

**TALBOT COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
EASTON, MD 21601**

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# Observations and Evaluations: A Guide for Teachers and Administrators

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## Introduction and Rationale

In 1987, the Board agreed to develop the extensively researched principles of the effective school to help achieve its mission that "... each student will learn grow and succeed". Prime consideration in this task has been the backbone of quality, the effective teacher. A personnel evaluation process was designed, using what has been determined by research to be the essential teaching skills, to improve instruction and student learning and to ensure that employees are competent professionals.

The responsibility for achieving effective evaluations lies with the evaluator. The evaluator must be able to offer specific help in directing the growth of the staff, individually and collectively. Dedication to the measurable improvement of student learning through skillful teaching, is essential to the mission of Talbot County Public Schools.

This handbook outlines procedures for evaluation and professional development. It includes procedures for observations and methods to help staff grow in their professional competence. Special attention is directed to the collection of Protocols of Essential Teaching Skills, which serves as a detailed handbook on effective teaching.

Developing the evaluation instruments, and compiling this handbook and protocols, has been a cooperative effort. All of the original materials were reviewed by administrators and Board members and shared with members of school faculties for professional soundness and usefulness.

The Board believes that the Teacher Performance Evaluation and the Professional Development Program will facilitate the growth and strength of Talbot County's teaching staff and that the ultimate goal of providing quality educational services will be achieved.

This program was implemented in August of 1989. It has been revised several times based upon recommendations of staff and administrators. This most recent revision incorporates the work of the Teacher Evaluation Workgroup. This group, comprised of teachers and administrators was charged, by the Maryland State Department of Education, with the task of developing a local tool that measures both Professional Practice as well as Student Growth.

Kelly L. Griffith, Superintendent

## **Policy 7.15 –Evaluation of Professional Staff**

- I.** The purposes of personnel performance evaluation in Talbot County Public Schools are to improve instruction and related services; and, to ensure that all employees are competent in their assignments.
- II.** We believe that specific help for personnel and reasonable procedures are to be expected of those who evaluate, supervise, or administer our system of evaluation.
- III.** We believe that through effective evaluation of personnel Talbot County Public Schools will be able to provide quality educational services.
- IV.** The following statements detail the specific purposes of evaluation:
  - to improve instruction and related services
  - to insure that students are served by competent and empathetic personnel
  - to make decisions regarding tenure or job placement
  - to assist in identifying outstanding personnel
  - to assess strengths and weaknesses of teachers, administrators and support personnel
- V.** The Board believes in order to achieve the purposes of evaluation it is essential that active and effective procedures be adopted which reflect a commitment to continuous growth and improvement in all employees.
- VI.** In light of these beliefs the superintendent shall develop and maintain various evaluation programs for all groups of employees. These programs must allow the flexibility and be characterized by certain features as follows:
  - regular and systematic supervision
  - detailed and timely written and verbal reporting
  - individualized design
  - confidential reporting and recording
- VII.** In addition to these features, concerted efforts shall be made to utilize the available talents of various personnel qualified to assess performance, particularly when concern arises relative to the quality of an employee's performance. In such an event multiple assessors shall be utilized including principals, assistant principals, lead teachers, specialists, consultants, supervisory personnel, assistant superintendents, as well as the superintendent.

## Definition of Terms

**Anecdotal Record of Performance** - The form used to document teacher performance related to professional responsibilities.

**Contract Renewal** - The principal and designated Specialist, Coordinator or Supervisor shall recommend to the Superintendent renewal or non-renewal of employment contracts for first, second, and third year teachers; such recommendations are neither subject to nor governed by the teacher observation and evaluation process.

**Evaluation** - The process of making an overall assessment of performance relative to specified criteria; the Evaluation Form to be used is found in this document under "Forms".

**Observation** - The process of observing a teacher's performance for the purpose of providing feedback; three (3) types of observation, Informal, Developmental, and Rating, shall be used.

**Professional Development** - The process of facilitating the growth of teachers.

**Professional Improvement Plan** - A tool for facilitating the professional growth of teachers; it specifies goals, strategies and resources necessary to accomplish the goals of the plan.

**Professional Responsibilities** - Important responsibilities that are necessary for the efficient and effective operation of schools.

**Rating Status** - A determination made based upon evaluation, all teachers are assigned to either Standard or Intensive Rating; the Teacher Performance Evaluation and Development Program differentiates between teachers on Standard and Intensive rating.

Standard - tenured teachers who are rated as effective or highly effective.

Intensive - non-tenured teachers, tenured teachers who are rated as ineffective.

**Second Class Certification** - The Superintendent may reclassify a teacher's certificate; salary is frozen and Intensive Rating procedures apply. (See "Procedures for Changing the Status of Tenured Teachers")

**Teacher** - a person whose job encompasses one of the following types: early childhood education, elementary education, middle school education, general secondary academic areas, business, Family and Consumer Sciences/Career Technology Education, social studies, technology education, trades and industry, certification in specialty areas (prekindergarten through grade 12), ESOL, special education, reading teacher, reading specialist.

**Teacher Observation Rubric** - A collection of specific information relative to each of the skills identified under Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Planning and Preparation. The rubrics are available to each teacher, administrator, curriculum coordinator, and other interested staff members.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **What Are The Roles and Responsibilities of the Teacher?**

- to be knowledgeable of all information contained in this document
- to effectively demonstrate teaching as described
- to prepare a Professional Development Plan and participate in appropriate professional development activities that lead to recertification
- to attend meetings where the observation/evaluation process is reviewed, explained and clarified

### **What are the Roles and Responsibilities of the Principal?**

- to demonstrate knowledge of all information contained in this document
- to demonstrate knowledge and application of the skills required to conduct effective observations and evaluations of teacher performance
- to coordinate the observation process for teachers assigned to his/her building which might include requesting other designated observers as appropriate to assist in the observation process and scheduling those observations
- to compile and utilize input from other designated observers to assist with teacher performance evaluation which includes making administrative decisions and recommendations regarding a teacher's status
- to provide and/or identify appropriate resources for teachers' use to promote effective teaching
- to complete observation and evaluation documentation according to time-lines and other criteria as described in this document
- to prepare end-of-the-year recommendations regarding teacher performance status to the superintendent

- to provide specific support to teachers for areas marked as Needs Improvement, Unsatisfactory, Developing and/or Ineffective

### **Do Other Professionals Have Roles and Responsibilities Directly Related to the Teacher Performance Evaluation and Professional Development Program?**

Certificated personnel other than teachers and principals may have roles and responsibilities directly related to teacher performance evaluation and professional development. These professionals may include, but not be limited to, curriculum supervisors, specialists, assistant principals, supervisors, assistant superintendents, superintendent, and others as designated by the superintendent. All professionals in this category are responsible for the following roles and responsibilities:

- to demonstrate knowledge of all information in this document
- to demonstrate knowledge and utilization of skills for effective observation of teacher performance
- to provide evaluation input to the building principal through rating observations
- to provide written narratives in support of each essential teaching and support skill
- to provide specific support to teachers for areas marked as Developing and/or Ineffective

### **What is the Responsibility of the Superintendent?**

- to be knowledgeable of all information contained in this document
- to ensure that all aspects of policy regarding teacher performance evaluation are effectively executed
- to provide appropriate resources and staff development opportunities for designated observers and evaluators to promote effective teacher performance observation

## Teacher Observation Rubric

Planning and Preparation: This assumes that the lesson plan(s) and unit plan are provided before, during, or immediately after the lesson. The end of the day is not acceptable.

### Planning and Preparation: Content

Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
Teacher's lesson and/or unit plans reflect little understanding of concepts in the discipline and little understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts.	Teacher's lesson and/or unit plans reflect some understanding of concepts in the discipline and some understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts.	Teacher's lesson and/or unit plans reflect accurate concepts in the discipline and accurate understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts.	Teacher's lesson and/or unit plans reflect an understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts and provide a link to necessary cognitive structures needed by students to ensure understanding.

### Planning and Preparation: Instructional Strategies

Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
Teacher's plans reflect little understanding of appropriate and effective pedagogical approaches in the discipline for student's learning of the content.	Teacher's plans reflect familiarity of appropriate and effective pedagogical approaches in the discipline for student's learning of the content.	Teacher's plans reflect appropriate and effective pedagogical approaches in the discipline for groups of students based on students' academic proficiencies and backgrounds, cultures, skills, language proficiency, interests and special needs.  Differentiates for groups of students. Requires higher level thinking.	Teacher's plans reflect appropriate and effective pedagogical approaches in the discipline for the needs of individual students based on students' academic proficiencies and backgrounds, cultures, skills, language proficiency, interests and special needs. Teacher provides a variety of appropriately challenging resources that are differentiated for students.



			The grouping of students is fluid. Small groups are adjusted throughout the unit. Requires higher level thinking.
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**Planning and Preparation: Develops Plans according to Board Policies and Administrative Regulations**

Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
Teacher plans include components of the Instructional Process but demonstrate little or no understanding of intent of each component or how they work in conjunction with one another.	Teacher plans include some components of the Instructional Process but include some misunderstanding of the intent or how the components work in conjunction with each other.	Teacher plans include all components of the Instructional Process and demonstrates an understanding of each component and the overall intent of the process.	Teacher plans include all components of the Instructional Process and demonstrate an understanding of each component. Teacher purposefully and intentionally utilizes the instructional process to meet the learning needs individual of students.

**Planning and Preparation: Utilizes Assessments consistent with instructional objectives**

Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
<p>Assessment is not congruent with instructional outcomes; the proposed approach contains no criteria or standards.</p> <p>Teacher has no plan to incorporate formative assessment in the lesson or unit nor any plan to use assessment results in designing future instruction.</p>	<p>Some of the instructional outcomes are assessed through the proposed approach but others are not.</p> <p>Assessment criteria and standards have been developed, but they are not clear.</p> <p>Approach to the use of formative assessment is rudimentary, including only some of the instructional outcomes.</p> <p>Teacher uses assessment results to plan for future instruction for the class as a whole.</p>	<p>Teacher's plan for student assessment is fully aligned with the instructional outcomes.</p> <p>Teacher has a well-developed strategy for using informal, formative, and summative assessments.</p> <p>Teacher uses assessment results to plan for future instruction for groups of students.</p> <p>All the learning outcomes have a method for assessment.</p> <p>Plans indicate modified assessments for some students as needed.</p>	<p>Teacher's plan for student assessment is fully aligned with all of the instructional outcomes and has clear criteria and standards that show evidence of student contribution to their development.</p> <p>Teacher uses assessment results to plan for future instruction for individual students.</p> <p>All the learning outcomes have a method for assessment.</p> <p>Assessment methodologies have been adapted for individual students, as needed.</p>

## Instruction: Student Engagement

Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
<p>The learning tasks and activities, materials, resources, instructional groups and technology are poorly aligned with the instructional outcomes or require only rote responses. Few students are intellectually engaged.</p>	<p>The learning tasks and activities are partially aligned with the instructional outcomes but require only minimal thinking by students, allowing most to be passive or merely compliant.</p>	<p>The learning tasks and activities are aligned with the instructional outcomes and designed to challenge student thinking, the result being that most students display active intellectual engagement with important and challenging content and are supported in that engagement by teacher scaffolding.</p>	<p>Virtually all students are intellectually engaged in challenging content through well-designed learning tasks and suitable scaffolding by the teacher and fully aligned with the instructional outcomes. In addition, there is evidence of some student initiation of inquiry and of student contribution to the exploration of important content. Students may have some choice in how they complete tasks and may serve as resources for one another.</p>

**Instruction: Monitoring**

Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
<p>Teacher adheres to the instruction plan in spite of evidence of poor student understanding or lack of interest.</p> <p>There is little or no assessment or monitoring of student learning; feedback is absent or of poor quality.</p>	<p>Teacher attempts to modify the lesson when needed and to respond to student questions and interests, with moderate success.</p> <p>Assessment is used sporadically by teacher and/or students to support instruction through some monitoring of progress in learning some feedback is given.</p>	<p>Teacher promotes the successful learning of all students, making minor adjustments as needed to instruction plans and accommodating student questions, needs, and interests.</p> <p>Assessment is used regularly by teacher and/or students during the lesson through monitoring of learning progress and results in accurate, specific feedback that advances learning.</p>	<p>Teacher seizes an opportunity to enhance learning, building on a spontaneous event or student interests, or successfully adjusts and differentiates instruction to address individual student's questions, needs, and interests.</p> <p>Assessment is used extensively by teacher and/or students and is fully integrated into instruction.</p>

**Instruction: Communication**

Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
<p>The instructional purpose of the lesson is unclear to students, and the directions and procedures are confusing.</p> <p>The teacher's spoken or written language contains errors of grammar or syntax.</p> <p>The teacher's vocabulary is inappropriate, vague, or used incorrectly, leaving students confused.</p> <p>Teacher's questions are of low cognitive challenge, require single correct responses, and are asked in rapid succession.</p>	<p>The teacher's attempt to explain the instructional purpose has only limited success, and/or directions and procedures must be clarified after initial student confusion.</p> <p>Teacher's spoken language is correct; however, his or her vocabulary is limited, or not fully appropriate to the students' ages or backgrounds.</p> <p>Teacher's questions lead students through a single path of inquiry, with answers seemingly determined in advance.</p>	<p>The teacher clearly communicates instructional purpose of the lesson and explains procedures and directions clearly.</p> <p>Teacher's spoken and written language is clear and correct and uses vocabulary appropriate to the students' ages and interests.</p> <p>Although the teacher may use some low-level questions, he or she asks the students questions designed to promote thinking and understanding.</p>	<p>The teacher links the instructional purpose of the lesson to student interests; the directions and procedures are clear and anticipate possible student misunderstanding.</p> <p>Teacher's spoken and written language is expressive, and the teacher finds opportunities to extend student's vocabularies.</p> <p>Teacher uses a variety or series of questions or prompts to challenge students cognitively, advance high-level thinking and discourse, and promote metacognition.</p>

**Instruction: Knowledge of subject matter**

Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
<p>Teacher's instruction reflects significant errors in content.</p> <p>The teacher's explanation of the content contains major errors.</p>	<p>Teacher's instruction reflects minor error in content; understanding of subject matter at the basic or introductory level.</p> <p>The teacher's explanation of the content may contain minor errors; some portions are clear; other portions are difficult to follow.</p>	<p>Teacher's instruction reflects mastery of content.</p> <p>Teacher's explanation of content is well scaffolded, clear and accurate, and connects with students' knowledge and experience.</p>	<p>Teacher's instruction reflects mastery of content and connections to students' interests.</p> <p>The teacher's explanation of content is thorough and clear, developing conceptual understanding through artful scaffolding and connecting with students' interests.</p>

**Instruction: Lesson Structure – Talbot County Instructional Process**

Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
<p>The series of learning experiences is poorly aligned with the instructional outcomes and does not represent a coherent structure.</p> <p>Classroom instruction is teacher-centered, with no invitation for student intellectual engagement.</p>	<p>Some of the learning activities and materials are suitable to the instructional outcomes and represent a moderate cognitive challenge but with no differentiation for students.</p> <p>Instructional groups partially support the instructional outcomes, with an effort by the teacher at proving some variety.</p> <p>The lesson or unit has a recognizable structure; the progression of activities is uneven, with most time allocations reasonable.</p> <p>Classroom instruction is primarily teacher-centered, with little invitation for student intellectual engagement.</p>	<p>Teacher coordinates knowledge of content, of students, and of resources, to design a series of learning experiences aligned to instructional outcomes and suitable to groups of students.</p> <p>The learning activities have reasonable time allocations; they represent significant cognitive challenge, with some differentiation for different groups of students.</p> <p>The lesson or unit has a clear structure, with appropriate and varied use of instructional groups. Groups are organized thoughtfully to maximize learning and build on student strengths.</p> <p>Classroom instruction is primarily student-centered and fosters student intellectual engagement.</p>	<p>Plans represent the coordination of in-depth content knowledge, understanding of different students' needs, and available resources (including technology), resulting in a series of learning activities designed to engage students in high-level cognitive activity.</p> <p>Learning activities are differentiated appropriately for individual learners. Instructional groups are varied appropriately with some opportunity for student choice.</p> <p>The lesson or unit structure is clear and allows for different pathways according to diverse student needs.</p> <p>Classroom instruction is student-centered and students contribute to extending the content and furthering their own learning.</p>

## Classroom Environment: Learning Environment

Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
<p>Patterns of classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are mostly negative, inappropriate, or insensitive to students' ages, cultural backgrounds, and developmental levels. Interactions are characterized by sarcasm, put-downs, and/or conflict.</p> <p>Teacher does not deal with disrespectful behavior.</p> <p>The teacher does not monitor behavior against established standards of conduct.</p>	<p>Patterns or classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are generally appropriate but may reflect occasional inconsistencies, favoritism, and disregard for students' ages, cultures, and developmental levels.</p> <p>Students rarely demonstrate disrespect for one another.</p> <p>The teacher does not consistently monitor behavior against established standards of conduct.</p>	<p>Teacher-student interactions are friendly and demonstrate general caring and respect. Such interactions are appropriate to the ages of the students.</p> <p>Students exhibit respect for the teacher. Interactions among students are generally polite and respectful.</p> <p>The teacher monitors student behavior against established standards of conduct.</p> <p>Teacher response to student misbehavior is consistent, proportionate, respectful to students, and effective.</p> <p>The classroom is safe, and learning is accessible to all students; teacher ensures that the physical arrangement is appropriate to the learning activities.</p>	<p>Classroom interactions among the teacher and individual students are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth and caring and sensitivity to students as individuals.</p> <p>Students exhibit respect for the teacher and contribute to high levels of civil interaction between all members of the class. The net result of interactions is that of connections with students as individuals.</p> <p>The teacher monitors student behavior against established standards of conduct.</p> <p>Teacher response to student misbehavior is consistent, proportionate, respectful to students, and effective.</p> <p>The classroom is safe, and learning is accessible to all</p>



		Teacher makes effective use of physical resources, including computer technology.	<p>students; teacher ensures that the physical arrangement is appropriate to the learning activities.</p> <p>Teacher makes effective and creative use of physical resources, including computer technology.</p>
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**Classroom Environment: Expectations of Student Performance**

Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
<p>Medium or low expectations for student achievement are the norm, with high expectations for learning reserved for only a few students.</p> <p>The classroom culture is characterized by a lack of teacher or student commitment to learning and/or little or no investment of student energy into the task at hand. Hard work is not expected or valued.</p>	<p>The teacher attempts to convey expectations but students indicate that they are only interested in completion of a task, rather than quality.</p> <p>The classroom is characterized by inconsistent expectations of student learning.</p>	<p>The teacher conveys that with hard work students can be successful.</p> <p>Classroom interactions support learning and hard work.</p> <p>The classroom culture is a cognitively busy place where learning is valued by all, with high expectations for learning being the norm for most students.</p>	<p>The teacher conveys high expectations for learning by all students and insists on hard work.</p> <p>Students assume responsibility for high quality by initiating improvements, making revisions, adding detail, and/or helping peers.</p> <p>The classroom culture is a cognitively vibrant place, characterized by a shared belief in the importance of learning.</p>