

“A Learning Paper”

Take the Stress Out of the Evaluation Process:

Leverage an Online Educator Growth System

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3500 Sunrise Highway

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www.MyLearningPlan.com

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“The ability to electronically update data in an organized and easy to use format has helped the district administration keep track of a complicated process. Storing the data from year to year is a huge asset to the district. It has been an easy and smooth transition to the online evaluation system, and it has been well received by our teachers and our administrators.”

~Eileen Conway, Assistant Superintendent,
Hawthorn School District 73, Illinois

Introduction

You’ve made great progress in your district as you prepare to implement the new teacher/principal requirements...You’re comfortable with the rubrics, and you know how to access the student growth and achievement data necessary for inclusion in the process. You’ve reviewed the scoring ranges. You’ve engaged in collective bargaining to iron out your appeals procedures, your process and format for improvement plans, and how you’ll use evaluation results data to inform employment decisions.

As you pause, you wonder how all of this is going to play out. How can you expect your administrators to keep up with all of the scheduling, observations, student data pieces, and paperwork on top of everything else? How do you meaningfully link appraisal outcomes to professional development? How can you ensure that your investments really improve the quality of instruction to enhance student learning?

In a recent position paper, the NYSCOSS (New York State Council of School Superintendents) referenced a case study that described how managing the new evaluation process can eat up more than 57% of a principal’s time in a given year. An online educator growth system automates much of the process by managing the paperwork and workflow, and capturing, integrating, and displaying easily interpreted data in a straight-forward, efficient, and secure environment.

Let’s imagine a wildly successful scenario...You log into your district’s online educator growth system. It instantly recognizes you as a district executive leader and provides a quick high level status of this year’s educator evaluation progress and related PD data.



First, you review a report that shows which teacher and principal evaluation elements are complete and incomplete this month by building. Next, you scan a graphical heat map to see data collected from classroom observation rubrics, noting trends across grades and subject areas as compared to previous data points to inform curricular conversations.

A summary report of composite scores for last year's beginning teachers provides the percentages of teachers that fell into each of your summative rating categories. Your team drills down to look at the student growth and achievement evidence behind the total scores as they collaboratively interpret the data to define enhancements to the mentoring program.

Finally, you view a report of the recommended leadership development areas that the system automatically recommended to principals based upon their individual evaluation results aligned to the ISLLC Standards. Assistant Superintendents will use this information during their evaluation conferences with principals. In just a few minutes, you have easily accessed several useful data points, empowering informed decision-making with your staff.

While your Cabinet keeps a pulse on the big picture, principals log in to schedule observations and conferences with seamless calendar integration and automatic scheduling emails to teachers. Principals use laptops, tablets or mobile devices, loaded with your selected rubrics and forms, to easily record observation notes, using the scrolling scratchpad and time stamp, and noting the automatic rubric scoring as they make their selections. These sophisticated yet user-friendly tools encourage accurate data collection, while allowing principals to easily complete forms and maintain focus on the lesson. Upon form submission, principals see a list of recommended professional development areas for each educator, aligned to the state teaching standards. These growth areas are automatically determined by the scores that principals assign using your district's rubrics.

In addition to recording observation data and other information regarding the qualitative component, your online management system attends to the student data components, as well. The system imports relevant student and school level growth and achievement data, and allows you to carefully decide where the data will be confidentially displayed to complement the observation and self-assessment pieces and support collaborative analysis during evaluation conversations.



On the teacher front, with a single sign-on educators easily view all of their evaluation action items and completed forms, recommended professional development opportunities, and portfolios of past professional learning experiences and evaluation data. They accept observation and conference scheduling requests, submit self-reflection forms, revise personal goals, and upload artifacts from their teaching practice as part of the transparent process.

Going a step further, the system even allows your team to easily examine the effectiveness of specific professional development experiences by reviewing documented changes in teacher practice and student outcomes related to the teacher’s classroom application of new knowledge and skills. This emphasis on looking for evidence about the relationship between instruction and student learning echoes a national theme reinforced in a recent *Education Week* article: “The money spent on professional development could be better tracked to ensure that it has an impact on student learning.” Your system ensures that resources are allocated to replicating and scaling only the PD that has yielded substantiated outcomes.

At the end of the evaluation cycle, your system calculates the weighted composite score for each individual, including the student growth scores, the locally negotiated student achievement data, and the observation scores and other defined measures, to make end of year reporting a breeze. The icing on the cake is that all of your required summative evaluation data is now ready to be reported to the State Education Department without the headaches.

In short, your online system has removed the stress by handling all of the evaluation management tasks, freeing up your staff to engage in the conversations that really matter about identified areas of strength and growth, in order to truly make a difference in enhancing teaching and learning.

Dr. Edward R. Fuhrman, Jr., Superintendent of the Croton-Harmon School District in New York State, remarks, “Our online system allows us to link all aspects of the appraisal process together electronically in one place, from pre and post observation conferences to professional growth plans to formative and summative evaluation. We’re able to monitor the process to ensure that all aspects of the performance review are fulfilled in a timely manner. In addition, professional development, as documented in our system, is fully integrated into the performance review.”



Considerations

To streamline the evaluation process and eliminate the stress in your district with maximum buy-in, consider the following tips:

1. Review and update your list of Evaluation Types or groups:

Who needs to be evaluated?

2. Determine which components will be completed for each Evaluation Type:

What is required for each evaluatee group?

3. Identify the elements that your district will use for the qualitative component:

Observations, Self-Assessments, other elements?

4. Review the measures your district will use for the Student Achievement component:

Which locally selected assessments are applicable and readily available?

5. Incorporate individual PD goals and PD histories seamlessly into the evaluation process:

On which evaluation form(s) would we like to see each educator's PD data?

6. Select an online educator growth management system that provides maximum flexibility and performance with all of the necessary features to take the stress out of the process:

- *Incorporates any rubrics into your system.*
- *Manages all components of the process for all groups, including calculating composite scores.*
- *Fully integrates with a complete Professional Development Management System to link professional development directly into the appraisal process.*
- *Displays each educator's PD history and goals on completed evaluation forms.*
- *Automatically recommends targeted PD offered by the building, district or external providers based on individual evaluation results.*
- *Developed by an organization that is focused only on K-12 and educator growth.*

Leverage an online educator growth management system to make the evaluation process fast and easy, enabling you to stress less.



References

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