licensed administrator must facilitate the teacher improvement process with a teacher receiving an “Unsatisfactory” rating.

To make clear the distinction between “summative evaluator” in the evaluation model and this role in the teacher improvement process, this person is referred to as the “administrator.” The administrator must:

- Have a Minnesota administrator's license.
- Have successfully completed MDE training on the evaluation model.
- Be employed in a supervisory position in the district, preferably the teacher's direct supervisor.

### *Role of the district*

The district must assign or approve the administrator who will lead the teacher improvement process.

### *Role of peer coaching or mentoring*

Licensed teachers, especially ones who are qualified and trained summative evaluators or peer reviewers, should play a role in supporting and coaching a teacher in the teacher improvement process.

A teacher may request, as part of his teacher improvement plan, the support of a peer(s) during the teacher improvement process. This peer may serve in a coaching or mentoring role and must be approved by the administrator. Should a peer be named and approved, that peer may be involved in any meetings between the teacher and administrator at the teacher's request. The peer will not evaluate the teacher or the teacher's progress in the teacher improvement process.

## **Awareness**

Minnesota Statutes, sections 122A.40 and 122A.41 require at least one summative evaluation for a teacher as part of the three-year professional review cycle. Typically, the summative evaluation will happen at the end of the three-year cycle. However, a teacher may receive a summative evaluation from an assigned summative evaluator at any time in response to performance concerns. In cases in which a summative evaluator has determined that performance concerns warrant a summative evaluation before the final year of a teacher's three-year cycle, the following guidelines should be considered:

- The teacher should be informed that the summative evaluator is collecting and reviewing evidence to conduct a summative evaluation and of any performance concerns.
- The summative evaluator should collect evidence sufficient to measure teacher practice, student engagement, and student learning and achievement. A *minimum* of three formal observation cycles or extended observations, other available evidence of teacher practice, available evidence of student learning and achievement, and available evidence of student engagement should all be considered for a summative evaluation conducted in response to performance concerns.

Based on summative evaluation results a teacher either develops an Individual Growth and Development Plan or enters the teacher improvement process and receives assistance and support.

## **Assistance and Support**

*Prerequisite: The teacher receives an "Unsatisfactory" performance rating on a summative evaluation.*

### **Step 1: Identify and communicate the area(s) of performance concern**

As follow-up to an "Unsatisfactory" rating on the summative evaluation, the summative evaluator must make face-to-face contact with the teacher and document the performance concern(s) in writing, including

- An explanation of concerns identifying specific standards of teacher practice or student outcomes
- An outline of evidence supporting the concerns and the teacher's summative evaluation
- A request for a follow-up face-to-face meeting to discuss the concerns addressed above and the teacher improvement process, and to develop an improvement plan. The proposed meeting time should be within five school days of this notification. This request includes:
  - Notification that the teacher may bring evidence related to the stated concern(s).
  - Notification that the teacher has a right to have a union representative present at the meeting.

This written communication will also be placed in the teachers' personnel records.

The district will determine the processes for how the assistance and support phase documentation is followed up if the notified teacher voluntarily transfers to another teaching assignment.

## **Step 2: Meet to set goals and time lines and to develop an improvement plan**

During the face-to-face meeting requested in step 1, the teacher and administrator will collaborate to resolve identified performance concerns. The teacher may request union representation and/or another peer to actively participate in the development of the improvement plan. The following information must be documented in the plan:

- Area(s) of concern related to teacher practice and/or student outcomes.
- Specific teacher actions or practices that will result in the teacher meet standards.
- Improvement goals. These goals must be specific, measurable, attainable, results-based, and time-bound.
- Support strategies, which may include but are not limited to:
  - Professional workshops or conferences
  - Books
  - Peer coaching, mentoring, or other form of peer support
  - Additional evaluator or peer reviewer points of contact
  - Curriculum resources
  - Videos of classroom teaching
  - Targeted professional development

- Method(s) the evaluator will use to gather evidence of improvement. These may include specific activities as described in the evaluation model or others as described during this meeting.
- The type, form, and frequency of feedback the teacher will receive during this phase (e.g. regular meetings with evaluator, regular written communications, evaluation observations, points of contact documentation, etc.)
- A time frame for formative feedback on progress as well as a summative assessment of progress. The summative assessment of teacher improvement results in a decision to exit the teacher from the teacher improvement process, modify the teacher improvement plan, or discipline a teacher. A meeting between the teacher and administrator where the summative assessment of teacher improvement results will take place.

This document will be placed in the teacher's personnel record.

As part of this meeting, participants may collaborate to establish a Teacher Assistance Team that supports the teacher in the assistance and support process. The Teacher Assistance Team uses data and information from the teacher's evaluation to collaborate with the teacher to implement the support plan.

*Composition of the Teacher Assistance Team (3-6 people)*

- 1–2 teachers appointed by the administrator (e.g., special education coordinator, mentor, grade-level lead, department chair, curriculum coordinator)
- 1 administrator other than the teacher's direct supervisor appointed by the superintendent or designee
- 1 – 2 teachers recommended by the teacher (The team should not include any representative from the grade level or the department of the teacher in the assistance and support process unless requested by the teacher.)
- 1 union representative if desired by the teacher

**Step 3: Engage in the improvement plan**

While implementing the improvement plan, there are expectations for both the teacher and the administrator.

*Expectations of the teacher*

- Participate in the activities identified in the plan developed in step 2.
- Participate in the collection of evidence related to the measurable goals identified in step 2.
- Be open and flexible in implementing different and/or refined strategies to improve his/her performance.
- Maintain a proactive stance in his own professional improvement.
- Engage in professional reflection ascertaining what is effective practice and what practice(s) need improvement.

- Be responsible for maintaining anecdotal notes (if desired).
- Ask for clarifications from the principal, direct supervisor, an exclusive representative, or superintendent or designee when needed.
- Be responsible for meeting deadlines, appointments, scheduled observations, and other agreed upon timelines.

*Expectations of the administrator*

- Provide feedback and relevant support opportunities identified in step 2.
- Give encouragement and informal support for improvement of performance.
- Be open and available for clarification at the teacher's requests.
- Monitor the teacher's performance for improvement.

*Expectations of the Teacher Assistance Team (if established)*

- One member of the Teacher Assistance Team is appointed as the facilitator by the administrator.
- The teacher and the facilitator mutually establish a schedule of meetings with the Teacher Assistance Team.
- The Teacher Assistance Team keeps a log of meetings in order to document actions taken to assist the teacher and recommendations made by the Teacher Assistance Team. (Note: The log will not provide evaluative statements regarding progress of the teacher toward the improvement goals.)
- Team members' observations and dialogues with the teacher are not recorded in writing, are not reported to the administrator, and are not part of the assessment of results in step 4.
- When communicating with the teacher, the Teacher Assistance Team may:
  - Offer multiple strategies related to the improvement goals from which the teacher may choose.
  - Give direct observational feedback to the teacher.
  - Offer peer coaching.
- Strict confidentiality is to be maintained and no reference is made to the name of the teacher or the school where the assistance is being provided.
- The facilitator communicates regularly with the administrator regarding the completion of action steps in the plan.
- At the completion of the plan, the log of meetings that documents completion of action steps is submitted to the teacher and the administrator.

**Step 4: Assess results of the improvement plan**

At the end of the plan and the time frame established in step 2, the teacher, the administrator, and any peer named in the process (whether union or other, by teacher invitation) will meet to

assess progress of the teacher toward resolving the area of concern. The assessment of progress will be documented in writing, following the plan and goals developed in step 2.

This document will be placed in the teacher's personnel record.

#### *Evidence to review*

- Teacher's personnel file
- Agreed upon improvement plan with measureable goals in the assistance and support phase
- Documentation of the measures of progress aligned with the goals
- Additional evidence that the teacher wants considered
- Documentation of meetings with the Teacher Assistant Team, if established
- Description of the recommendations and support provided by the Teacher Assistance Team, if established
- Evidence collected by the administrator
- Evidence collected at the discretion of the administrator
- Past summative evaluations may be considered

#### *Criteria for decision-making*

- Progress toward meeting the goals identified for improvement in the improvement plan
- Current performance level (consideration for past performance may be given)

At the conclusion of the meeting, one of the following determinations will be made by the administrator about the teacher's status:

- Leave the assistance and support phase. The teacher writes an individual growth and development plan and re-enters the three-year professional review cycle.
- Extend the assistance and support phase. Revise or begin a new improvement plan, repeating steps 1-4.
- Move from the assistance and support phase to discipline.

## **Discipline**

Minnesota Statutes, section 120A.40 and 120A.41 state that discipline "may include a last chance warning, termination, discharge, nonrenewal, transfer to a different position, a leave of absence, or other discipline a school administrator determines is appropriate."

Should a teacher enter the discipline phase, the administrator must follow board policies and teacher contract language established in the school district as well as state statutes.