Baltimore City Public Schools

Observation and Evaluation Guidelines: 2012-13

A guide to conducting observations and evaluations during the 2012-13 school year

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PUBLIC SCHOOLS
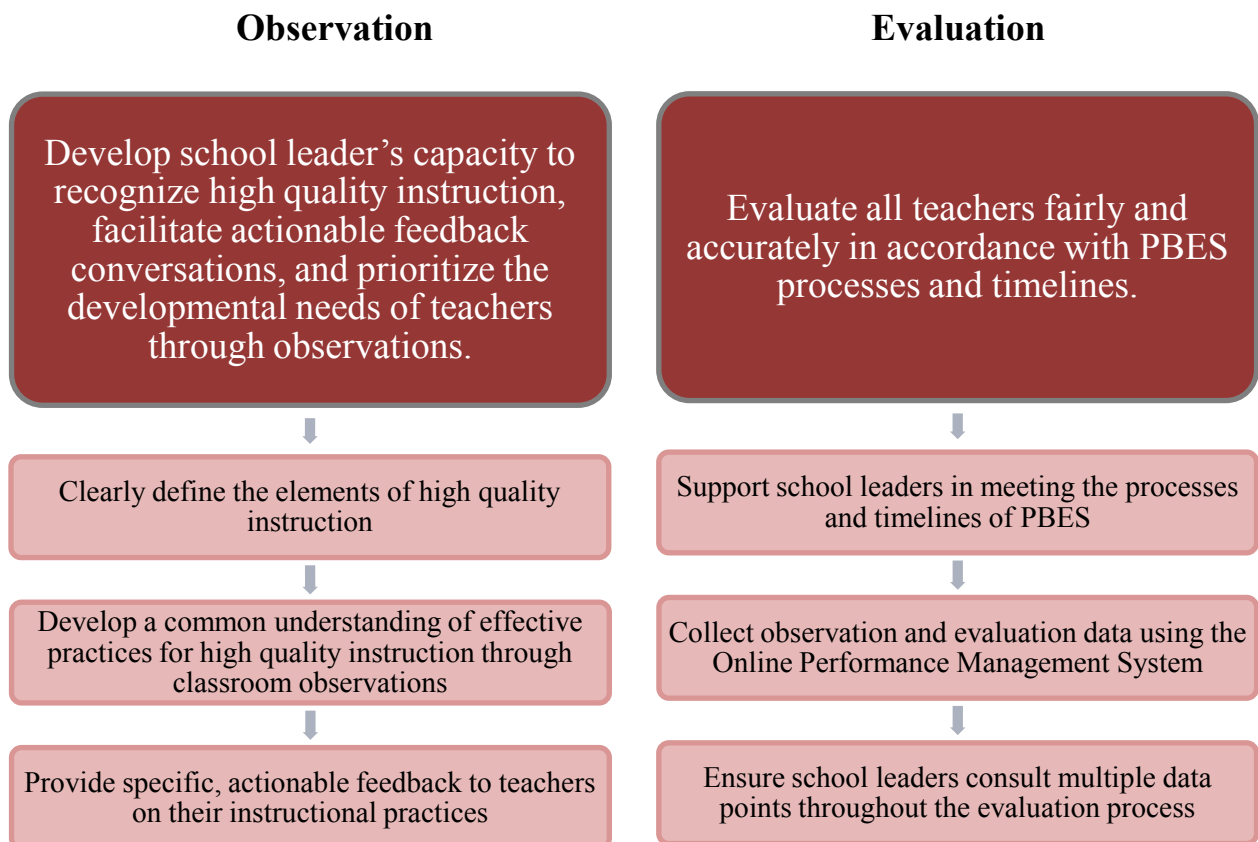
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I. Observation and Evaluation Overview 2012-13

In the 2012-13 school year:

- ALL observations (formal and informal) will be based on the Instructional Framework and Rubric.

- ALL timelines, processes and procedures of the Performance Based Evaluation System (PBES) will be used for BTU staff observations and evaluations.

- ALL observation and evaluation data will be collected in the Online Performance Management System (OPMS).

- ALL teachers will participate in a no-stakes field test of the new teacher evaluation system, before it is implemented for stakes in 2013-14 as required by the Education Reform Act of 2010.

II. Observation and Evaluation Goals for 2012-13

Observation	Evaluation
Develop school leader's capacity to recognize high quality instruction, facilitate actionable feedback conversations, and prioritize the developmental needs of teachers through observations.	Evaluate all teachers fairly and accurately in accordance with PBES processes and timelines.
Clearly define the elements of high quality instruction	Support school leaders in meeting the processes and timelines of PBES
Develop a common understanding of effective practices for high quality instruction through classroom observations	Collect observation and evaluation data using the Online Performance Management System
Provide specific, actionable feedback to teachers on their instructional practices	Ensure school leaders consult multiple data points throughout the evaluation process

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III. Defining the Purpose of Observations

High-quality classroom observations are an essential component of teacher growth. When done frequently and purposefully, they are an integral step to improving teachers' instructional practice. Both formal and informal observations help provide evidence of teachers' strengths, as well as areas for development.

Formal observations should be conducted for all teachers at least twice a year, in accordance with the processes and timelines cited in the *Performance-Based Evaluation System Handbook* (page 14):

> *Formal observations are opportunities to observe teacher performance and provide information for the preparation of the evaluation. There must be at least two formal observations of each City Schools teacher every year [COMAR 13A.07.04.02A(4)]. An unsatisfactory evaluation shall include at least one formal observation by an individual qualified to conduct the observation, other than the teacher's immediate supervisor.*
>
> *Formal observations will be conducted with the prior knowledge of the teacher. There will be a pre-observation conference and a post-observation conference. A written observation report must be prepared for each formal observation and should be discussed during the post-observation conference. The observer's notes and comments should provide helpful feedback to the teacher. The observation report must be completed and the post-observation conference must take place within ten working days after the observation. An observation report provides a place for written comments and reactions by the teacher being observed.*
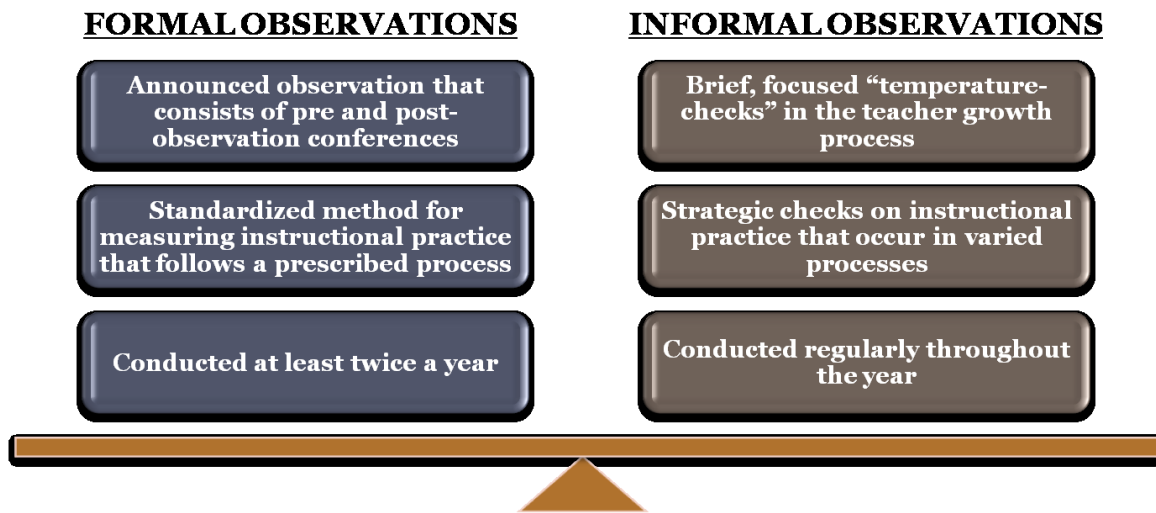
In general, informal observations should be brief, focused and designed to provide a "temperature check" in the teacher growth process. These types of informal visits may vary from "walk-throughs" to extended observations around an identified area of growth. Like formal observations, informal observations should serve a developmental purpose, and should be grounded in the feedback and coaching process, as stated in the *Performance-Based Evaluation System Handbook* (page 16):

> *Informal observations provide an opportunity to observe activities and instruction. The purpose of informal observations is to provide the qualified observer with current, ongoing information about the teacher's and the students' performance. Informal observations give the qualified observer important information about the implementation of the curriculum, delivery of instruction, and student performance. These observations can also provide guidance for the design of a teacher's professional development and feedback regarding the teacher's effectiveness. Informal observations do not require written reports or follow-up conferences. The observer, however, should provide the teacher with feedback.*

A balance of both formal and informal observations should be used to provide ongoing, critical feedback to teachers about their practice.

| **FORMAL OBSERVATIONS**	**INFORMAL OBSERVATIONS**
Announced observation that consists of pre and post-observation conferences	Brief, focused "temperature-checks" in the teacher growth process
Standardized method for measuring instructional practice that follows a prescribed process	Strategic checks on instructional practice that occur in varied processes
Conducted at least twice a year	Conducted regularly throughout the year

IV. Observation Expectations in 2012-13

While PBES requires two formal observations per year for each teacher, prioritized support via informal observations should occur on a much more frequent basis for all teachers. Principal Executive Directors will work with their assigned principals to help set school-specific targets for how many informal observations teachers should receive. It is important that there be a balance between the number and the type of observations teachers receive. All formal and informal observations should be based on the Instructional Framework and Rubric.

V. Defining the Observation Process

Classroom observations, both formal and informal, should be grounded in teacher development. The three essential steps for classroom observations outlined below will help ensure that teachers receive specific, actionable feedback grounded in evidence. While the depth of each step may differ depending on the type of observation, the basic process remains consistent: 1) lesson observation; 2) analysis of lesson through coding, evidence analysis and rating; and 3) feedback through planned coaching conversations.

Lesson Observation

⬇

Coding, Evidence Analysis & Rating

⬇

Feedback/Development
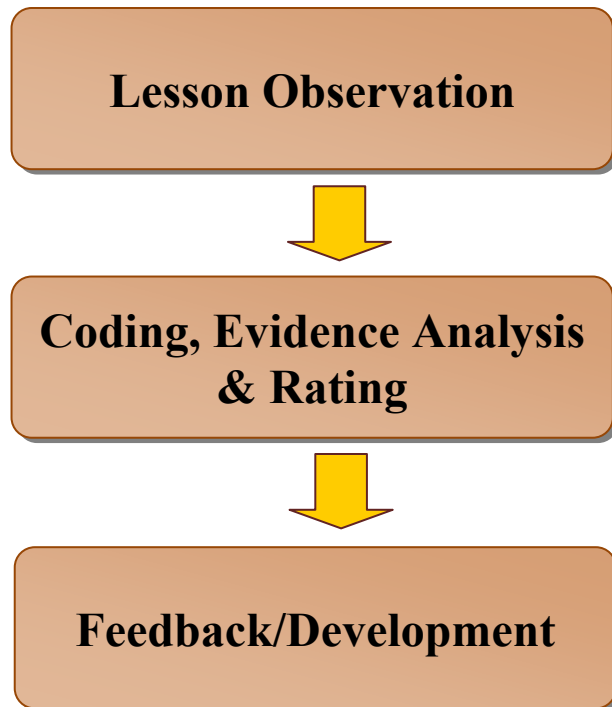
STEP 1: | **Lesson Observation**

Purpose:

In this step of the observation process, the observer collects evidence by taking notes on what is demonstrated, said or done by teachers in relation to the instructional core.

Guidance/Best Practice:

- Collected evidence should be non-judgmental and specific, and define what was demonstrated, said or done.
- Observation notes should focus on:
  - ✓ what **teachers** are doing and saying,
  - ✓ what **students** are doing and saying,
  - ✓ the **task** students are completing
- Provide a balance between scripted quotations and summative evidence statements.

Supporting Tools: (optional)

- OBSERVATION: Notes Collection and Coding Form: Optional tool to collect evidence during the observation process

STEP 2: Coding, Evidence Analysis & Rating

STEP 3: Feedback/Development

STEP 2 — Coding, Evidence Analysis & Rating

Purpose:

This step of the process focuses on organizing and analyzing evidence around the Key Actions in the Instructional Framework.

Guidance/Best Practice:

- Analyzing evidence should start with coding. Coding is the process of identifying the Teach Key Action(s) demonstrated by each piece of evidence.
- For each Key Action, observers should examine the totality of evidence collected for that Key Action. Grounding their judgment in evidence, observers then identify the level of the Rubric that best reflects a teacher's practice for each Key Action.
- In order to check ratings, and as a best practice to prepare feedback for teachers, observers should refine their evidence into rationales for each rating. This entails identifying the strongest pieces of evidence for each rating.

Supporting Tools: (optional)

- OBSERVATION: Evidence Collection and Rating Form: Optional tool to support the analysis of observed evidence
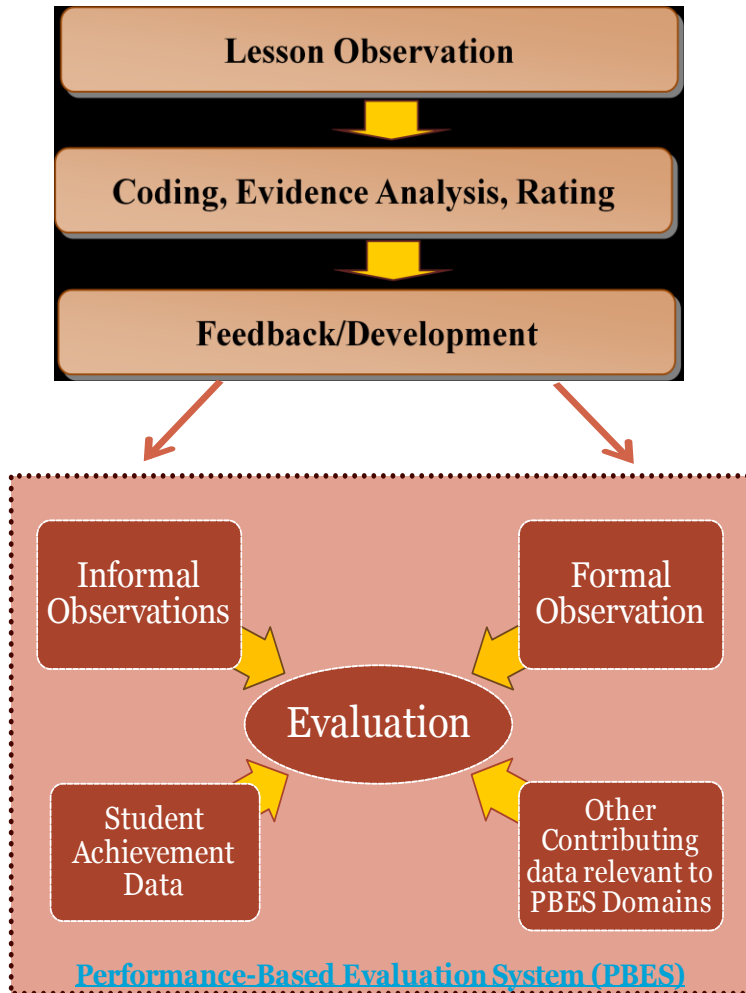
STEP 3 — Feedback/Development

Purpose:

Specific and actionable feedback is essential to developing teachers. In order to provide meaningful, targeted feedback, it is essential that observers plan the content of their written and/or verbal feedback to teachers.

Guidance/Best Practice:

- Feedback should highlight teachers' successes, while also providing a focus for development and improvement. All feedback should be specific, grounded in evidence and the Instructional Framework.
- In planning feedback, observers can use the following elements to frame the conversation:
  - Develop targeted, open-ended questions to focus the feedback conversation
  - Explicitly identify 2-3 strengths observed
  - Identify an area for growth that will have the greatest impact on student learning and the teacher's development
  - Develop a few achievable, specific next steps to support improvement in the area identified for growth

VI. Connecting Observation to Evaluation

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│        Lesson Observation        │
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                 ↓
┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│  Coding, Evidence Analysis, Rating│
└──────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│      Feedback/Development         │
└──────────────────────────────────┘
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Informal Observations → **Evaluation** ← **Formal Observation**

Student Achievement Data → **Evaluation** ← **Other Contributing data relevant to PBES Domains**

Performance-Based Evaluation System (PBES)

With a strong teacher evaluation system, everyone wins. Done thoughtfully and thoroughly, it is a barometer for how well a school district is educating its students. All teachers, regardless of tenure, benefit from feedback that helps them continue to improve their practice. School leaders use teacher evaluations to support their teachers and develop highly effective instructional programs. But most importantly, a strong teacher evaluation system reveals which instructional practices serve students well, and which do not—and provide a blueprint for what a district must do to ensure its students' success. Teacher evaluations ground districts in the work they do—they reinforce that students are at the center, and that what happens in the classroom is the most critical work of all.

The *Performance-Based Evaluation System Handbook* states that both formal and informal observations should help inform the teacher evaluation process. The steps outlined in the observation process help ensure that teacher observations are meaningful, grounded in evidence and can be used as one of multiple measures for evaluating teacher performance.

> *Evaluations should take into account observations (both formal and informal), student achievement data, and other contributing data that supports the PBES Domains. Other contributing data relevant to the PBES Domains include professional responsibilities, learning environment, etc.*

VII. Performance-Based Evaluation System General Review

Note: Please refer to the [Performance-Based Evaluation System Handbook](#) (revised in 2003) for the full guidance pertaining to the implementation of PBES. The section below highlights key aspects of PBES on which school leaders have requested additional clarity.

The performance-based evaluation system is for all teacher level employees covered by the Memorandum of Understanding between the Baltimore Teachers' Union and the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners. The effective performance of all teacher-level staff members is the foundation for achieving the goal of increased student achievement.[1]

VIII. Adhering to the PBES Timeline

The timeline for the steps of PBES in 2012-13 is below:

PBES Process	Deadline
Staff Review of Evaluation Process	• By October 1
Initial Planning Conference	• By October 15
1st Formal Observation	• By December 3
Performance Review	• By January 15
2nd Formal Observation	• By April 2
Annual Evaluation	• For teachers receiving an unsatisfactory rating, by May 1 • For teachers receiving Satisfactory and Proficient ratings, by one week before the teacher's last day of work

On page 10 of the *Performance-Based Evaluation System Handbook* it states that "If any due date falls on a non-work day, the due date is the next work day." The above chart reflects this policy.

For questions about the timeline, please call the Office of Human Capital at 410-396-8885. Also, please see the *Performance-Based Evaluation System Handbook* (page 10) for information.

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[1] *Performance-Based Evaluation System Handbook*, page 2

IX. Qualified Observers for Formal Observations and Evaluations

School leaders are responsible for the implementation of each step of the PBES process and they are encouraged to involve other qualified observers in completing the steps of the PBES cycle.

The *Performance-Based Evaluation System Handbook* notes, "Qualified observers are principals, assistant principals, directors, coordinators, and other instructional support staff in area and central offices."[2] In accordance with state law, qualified observers must hold either the Administrator I or Administrator II license, granted by the Maryland State Board of Education. BTU-level members cannot serve as qualified observers.

Also, the *Performance-Based Evaluation System Handbook* explicitly denotes the first and second formal observations, which are the minimum observations necessary in accordance with City Schools' understanding of necessary supports for teacher growth and Maryland state law. There is no limit on the number of informal or formal observations a teacher can receive in a given school year.

The same qualified observer cannot complete both observations to support an unsatisfactory evaluation. In the event that a teacher receives an unsatisfactory rating on the Performance Review (i.e. Mid-Year Review), it is required that the school leader secure a different qualified observer to complete the teacher's second formal observation.

If the same qualified observer conducts both the first and second formal observations and the teacher is trending towards an unsatisfactory rating, the school leader must schedule a third formal observation for the teacher, with a different qualified observer for the observation.

School leaders are advised to consult the appropriate Executive Director and Facilitator to secure another qualified observer to assist with observations in the event that the school only has one full-time qualified observer. School leaders are also advised to consult other school leaders to initiate collaborative observation schedules.

Guidance Counselor and Related Service Provider Evaluations
Per the BTU contract, a qualified specialist completes the observations for Guidance Counselors. School leaders, however, are to complete Guidance Counselor evaluations. Related-service providers are observed and evaluated by qualified specialists in the Office of Special Education.

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[2] *Performance-Based Evaluation System Handbook*, page 6

X. Refusal to Acknowledge

If an employee refuses to complete any step of the PBES observation and evaluation process, the school leader must document this refusal and secure a witness to affirm the employee's refusal. It is advised that the witness be a non-BTU member. This signed form can then be attached in the Online Performance Management System (OPMS).

Refusal by an employee to participate in the Performance Improvement Plan process is insubordination and can warrant a written reprimand.

XI. Using the Online Performance Management System (OPMS)

The Online Performance Management System (OPMS) will facilitate the employee evaluation process by allowing principals, teachers, mentors, and other district leaders to:

- Track and Report on all PBES performance evaluations for BTU classroom teachers, non-classroom teachers and other BTU populations (Clinical Service Providers, IEP Instructional Associates, Guidance Counselors, Full-time Mentors)
- Provide advanced reporting, both Dashboard and Query Reports, available through Oracle tools. Completion Reports available for both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2
- Document and maintain evidence using the Instructional Framework in the formal observations (for BTU classroom teachers)
- Electronic sharing and acknowledgement of evaluation documents
- Electronic tracking of Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)
- Tracking of non-classroom PSASA employees
- Tracking of leadership evaluations

i) Expectations for OPMS Use
Employees will be entering observation and evaluation data in the Online Performance Management System throughout the year. This year the Formal Observations from both cycle 1 and 2, the midyear Performance Reviews, Annual Evaluations, as well as the PIPs must be submitted electronically via OPMS. Compliance with the PBES deadlines will be enforced; the forms must be completed electronically by the same deadlines as described in the PBES guidance. The information will be exchanged between supervisor and employee, and acknowledged electronically. This back and forth exchange will track an electronic signature, and any comments either party wishes to add. This will build a history that may be used for reference, identifying training needs and the need for support. The data captured by this electronic system can be gathered in reports and dashboards which will also display an employee's progress.

ii) Highlights for this year

- School Leaders will be able to view usage reports through the Principal's Dashboard. The reports will be placed in the Human Capital tab, under a new section labeled Performance Management.
- For Clinical Service Providers, IEP Instructional Associates, Guidance Counselors, the mentors will be able to enter the Formal Observations in OPMS and the Principals will be responsible for completing the evaluations. The Initial Planning Conferences and Individual Development Plans will not be tracked in OPMS, but should be maintained locally at each school site
- The text boxes have been expanded to hold additional characters. Supervisors can now enter up to two pages of evidence.
- A new form combining the Instructional Framework Evidence Collection and Rating form and the PBES Formal Observation form is available.

iii) Accessing the Online Performance Management System

The Online Performance Management System is accesse*d through Employee Self Service, or Manager Self Service.* Employees can find Employee Self Service under the Employees tab on the homepages of the district website and City Schools Inside, the district's employee website. Access is also available through the ERP Production link on the ERP Portal:
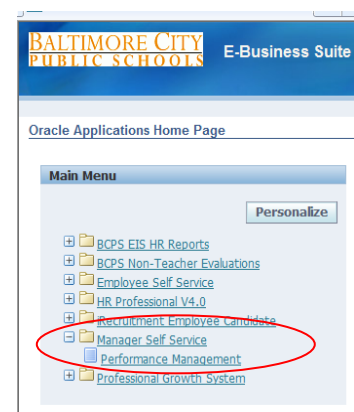https://ebs.bcps.k12.md.us/bcpss.html
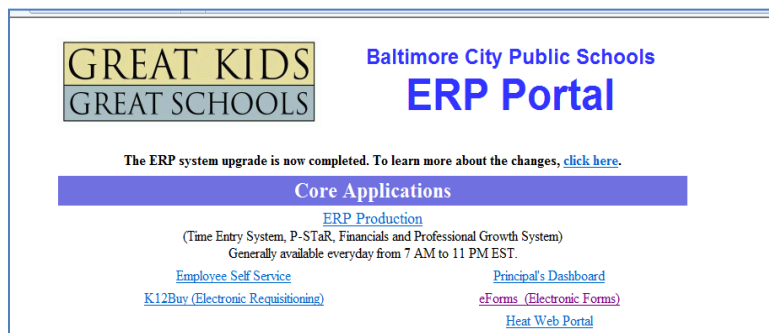
From Employee Self Service, choose **the Employee Performance Management** link:
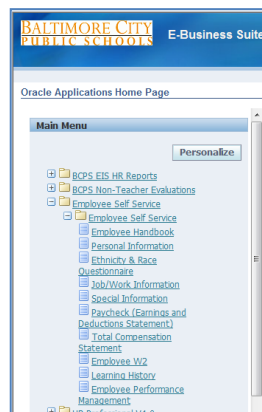
Managers will access OPMS from the **Performance Management** link under Manager Self Service:

Supervisors use Manager Self Service to create and monitor the observations and evaluations, Employees use Employee Self Service to respond to the observations and evaluations.

While this link is available to all employees, only BTU staff, principals, and ED's currently have a role in this online evaluation process. All others will see a message that reads "currently not applicable."

iv) Training Support
Training for the Online Performance Management System can be accessed through TSS. No credentials are needed to view the documentation. The training introduces the Observation and Evaluation processes from the perspective of both classroom teachers and principals, and it is recommended that everybody watch the different trainings to get a full overview of how OPMS works. The Online Performance Management system is designed to allow the back-and-forth exchange of documentation between teachers and principals.

The training includes single-page quick reference guides for each task along the PBES cycle. These can be printed and used to build a self-guided manual. There are also narrated videos that walk participants through each screen, each form and "click-path." Click here for both trainings.

For help with OPMS, email OPMS@bcps.k12.md.us.

XII. Contacts for Assistance

Topic	Who to Contact
OPMS Technical Support **Sample Questions** • How do I access OPMS? Where can I get trained? • Do I use the same online system as last year to enter mid-year and final evaluations? • I already did my observations by hand, what do I do? • How do I reset an evaluation or correct an error?	**School Support Network Human Capital Specialists** **opms@bcps.k12.md.us**
Observation/Evaluation Guidance – PROCESS **Sample Questions** • Who can I get help with observations from if I do not have another qualified observer at my school? • What forms do I need to complete for documentation if I am placing a teacher on a PIP? • Can I do my pre-observation and formal observation in the same day?	**Office of Human Capital 410.396.8885**
Observation/Evaluation Guidance – CONTENT **Sample Questions** • How does the Instructional Framework relate to PBES? Does the Instructional Framework replace PBES? • When evaluating teachers, am I rating them based on the Instructional Rubric or the PBES rubric?	**Principal Executive Director**

APPENDIX

- OBSERVATION: Notes Collection and Coding Form

- OBSERVATION: Evidence Collection and Rating Form

- *Performance-Based Evaluation System Handbook*

- Instructional Framework Resources

* Word versions of the observation and evaluation tools can be found at City Schools Inside.

http://www.bcpss.org/bbcswebdav/xid-1872036_2

Date: _____ Teacher: _____ Observer: _____

OBSERVATION: Notes Collection and Coding Form

Criteria for Evidence:	✓ Non-judgmental	✓ Specific	✓ Defines what was said/seen/done

Notes:

Coding:

Date: Teacher: Observer:

OBSERVATION: Evidence Collection and Rating Form

Key Action:	Evidence:	Rating:
TEACH 1: Communicate standards-based lesson objectives Key Concepts • Communication of objective • Communication of objective's significance • Communication of criteria for meeting objective • Student understanding of objective		**Consult Instructional Rubric** **4 3 2 1**
TEACH 2: Present content clearly Key Concepts • Accuracy of content • Emphasis of key points • Alternate presentation of content when needed • Modeling of academic language • Modeling engagement with texts and tasks • Clear instructions		**Consult Instructional Rubric** **4 3 2 1**
TEACH 3: Use strategies and tasks to engage all students in rigorous work Key Concepts • Purposeful tasks • Scaffolded and differentiated tasks • Opportunities to engage with complex texts and rigorous tasks • Student application of prior skills and learning • Student perseverance		**Consult Instructional Rubric** **4 3 2 1**

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Date: Teacher: Observer:

OBSERVATION: Evidence Collection and Rating Form

Key Action:	Evidence:	Rating:
TEACH 4: Use evidence-dependent questioning Key Concepts • Questions that push thinking • Questions requiring justification • Questions at key points • Clear and scaffolded questions • Wait time • Appropriate student response		**Consult Instructional Rubric** **4　3　2　1**
TEACH 5: Check for understanding and provide specific, academic feedback Key Concepts • Informative checks for understanding • Real time adjustments when needed • Student misunderstandings addressed • Specific, academic feedback • Delivery of feedback at key points		**Consult Instructional Rubric** **4　3　2　1**
TEACH 6: Facilitate student-to-student interaction and academic talk Key Concepts • Opportunities for student-to-student interaction • Structures for student collaboration • Purposeful and flexible student groups • Evidence-based discussions • Student academic talk		**Consult Instructional Rubric** **4　3　2　1**

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Date: Teacher: Observer:

OBSERVATION: Evidence Collection and Rating Form

Key Action:	Evidence:	Rating:
TEACH 7: Implement routines to maximize instructional time Key Concepts • Maximized instructional time • Smooth routines and procedures • Student understanding of responsibilities • Smooth transitions		**Consult Instructional Rubric** **4 3 2 1**
TEACH 8: Build a positive, learning-focused classroom culture Key Concepts • High expectations • Teacher to student rapport and respect • Equitable contribution • Student ownership and participation • Academic risk taking		**Consult Instructional Rubric** **4 3 2 1**
TEACH 9: Reinforce positive behavior, redirect off-task behavior, and de-escalate challenging behavior Key Concepts • Behavioral expectations • Feedback for positive and negative behavior • Off-task behavior and addressing it • Correction of misbehavior • Time impact of addressing misbehavior		**Consult Instructional Rubric** **4 3 2 1**

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