Superintendent Evaluation

A Resource for School Board Members and Superintendents

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INTRODUCTION

This guide, along with the supporting resources, is designed to help school board members and superintendents implement an effective, meaningful superintendent evaluation process that is focused on improving student achievement.

The resources referenced in this document were developed jointly by staff of the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) and staff and officers of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA).

The basis for all resources are the Program Requirements for All Administrative Licenses, Subparts "1" and "2" (Minnesota Rule 3512.0510).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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OVERVIEW

Evaluation of a superintendent's performance is one of a school board's most important responsibilities, and school boards must comply with Minnesota's Open Meeting Law (OML) – Minnesota Statute 13D – Minnesota's Government Data Practices Act (Data Practices Act) – Minnesota Statute 13 – and other privacy laws which protect superintendents from public disclosure of private data. Keeping in mind that fact, this document was created from a conservative point-of-view in order to protect both parties.

Done correctly, an evaluation is a useful governance tool that helps drive school improvement. In fact, a high quality evaluation process helps develop positive school board-superintendent relationships, clarifies leadership roles, creates common understandings, and provides a mechanism for satisfying the public's desire for accountability.

An extremely important fact to keep in mind, however, is that evaluations are most effective when they are designed and used for improving existing performance and communicating future expectations, not simply for punitive reasons and reviewing past performance.

WHY EVALUATE THE SUPERINTENDENT?

A quality superintendent evaluation process provides benefits not only for a school board and its superintendent but also benefits the school community and the community at large by:

- allowing school board members to follow school district progress and learn about a superintendent's ongoing professional development;
- providing input, feedback, and support for a superintendent to help him/her improve throughout the school year;
- creating and establishing a climate of trust and collaboration;
- providing the school community and the community at large with assurance that their priorities are being addressed; and
- providing oversight and assurance that a school board's vision, priorities, and policies are being implemented as intended.

HOW DO WE EVALUATE OBJECTIVELY AND FAIRLY?

While every evaluation process will include some degree of subjectivity, using effective tools and procedures will make the process more objective. The components listed below are necessary in any quality evaluation process.

- **Documentation.** An evaluation is more than a checklist – it requires careful consideration of supporting documented evidence to decide whether expectations are being met. School board members and their superintendent should work together to reach consensus on the evidence to be used, keeping in mind that school districts already produce a variety of annual reports, curriculum studies, budget printouts, contracts, meeting minutes, etc., all of which could be used to document a superintendent's progress and accomplishments relative to the established goals.

- **Criteria and Ratings.** An effective evaluation requires school board members to rate performance through the use of criteria that are mutually agreed upon, understandable, realistic, and measurable.

- **Written Comments.** Written comments are essential as they offer school board members the opportunity to provide specific constructive praise and criticism, and they provide the superintendent with useful information that he/she can use to continually improve.

- **Evaluation Conferences.** Face-to-face meetings between a school board and its superintendent are essential. Meetings should occur to discuss evaluation criteria, establish goals, determine the evaluation instrument and process, present supporting

evidence, and discuss the results of the school board's mid-year formative and year-end summative evaluations. As previously stated, school boards must comply with the OML – Minnesota Statute 13D – the Data Practices Act – Minnesota Statute 13 – and other privacy laws. For more information regarding the OML and the Data Practices Act, refer to MSBA/MASA's model policies 205 and 206, contact MSBA or MASA, or go to the website of the Office of the Revisor of Statutes.

BEFORE BEGININNING THE EVALUATION PROCESS

A school board's evaluation of its superintendent is an inherent managerial right, unless it has been negotiated away. Therefore, all school board members should review their superintendent's employment contract to determine what, if any, evaluation-related terms, timelines, and protocols may have been included. As a reminder, wise school boards avoid including language in employment contracts that limits inherent managerial rights.

RESOURCES

Sample resources are provided in the appendixes, and school boards and their superintendents may agree to modify the various components to best fit the needs of their school districts.

EVALUATION OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Operating principles provide a road map for structuring an effective superintendent evaluation by outlining the purpose and outcome underlying the entire process.

TIMELINE FOR SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION

While an effective superintendent evaluation process is ongoing, the sample twelve-month timeline presents a suggested schedule that breaks the process into small steps to be completed.

During the twelve-month period, a superintendent may be given any number of formative evaluations but must be given at least one summative evaluation. According to the Minnesota Department of Education, a formative evaluation is an activity that may include informal or formal assessment of current practice that offers feedback suited to improve future performance; whereas, a summative evaluation is formal, is based on all evidence collected throughout the evaluation period, results in a superintendent receiving an overall performance rating, and is placed in the superintendent's personnel file.

SUPERINTENDENT JOB DESCRIPTION

The sample superintendent job description is based on the competencies in Minnesota Rule 3512.0510 and articulates the functions of a school district's chief executive officer. A sample job description is located in Appendix A.

GOALS-BASED EVALUATION

Goals-based evaluation is a framework that is useful in helping to establish district-level and professional development goals for superintendents and then evaluate the progress made toward those goals. The competencies included in Minnesota Rule 3512.0510 are assumed to be embedded in the established goals. Goals-based evaluation commentary and forms are located in Appendix B.

SUPERINTENDENT SELF-EVALUATION

Superintendents are encouraged to engage in an annual self-evaluation of their progress toward meeting performance goals and/or to reflect on their professional experience. Self-evaluation provides a structure for considering future goals and determining strategies for achieving them. MSBA and MASA suggest that the data from a self-evaluation be the sole property of the superintendent and shared with his/her school board only if the superintendent so chooses. A sample superintendent self-evaluation is located in Appendix C.

SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION OPERATING PRINCIPLES

A comprehensive superintendent evaluation process must:

1. Provide opportunities for personal and professional development.

- Rationale: To be successful, evaluation processes must address the whole person and be oriented toward continuous improvement.

2. Be intended to improve performance, not prove incompetence.

- Rationale: An effective evaluation process is established on the premise of providing feedback for growth, not on finding evidence of shortcomings. While a school board is able to use evaluation for purposes of termination, doing so should not be its priority.

3. Provide legal, realistic, accurate, useful, and measurable criteria reflective of the competencies in Minnesota Rule 3512.0510.

- Rationale: Competencies of any kind are only effective if they are legal, realistic, accurate, useful, and measurable. Examples of multiple data sources are school district/school improvement plans; documents that address previous goals; school board meeting agendas; a superintendent self-evaluation; a portfolio compiled by the superintendent; etc.

4. Be ongoing and connected to school district/school improvement goals.

- Rationale: An evaluation is a process, not a once-a-year conversation, and, thus, must be embedded in the school district's goals and plans.

5. Connect the school district's goals with its community's vision for its schools.

- Rationale: Goals cannot be developed in isolation, so a school district's goals must reflect the community's hopes for its public schools and students.

6. Link to academic, social, and emotional growth for all students in the school district.

- Rationale: Accountability must include multiple measures of student learning.

7. Recognize the importance of a superintendent's leadership work to facilitate a better quality of life for all groups, both inside the school community and in the community at large.

- Rationale: The larger work of the superintendent is concerned with shaping the future of the community and having a positive effect on people's lives.

SAMPLE TIMELINE FOR SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION

TIMELINE	ACTION
Summer or Early Fall	1. The school board and the superintendent review the superintendent's job description, the evaluation process, form(s), indicators, and timelines, and identify acceptable supporting documents, information, and data to be used to measure performance. 2. The superintendent and school board create goals which are based on the school district's goals and which are measurable and can be accomplished in twelve months. In the unlikely event that the school board and the superintendent are unable to come to mutual agreement, however, as the legal employer, the school board's determination prevails.
Winter	3. During a school board meeting, the school board chair and the superintendent review the evaluation process and form(s) with new school board members following their election and officially taking their seats on the school board. 4. The superintendent may complete a self-evaluation, with supporting documents to be provided to the school board. The data from a self-evaluation is the sole property of the superintendent and is shared with his/her school board only if the superintendent so chooses. 5. The superintendent makes mid-year progress reports to the school board on school district goals and his/her professional development goals. 6. Each school board member completes the evaluation form(s) for the superintendent's mid-year, formative evaluation and returns them to the school board chair. 7. The school board chair creates a mid-year, formative evaluation summary document consisting of each school board member's ratings and comments. 8. The school board chair brings the mid-year, formative evaluation summary document to the superintendent's evaluation meeting. Unless the superintendent requests the evaluation meeting be open, the school board may close the meeting. If the superintendent wants the evaluation to occur in an open meeting, the school board chair shall get the request in writing. 9. The school board shares and discusses with the superintendent the formative evaluation of his/her performance. The superintendent provides additional clarification/progress reports, if any, on school district goals and his/her professional development goals. 10. The school board, at its next open meeting, shall summarize its conclusions regarding the formative evaluation. 11. The formative evaluation shall be attached to the summative evaluation when that is completed and placed in the superintendent's personnel file (see number 17 below).

SAMPLE TIMELINE FOR SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION, CONT'D

TIMELINE	ACTION
Spring	12. Each school board member completes the summative evaluation form(s) and returns it to the school board chair. 13. The school board chair creates a summative evaluation summary document consisting of each school board member's ratings and comments. 14. The school board chair brings the summative evaluation summary document to the superintendent's evaluation meeting. Unless the superintendent requests the evaluation meeting be open, the school board may close the meeting. If the superintendent wants the evaluation to occur in an open meeting, the school board chair shall get the request in writing. 15. The school board shares and discusses with the superintendent its evaluation of his/her performance. The superintendent provides additional clarification/progress reports, if any, on school district goals and professional development goals. Changes to the evaluation may be made as a result of the discussions. 16. The school board, at its next open meeting, shall summarize its conclusions regarding the summative evaluation. 17. A copy of the final written summative evaluation form is placed in the superintendent's personnel folder.
Summer or Early Fall	18. Return to the beginning of the cycle.

NOTE: *In the last year of a superintendent's employment contract, the suggested timeline may need to be altered to allow for a summative evaluation to take place 6-9 months prior to the expiration date of said contract. Pursuant to M.S. 123B.143, subsequent employment contract negotiations may begin 365 days prior to the expiration of the existing contract, and the new contract will take effect upon expiration of the existing contract and is contingent upon the superintendent's successful completion of his/her existing contract.*

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Appendix A

CREATING/REVISITING A JOB DESCRIPTION

To be effective in their school districts, superintendents must focus on meeting the regular, ongoing responsibilities that cause the school district to function effectively. To do so, and to ensure that school boards and superintendents share a common understanding of these roles and ongoing responsibilities, superintendents must have a clearly-defined job description. This job description should be grounded in the competencies of Minnesota Rule 3512.0510, address the specific needs of the school district, and be re-visited regularly to ensure that the description accurately describes the full scope of the superintendent's ongoing responsibilities and roles. The job description must also be consistent with what the school board expects, what the school district needs, and what should be occurring.

SAMPLE SUPERINTENDENT JOB DESCRIPTION

General Position Description

The Superintendent is the chief executive officer of the School District, is the professional advisor to the School Board, and is directly accountable to the School Board.

The Superintendent is responsible for guiding and directing all operations and activities of the School District and for informing the School Board of all the needs related to the current and future operations of the School District. The Superintendent shall recommend policies to the School Board and, when adopted by the School Board, shall be responsible for implementing, interpreting, and executing those policies.

Specific Duties

The Superintendent shall do the following:

- Provide leadership for the School District's educational programs, staff-development programs, and curriculum development to provide the best possible learning environment for all the School District's students;
- Inform and advise the School Board about programs, practices, and problems of the School District and keep the School Board informed of the activities operating under the School Board's authority;
- Explain the educational needs of the School District to the School Board, recommending necessary new and/or revised policies and staffing changes for School Board action;
- Act as liaison between the community and the School District and respond to concerns of parents, students, citizens, and staff in order to increase understanding of policies and practices and to keep them informed of and involved with School District activities;
- Oversee all financial operations of the School District and prepare, present, and recommend budgets to the School Board;
- Interpret employee proposals to the School Board, recommend adjustments to employee policies and salary structures as appropriate, and be responsible for the management of all employee contracts and policies;
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive strategic planning process, which includes short-term and long-term planning and the development of School District goals and instructional goals;
- Establish and maintain working relationships with agencies and personnel outside the School District to promote the best interests of the School District through contact with legislators, other superintendents, local government leaders, business, etc.;
- Maintain and improve effective School Board-Superintendent relationships by participating in joint seminars and training sessions;
- Delegate responsibility and authority to School District employees as appropriate, define the authority and responsibilities of and effectively evaluate mid-management staff;
- Complete in a timely manner all required school board, state, and federal reports; and
- Assume the ultimate responsibility for all aspects of the School District's operation.

Appendix B

GOALS-BASED EVALUATION

Before starting the evaluation process, school board members and superintendents should keep the following “dos” and “don’ts” in mind.

DO	DON’T
Collaborate on the evaluation process, timeline, and expectations.	Expect the school board or the superintendent to manage the work of evaluation alone.
Compile one final evaluation summary of the superintendent so that the school board speaks with one voice.	Provide separate individual evaluation summaries from each school board member.
Develop an effective process for the entire school board and superintendent to conduct the evaluation.	Appoint a committee of the school board or a single school board member to conduct the evaluation.
Provide agreed-upon ratings along with written commentary, feedback, and recommendations to the superintendent.	Provide **only** the agreed upon ratings without written commentary, feedback, and recommendations to the superintendent.
Allow time for the school board to discuss the results and the superintendent to give input and respond to the evaluation.	Conduct evaluation as a one-way communication from the school board to the superintendent.

GOALS-BASED EVALUATION STEP 1: ESTABLISHMENT OF GOALS

The superintendent and school board establish at least two, but no more than three, school district goals and at least one, but no more than two, professional development goals. The goals should be clearly aimed at improving student learning and/or the climate for student learning, and each goal must include Minnesota Rule 3512.0510 competencies linked to achieving the goal as well as measurable progress indicators to be accomplished by the superintendent during the next twelve months, understanding the circumstances may necessitate modifications during the year.

When possible, measurable progress indicators, the evidence the school board expects to determine whether goals have been accomplished, should be mutually agreed to by the school board and superintendent. Each measurable progress indicator should be clear, understood by both the school board and superintendent, and recorded under the goal.

This document detailing goals, Minnesota Rule 3512.0510 competencies, and progress indicators will be part of the Superintendent's ongoing evaluation and included as part of the annual summative evaluation.

SAMPLE -- ESTABLISHMENT OF GOALS					
	Pertinent MN Rule 3512.0510 Competency	**Measurable Progress Indicator 1**	**Measurable Progress Indicator 2**	**Measurable Progress Indicator 3**	**Timeline for Achieving the Goal**
Superintendent-School District Goal One:					
Superintendent-School District Goal Two:					
Superintendent-School District Goal Three:					
	Pertinent MN Rule 3512.0510 Competency	**Measurable Progress Indicator 1**	**Measurable Progress Indicator 2**	**Measurable Progress Indicator 3**	**Timeline for Achieving the Goal**
Superintendent-Professional Development Goal One:					
Superintendent-Professional Development Goal Two:					

Evaluation Period: _____ to _____

Superintendent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

School Board Chair's Signature: _____ Date: _____

GOALS-BASED EVALUATION STEP 2: MID-YEAR FORMATIVE EVALUATION

Mid-way through the evaluation cycle, school board members should conduct a formative evaluation of the superintendent to assess his/her progress toward the previously established goals. At this time, the superintendent may also choose to complete a self-evaluation. The school board's completed formative evaluation form is to be placed in the superintendent's personnel file and attached to the summative evaluation. The school board and superintendent are reminded they must comply with the OML – Minnesota Statute 13D – and the Data Practices Act – Minnesota Statute 13. Also, see steps, 8, 9, and 10 in the sample timeline on page 7.

SAMPLE -- MID-YEAR FORMATIVE EVALUATION
Superintendent-School District Goal One: Evidence of Progress Toward Attainment
School Board Member Comments:
Superintendent-School District Goal Two: Evidence of Progress Toward Attainment
School Board Member Comments:
Superintendent-School District Goal Three: Evidence of Progress Toward Attainment
School Board Member Comments:
Superintendent-Professional Development Goal One: Evidence of Progress Toward Attainment
School Board Member Comments:
Superintendent-Professional Development Goal Two: Evidence of Progress Toward Attainment
School Board Member Comments:

Mid-Year Evaluation Period: _____ to _____

Superintendent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Board Chair's Signature: _____ Date: _____

GOALS-BASED EVALUATION STEP 3: END-OF-YEAR SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

At the end of the evaluation cycle, the school board should conduct a summative evaluation of the superintendent. The school board's completed summative evaluation form is to be placed in the superintendent's personnel file. Again, the school board and superintendent are reminded they must comply with the OML – Minnesota Statute 13D – and the Data Practices Act – Minnesota Statute 13. Also, see steps 14, 15, and 16 in the sample timeline on page 7.

At the end of the established twelve-month period, school board members shall assign ratings, along with supporting evidence, based on the superintendent's accomplishment of the school board-approved goals. Presentations made by the superintendent to the school board throughout the twelve months, along with an ongoing discussion of progress toward goals, will provide school board members with necessary data and evidence.

Each school board member completes an end-of-year summative evaluation form and returns it to the school board chair. The school board chair summarizes the responses onto an end-of-year summative evaluation form, which he/she brings to the superintendent's evaluation meeting. The school board shares and discusses with the superintendent its evaluation of his/her performance. The superintendent provides additional clarification/progress reports, if any, on school district goals and professional development goals. Based on the discussion, the school board completes an overall end-of-year summative evaluation form and places a copy of it in the superintendent's personnel file.

When considering which rating to choose, school board members should keep the following brief descriptions in mind:

- "Distinguished" – exceeded school board expectations and met each progress indicator;
- "Accomplished" – exceeded school board expectations and met most progress indicators;
- "Satisfactory" – met school board expectations and met most progress indicators;
- "Unsatisfactory" – did not meet school board expectations and/or failed to meet most progress indicators.

SAMPLE -- END-OF-YEAR SUMMATIVE EVALUATION			
Superintendent-School District Goal One: Evidence of Attainment			
School Board Member Rating (circle the appropriate response)			
4 Distinguished	3 Accomplished	2 Satisfactory	1 Unsatisfactory
Comments:			
Superintendent-School District Goal Two: Evidence of Attainment			
School Board Member Rating (circle the appropriate response)			
4 Distinguished	3 Accomplished	2 Satisfactory	1 Unsatisfactory
Comments:			
Superintendent-School District Goal Three: Evidence of Attainment			
School Board Member Rating (circle the appropriate response)			
4 Distinguished	3 Accomplished	2 Satisfactory	1 Unsatisfactory
Comments:			
Superintendent-Professional Development Goal One: Evidence of Attainment			
School Board Member Rating (circle the appropriate response)			
4 Distinguished	3 Accomplished	2 Satisfactory	1 Unsatisfactory
Comments:			
Superintendent-Professional Development Goal Two: Evidence of Attainment			
School Board Member Rating (circle the appropriate response)			
4 Distinguished	3 Accomplished	2 Satisfactory	1 Unsatisfactory
Comments:			

SAMPLE -- OVERALL END-OF-YEAR SUMMATIVE EVALUATION				
Place *one* check [✔] in each row for each goal and *one* check [✔] for overall rating.				
	4 Distinguished	**3 Accomplished**	**2 Satisfactory**	**1 Unsatisfactory**
Superintendent-School District Goal One				
Superintendent-School District Goal Two				
Superintendent-School District Goal Three				
Superintendent-Professional Development Goal One				
Superintendent-Professional Development Goal Two				
OVERALL RATING	**4 Distinguished**	**3 Accomplished**	**2 Satisfactory**	**1 Unsatisfactory**
A. In regard to the listed goals, which best illustrates the Superintendent's greatest strength and why?				
B. In regard to the listed goals, which presented the Superintendent with the greatest challenge and why?				
C. What supports might the School Board offer to enhance the Superintendent's strengths and assist him/her in overcoming existing challenges?				
D. Superintendent's Comments:				

Evaluation Period: _____ to _____

Superintendent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Board Chair's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C

SAMPLE -- Superintendent Self-Evaluation Form (*Optional*)					
Superintendent		**School Year**		**Date**	
	Pertinent MN Rule 3512.0510 Competency	**Measurable Progress Indicator 1**	**Measurable Progress Indicator 2**	**Measurable Progress Indicator 3**	**Timeline for Achieving the Goal**
Superintendent-School District Goal One: **Areas of strength:** **Areas needing work/strategies for improving performance:**					
Superintendent-School District Goal Two: **Areas of strength:** **Areas needing work/strategies for improving performance:**					
Superintendent-School District Goal Three: **Areas of strength:** **Areas needing work/strategies for improving performance:**					
Superintendent-Professional Development Goal One: **Areas of strength:** **Areas needing work/strategies for improving performance:**					
Superintendent-Professional Development Goal Two: **Areas of strength:** **Areas needing work/strategies for improving performance:**					