Teacher Professional Growth System Handbook

Revised August 20, 2011

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Preamble
Organizational Culture of Respect Statement
Montgomery County Public Schools recognizes and values the role of all employees as contributors to a learning community that sets high standards of performance for staff and students. By working together through continuous improvement, effective communication, and meaningful involvement in the decision-making process, we provide a high-quality education to every student. We are committed to shared responsibility and a collaborative partnership, integrated into an organizational culture of respect. This culture is built on the belief that all employees, both school-based and nonschool-based, are essential to a successful learning environment.

In order to sustain an organizational culture of respect, it is critical that all employees have an awareness, understanding, and tolerance of others' interests, viewpoints, cultures, and backgrounds. This culture promotes a positive work environment that supports the success of each employee, high student achievement, and continuous improvement in a self-renewing organization (MCPS, Excerpt R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Make it Real, 2005).

Equity and Cultural Competence
The commitment to foster an organizational culture of respect that is embedded throughout the school system is a priority of the employee associations/unions, the Board of Education, the superintendent, and executive staff. Inherent to this belief is the recognition that there is strength in diversity and the belief that all employees are essential to a successful learning community. Therefore, MCPS commits to Creating a Positive Work Environment in a Self-renewing Organization that does the following:

♦ Believes that the inclusion of individuals with a broad range of experiences and backgrounds broadens and strengthens education and contributes to student achievement.
♦ Promotes knowledge and understanding of one's own cultural identity as it influences a culturally competent workplace
♦ Values the uniqueness of cultures other than one's own and the richness of cultural diversity and commonality
♦ Promotes awareness of and sensitivity to individual differences within various cultural groups
♦ Eliminates stereotypes related to race, ethnicity, region, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, age, and individuals with disabilities
♦ Promotes the value of diversity and equity in our professional development offerings, recruitment, hiring, and promotional practices
♦ Provides venues for courageous conversations about diversity and equity in a safe, nonjudgmental environment
♦ Promotes a focus on diversity and equity through the implementation of each standard

Role of the Professional Growth System Implementation Teams
The implementation of the components of each professional growth system (PGS) is overseen by a joint multi-stakeholder implementation team. Each team is charged with monitoring the processes and procedures as set forth in the design of the PGS. Through a collaborative and problem-solving process, the Implementation Teams are responsible for defining expectations and practices and assessing the implementation of the PGS. In addressing issues that have arisen, the decision-making process will be to seek consensus; when that is not possible, a voting process may be used. Issues that cannot be resolved at the Implementation Team level may be referred to the appropriate collaboration committee. All professional growth system handbooks are continuously updated to reflect changes in processes and procedures approved by the appropriate Implementation Team.

♦ The Implementation Teams meet regularly on a schedule agreed on by the members at a meeting prior to July 1, for the subsequent year.
♦ The Implementation Teams consist of representative members of the employee associations and administration.
♦ The Implementation Teams are chaired by the employee association presidents or designees and MCPS designees, who are appointed by the deputy superintendent of schools and the chief operating officer.
♦ The meetings are facilitated by an appointee of the associate superintendent, Office of Human Resources and Development.
♦ An agenda is developed, with input from Implementation Team members or other collaboration committees.

INTRODUCTION

Of all the factors that are important to student achievement in productive schools—and there are many—the most important are what individual teachers believe, know, and can do. The design of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Teacher Professional Growth System (TPGS) recognizes the complexity and importance of teaching in a high-performing school system, one in which there is an emphasis on continuous improvement and shared accountability for student achievement. Good teaching is nurtured in a school and in a school system culture that values constant feedback, analysis, and refinement of the quality of teaching.

The TPGS for MCPS integrates two important components: a qualitative approach to teacher evaluation and professional growth. The essential elements of the system are as follows:
1. Six clear standards for teacher performance, based on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, with performance criteria for how the standards are to be met and descriptive examples of observable teaching behaviors.
2. Training for evaluators and teachers that creates not only a common language for the discussion of what good teaching is and is not, but also develops skills of analysis and critique that will make the dialogue a rich and data-driven one.
3. A professional growth cycle that integrates the formal evaluation year into a multi-year process of professional growth, continual reflection on goals and progress meeting those goals, and collegial interaction.
4. Formal evaluation with narrative assessments that provide qualitative feedback to teachers about their work.
5. A Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program that has consulting teachers (CTs) who provide instructional support to novice teachers (teachers new to the profession) and those not performing to standard. The CTs report to a PAR Panel composed of teachers and principals appointed by the unions with the shared responsibility for quality control and improvement.
6. Professional development years that are structured around a collaborative learning culture among teachers in each school, integrating individual growth plans into school plans, and utilizing student achievement and other data about student results.

II. THE ELEMENTS OF THE SYSTEM

A. Performance Standards

Six performance standards endorsed by the Board of Education provide a blueprint for the assessment of teachers' competencies in the TPGS. These standards are used in the evaluation of all classroom-based teachers, including ESOL and special education at all levels, as well as music, art, and physical education at the elementary level. They are as follows:

Standard I: Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Standard II: Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

Standard III: Teachers are responsible for establishing and managing student learning in a positive learning environment.

Standard IV: Teachers continually assess student progress, analyze the results, and adapt instruction to improve student achievement.

Standard V: Teachers are committed to continuous improvement and professional development.

Standard VI: Teachers exhibit a high degree of professionalism.

Each performance standard is clarified by performance criteria and descriptive examples of observable teaching behaviors (see Appendix A). The purpose of these examples is to provide a sample picture of what teaching looks like when it meets and when it does not meet the MCPS performance standards.

Performance Standards for All Other Teacher-Level Positions
Parallel performance standards, criteria, and descriptive examples have been designed for teacher-level positions not assigned to classrooms. These include counselors, media specialists, speech/language pathologists, school psychologists, pupil personnel workers, staff development teachers, parent educators, assistive technology specialists on the InterACT Team, social workers, instructional specialists, auditory and vision teachers, occupational and physical therapists, reading specialists, and teachers of infants/toddlers. Information about evaluation forms as well as the performance standards, criteria, and descriptive examples is available through the Office of Human Resources (OHR). Each of these groups may have different performance standards, criteria, descriptive examples, and data measures related to unique aspects of their observation/evaluation process.

All staff in the above categories will be evaluated on the same evaluation cycle as teachers, based on years of MCPS experience (see page 6). If a classroom teacher moves from a classroom assignment to one of these positions or vice versa, evaluation will be conducted according to the schedule and processes developed for that assigned position.

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B. Courses to Promote a Common Language About Skillful Teaching

A wide variety of professional development opportunities is available to staff through MCPS courses, workshops, and other staff development opportunities for professional growth. Essential to the success of the Workforce Excellence initiative and the TPGS are the courses Observing and Analyzing Teaching 1 (OAT 1), Observing and Analyzing Teaching 2 (OAT 2), Studying Skillful Teaching (SST), and Studying Skillful Teaching 2 (SST2).

Using the six performance standards, the educational consultant group, Research for Better Teaching, Inc. (RBT) of Acton, Massachusetts, provided courses of study for observers and evaluators, as well as for other MCPS staff. In-district trainers at the MCPS Center for Skillful Teaching have been trained by RBT and continue to assume most of the training responsibilities.

The two six-day courses, OAT 1 and OAT 2, are required for all school leadership staff engaged in observation and evaluation (principal, assistant principal (AP), resource teacher or interdisciplinary resource teacher). These courses are also required for consulting teachers (CT) and all members of the Peer Assistance and Review Panel, who are actively involved in the assessment of teaching performance.

OAT 1 prepares observers and evaluators to collect and analyze evidence about a teacher's work across the standards, including areas such as planning and assessment, capacity to motivate students and communicate consistently high expectations, and repertoire of instructional and classroom management strategies. Participants communicate what they have observed orally and in writing in a balanced manner that addresses claims based on teacher performance, evidence from observations, interpretation of the impact of the evidence on student learning, and judgments of the effectiveness of instruction.

OAT 2 helps participants focus on using multiple sources of data in evaluation. This course emphasizes strategies for dealing with supervisory challenges and means for developing leaders' knowledge and skills in areas such as conferring with teachers and addressing mediocre or ineffective teaching.

SST 1 and 2 are companion courses for teachers. The basic content of SST 1 overlaps with that of OAT 1, but student learning is the focus rather than skills to observe and analyze teaching. Participants are asked to examine the ways in which their research-based instructional strategies, as well as their beliefs about learning and professional community, make a difference for student performance. SST 1 helps teachers expand their repertoire of instructional strategies, match strategies to student needs, and learn skills for effective peer support and collaboration.

In SST 2, the focus is on breaking down the recurring obstacles to student success through the study of common causes of discipline problems, critical attributes of class climate, the use of assessments, and the design of learning experiences.

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C. Schedule for Evaluation and Professional Development

As documented by decades of research, the best strategy for improving teaching and learning is to build the capacity of the school to function as a learning community in which professional development is job embedded. To support the learning community, the TPGS places teachers in a multi-year professional growth cycle. The professional growth cycle provides opportunities and resources for reflection on teaching practices (both individually and collegially) that lead to continuous improvement of teaching practices.

The TPGS was designed to meet the different needs of teachers at various points in their careers in MCPS. More intensive support and supervision are provided for probationary teachers. The focus of teachers in the probationary years must be to develop an effective repertoire of instructional skills and to become knowledgeable about MCPS curricula. Probationary teachers are evaluated each year to provide them in-depth analysis and feedback about their teaching. They are not required, nor should they be encouraged, to engage in the formal Professional Development Plan (PDP) process.

Tenure is granted two years from the date of hire if an employee earns an overall year end evaluation of meets standard in the last year and if Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) requirements for standard or advanced professional certification have been met.

For tenured teachers, formal evaluations are less frequent. As a teacher gains experience and expertise, more time is spent in professional development activities and less time in formal evaluation. Upon receiving tenure, s/he then enters a three-year professional growth cycle. In the third year of the cycle, which is year five of service in MCPS, the principal formally evaluates the teacher. Teachers who successfully complete the three-year professional growth cycle enter a four-year growth cycle. In the fourth year of this cycle, which is year nine of service in MCPS, they are formally evaluated. After successfully completing the four-year cycle, teachers enter a five-year professional growth cycle. In the fifth year of this cycle, which is year 14 of service in MCPS, and every five years thereafter, the principal conducts a formal evaluation of the teacher. (See Schedule for Evaluation and Professional Development, page 6.)

During non-evaluation years, tenured teachers design a multi-year Professional Development Plan (PDP) with outcomes for their continuous improvement. During the evaluation year, tenured teachers collect and prepare information for the formal evaluation process and analyze progress on professional development activities, including those related to the PDP.

SCHEDULE FOR EVALUATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
(Based on number of years of MCPS teaching experience)

For teacher continuously meeting standards

Beginning		Tenured			Experienced				Veteran				
2-Year Cycle		3-Year Cycle			4-Year Cycle				5-Year Cycle				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
X	X	P	P	X	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	X

Veteran					Veteran					Veteran				
5-Year Cycle					5-Year Cycle					5-Year Cycle				
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
P	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	X

Veteran					Veteran					Veteran				
5-Year Cycle					5-Year Cycle					5-Year Cycle				
30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44
P	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	X

X = formal evaluation year
P = professional development year

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D. Observations

All teachers may be observed formally and/or informally at any time. During professional development years, formal observations are not required. However, administrators, resource teachers (RTs) or interdisciplinary resource teachers (IRTs) are expected to do a minimum of two informal observations each professional development year in order to be familiar with teachers' classroom practices. There is no required length or format for these informal observations, although some written documentation is encouraged. Formal observations are required during the evaluation year, and there are required specifications for these formal observations.

Requirements for Formal Observations

Formal observations serve as critical sources of data for the formal evaluation process. The requirements for formal observations are as follows:

1. A formal observation must occur for a minimum of thirty (30) minutes.
2. At least one formal observation must be announced. A pre-observation conference is required for each announced formal observation.
3. All formal observations must include a post-observation conference.
4. Post-observation conferences should be held within three (3) duty days after the formal observation. Conferences may be delayed by mutual agreement due to extenuating circumstances.
5. Teachers may respond to a post-observation conference report by submitting a written response to their file within ten (10) school days of the receipt of the *Post-Observation Conference Report.*
6. The *Post-Observation Conference Report* is considered a stand-alone document. Any notes taken by an observer or evaluator may be shared with the teacher, but they are not considered part of the formal documentation.
7. The *Post-Observation Conference Report* is completed after the conference with the teacher. It is reviewed by the administrator and the teacher and is housed in the local school file. The goal is to return the report to the teacher within ten (10) duty days after the post-observation conference or a reasonable amount of time as agreed upon by the teacher and observer.
8. The term 'qualified observer' refers to Principal, Assistant Principal, Student Support Specialist, Resource Teacher (RT), Interdisciplinary RT, Consulting Teacher (CT), or retired administrator. All qualified observers must have completed OAT 1 or be enrolled in the OAT 1 class and have completed the first four classes. For evaluations resulting in a below standard rating, at least one of the two observers must have successfully completed both the OAT 1 and OAT 2 classes. Central office subject area supervisors are available for consultation, but generally do not serve as qualified observers.
9. An elementary principal in a school without an assistant principal may request the support of a second observer if the principal needs assistance due to a large number of required formal observations and evaluations.
10. If it appears likely that a teacher will receive a "below standard" rating in an evaluation, the observations (serving as the basis for the evaluation) must be completed by **two** different qualified observers.

Classroom Observation Requirements

The number of required observations during the formal evaluation year varies, depending on status and a preliminary assessment of performance status. More observations by **two** different qualified observers are required if the evaluator suspects the final rating may be below standard.

Probationary teachers with CT:
- At least two formal observations are required by principal or qualified observer.
- One of the two required formal observations must be announced.
- At least one of the two required formal observations must be done each semester.
- The CT will complete a minimum of two **additional** formal observations, three if the teacher may be rated below standard. At least one must be announced and at least one is completed each semester. These do not count toward the required number of observations completed by administrators. The minimum number will be completed only for teachers clearly meeting standard with no concerns on the part of the CT or principal.

Probationary teachers without CT (first-year teacher with experience or any second-year teacher):
- At least two formal observations are required by principal or qualified observer, three if the teacher may be rated below standard.
- One of the two required formal observations must be announced.
- At least one of the two required formal observations must be done each semester.

Tenured teachers on regular evaluation cycle:
- At least two formal observations are required by principal or qualified observer, three if the teacher may be rated below standard.
- The principal or assistant principal must observe at least half the required observations.
- The RT, IRT, or other qualified observer may complete a formal observation.
- One of the two required formal observations must be announced.
- At least one of the two required observations must be done each semester.

Tenured teachers with CT:
- At least one formal observation by principal, immediate supervisor or assistant principal is required.
- The CT will complete a minimum of three formal observations, four if the teacher may be rated below standard. At least one must be announced and at least one is completed each semester.

The Post-Observation Conference Report

After the observation conference, the observer prepares a written narrative summary of the class and the conference called the *Post-Observation Conference Report.* (See Appendix C.) This report contains an analysis of the lesson. The report format incorporates an appropriate balance of claims about the teaching observed, evidence to support the claims, and interpretations about the effect on students. Reports may refer to MCPS performance standards. The report includes a summary of the discussion with the teacher as well as any decisions or recommendations that resulted from the conference. Appendix E contains samples of post-observation conference reports. The teacher is expected to review and return a signed copy of the *Post-Observation*

Conference Report. The teacher's signature indicates that s/he has received and read the conference report but does not necessarily indicate agreement with the contents of the report.

SUMMARY OF
MINIMUM REQUIRED FORMAL CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS
DURING AN EVALUATION YEAR

Type of Teacher	Observer	Minimum Required Yearly Observations		Frequency (minimum each semester)
Probationary Teacher (with CT)		Meeting Standard	Below Standard	
Novice teacher (new to teaching) and Second-year and Third-year teacher	Principal or Qualified Observer	2	2*	1
	CT	2**	3	1
Total		4	5	2
Probationary Teacher (without CT)				
First-year teacher (new to MCPS—experienced; NOT new to teaching) and second-year teacher	Principal or Qualified Observer	2	3*	1
Tenured Teacher				
	Principal or Qualified Observer	2	3*	1
Tenured Teacher (with CT)				
	CT	3	4	1
	Immediate Administrative Supervisor	1	1	

* The observations must be completed by **two** different qualified observers, at least one of whom must have successfully completed OAT 1 and OAT 2.

** The minimum number of observations is to be done only for teachers clearly meeting standard with no concerns on the part of the CT or principal.

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E. Evaluations

Formal evaluations are not required during professional development years of the professional growth cycle. However, the principal must complete the *Yearly Evaluation Report for MSDE Certification Renewal* (see Appendix C) annually to verify to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) that the certificate holder's performance is satisfactory ("meets standard").

In the TPGS, the formal evaluation process is seen as a tool for continuous improvement for teachers. During the formal evaluation year, both the teacher and administrator gather data from the professional development years as well as from the evaluation year. This data serves as the point of reference for the collaborative evaluation process. The evaluation year is a time when the teacher reflects on progress made and potential areas for future professional growth.

Important details regarding formal evaluations in designated evaluation years of the professional growth cycle are as follows:

1. **Frequency/Schedule:** Formal evaluations are required—
    *   For probationary teachers in their first year when hired before the school year begins or anytime during the first semester. If a first-year probationary teacher is hired during the second semester, the teacher will be formally evaluated for the first time in March of the following year.
    *   For probationary teachers in their second year.
    *   For tenured teachers: At least once in every professional growth cycle (years 5, 9, 14, and every 5 years thereafter).

2. **Special Evaluation:** A formal evaluation may be completed any year by placing a teacher on Special Evaluation when there is a concern about performance. (See pages 14–15 on Special Evaluation.)

3. **Evaluators:** The principal or an AP at the school to which the teacher is assigned is responsible for completing the formal evaluation. The principal must review and sign every evaluation.

4. **Evaluation of Novice Teachers (teachers new to the profession):** The school administrators, as well as the CT, support novice teachers. The administrator is responsible for writing a final evaluation report. The CT completes a final summative report, which is presented to the PAR Panel.

5. **Referring Probationary Teachers to PAR:** Experienced teachers who are new to MCPS have probationary status. The principal or an AP evaluates these probationary teachers. If serious instructional concerns are identified early in the first year for an experienced probationary teacher, two formal observations should be completed by November 1, and the principal should contact the director of performance evaluation in the Office of Human Resources (OHR) to request referral for PAR support with an assigned CT. The PAR Panel renders a decision on this request.

6. **Tenured Teachers in PAR:** The evaluation (Evaluation Form for Tenured Teachers in PAR included in Appendix D) will reflect the input of the principal as reported through observation reports and other data sources, the consulting teacher as reported through observation reports, the Mid-year Summative and Final Summative reports, and the recommendations of the principal and the consulting teacher to the PAR panel. The evaluation reflects the finding of the PAR Panel made through its deliberative process following the review of all appropriate data including any appeal by either the teacher or principal, if such an appeal occurs, as detailed on page 20 of this handbook. During the PAR year, the information in this evaluation is compiled by the co-chairs of the PAR Panel.
   A formal evaluation by the principal is not completed for a tenured teacher supported by the PAR program. The immediate supervisor is required to complete at least one formal observation with a post-observation conference and subsequent report.

7. **Teachers in Multiple Schools:** In the case of teachers who work in multiple schools, the administrator at the school in which the majority of the teacher's time is assigned completes the evaluation. If equal time is spent in two different schools, the administrator of the school in which the teacher's paycheck is received **completes** the evaluation. The administrator completing the evaluation is responsible for gathering data from the principal(s) of the other schools in which the teacher works, for inclusion in the evaluation.

The Final Evaluation Report

The principal or AP is the evaluator responsible for completing the formal *Final Evaluation Report* at the end of the formal evaluation year for all teachers except tenured teachers in the PAR program. The evaluation includes an examination of cumulative performance for an entire professional growth cycle and reviews the teacher's overall performance on each of the six MCPS performance standards.

The evaluator reviews all of the material, including all post-observation conference reports, as well as a variety of other data sources. Teachers are encouraged to assemble a portfolio with evidence of attainment of growth in terms of the six performance standards to serve as a comprehensive record of continuous improvement. Before the final evaluation is completed, the administrator and the teacher will review together the additional sources of data that may include the following:
   • Samples of student work, tests, assignments, feedback to students.
   • Long- and short-term lesson and unit plans.
   • Evidence of communication with parents.
   • Publications.
   • PDPs, evidence of activities that support PDP outcomes, and additional PDP-related documentation.
   • Student results: countywide and state test scores; countywide and department final exams, tests, quizzes, papers and project grades; checklists of skills mastered; attendance; discipline referrals; numbers/percents of students who move on from a teacher's class to the next grade or to a higher level of a subject; other measures of progress or success such as AP or SAT test scores, Gifted and Talented, or Honors enrollment; and customized data reports that document student results over a number of years as part of the system of shared accountability.
   • Student and parent surveys: MCPS provides recommended student and parent surveys, but teachers may choose to construct individualized survey instruments to help refine and improve their instructional practice.

Teachers should analyze survey data plus other forms of student and parent feedback from all years in the TPGS cycle to identify issues, patterns, trends, implications, what was done to address concerns in the past, and future professional growth plans. The teacher's analysis of student results is an integral part of the teacher's final evaluation report. The TPGS is designed to focus on many different kinds of student results every year whether or not the formal evaluation is being done. The Board of Education, administrative and supervisory staff, and teachers are ultimately accountable to the public for student performance. Standardized test scores provide one important source of data, but they cannot constitute a judgment, in and of themselves, about the performance of a teacher or the success of a school. The most important use of student results is to contribute to analysis and problem solving for school, teacher, or individual student improvement.

The *Final Evaluation Report* concludes with a summary rating of the teacher's overall performance and is sent to the OHR for inclusion in the teacher's personnel file. The teacher is given a holistic rating of either "Meets Standard" or "Below Standard." Appendix E contains examples of final evaluation reports. Any teacher who receives a rating of "Below Standard" will be referred automatically to the PAR program.

Due Dates for Final Evaluation Reports

It is essential that administrators send evaluations with the rating of "Below Standard" to the OHR within the specified due dates (see chart on page 13). Failure to adhere to timelines may result in postponement of PAR support.

CTs working with novice and tenured teachers are required to submit summative reports to the PAR Panel by specific dates that are aligned with the due dates for administrators' final evaluation reports. Original copies of final summative reports completed by CTs are kept by the Office of Human Resources and Development (OHRD). Attached to each summary is a copy of the letter from the PAR Panel with its recommendation to the superintendent.

DEADLINES FOR EVALUATIONS BY ADMINISTRATORS				
Probationary Teachers		**Tenured Teachers**		
Meets Standard	Below Standard	Meets Standard	Below Standard	In PAR
June 1	March 1	June 1	March 31 *(or last workday in March)*	No formal evaluation is due for tenured teachers in PAR. Administrators should continue to collect data and observe any teacher who is receiving PAR support. Administrator should contact the PAR Panel co-chairs by April 20 **only if the administrator disagrees** with the recommendation of the CT report, so the administrator can present additional information at the second May PAR Panel meeting.

DEADLINES FOR SUMMATIVE REPORTS BY CONSULTING TEACHERS				
Probationary Teachers		**Tenured Teachers IN PAR**		
Meets Standard	Below Standard	Meets Standard	Below Standard	Recommended for Dismissal
June 1	March 1	June 1	April 30 *(or last workday in April)*	April 30 *(or last workday in April)*

Special Evaluations for Tenured Teachers not in Formal Evaluation Year

If a principal has concerns about the performance of a tenured teacher who is not currently in a formal evaluation year, s/he may request that OHR place the teacher on a special evaluation. The request for special evaluation removes the teacher from the scheduled professional development year. Special evaluation status is not subject to appeal.

Requesting a special evaluation for the current school year:
- The administrator or a qualified observer must complete a minimum of two formal observations prior to the request for special evaluation.
- The written request for special evaluation should be sent to the director of performance evaluation in OHR no later than the second Friday in January. All relevant documentation should accompany the request.
- OHR must notify the teacher placed on special evaluation by January 31.
- A minimum of one additional formal observation must be completed after January 31.
- The formal evaluation must be sent to the director of performance evaluation in the OHR by March 3l if the rating on the special evaluation is 'below standard'.
- The formal evaluation must be sent to the director of performance evaluation in the OHR by June l if the rating on the special evaluation is 'meets standard'

Requesting a special evaluation for the following year:
- The administrator or a qualified observer must complete a minimum of two formal observations prior to the request for special evaluation.
- The written request for special evaluation should be sent to the director of performance evaluation in OHR by the last workday in May; all relevant documentation should accompany the request.
- OHR must notify the teacher that s/he will be placed on special evaluation the following year by the last day of the school year;
- The special evaluation is due by March 31 of the following year if the rating on the special evaluation is 'below standard' and should be sent to the director of performance evaluation in the OHR; a minimum of three formal observations must be completed during the special evaluation year.
- The special evaluation is due by June 1 of the following year if the rating on the special evaluation is 'meets standard' and should be sent to the director of performance evaluation in the OHR; a minimum of two formal observations must be completed during the special evaluation year.

Special Evaluation Due Dates and Process Information

Request for Special Evaluation for the current year	Request for Special Evaluation for the following year
Two (2) formal observations completed by an administrator or a qualified observer **prior to request**	Two (2) formal observations completed by administrator or a qualified observer **prior to request**
Written request for special evaluation to OHR (director of performance evaluation) by **second Friday in January**	Written request for special evaluation to OHR (director of performance evaluation) **by May 31**
OHR notifies teacher by **January 31**	OHR notifies teacher **by last day of the school year**
Minimum of one additional formal observation completed after January 31 (more recommended) and formal evaluation completed **by March 31** if the rating on the special evaluation is **'below standard'** or by **June 1** if the rating on the special evaluation is **'meets standard'**—Send to OHR (director of performance evaluation)	Special evaluation is sent to OHR (director of performance evaluation by **March 31** of the following year if the rating on the special evaluation is **'below standard'** or by **June 1** of the following year if the rating on the special evaluation is **'meets standard'**. The administrator or other qualified observer has completed a minimum of three formal observations.
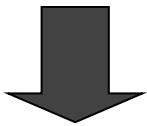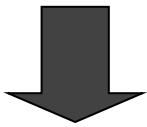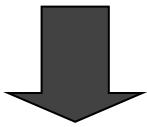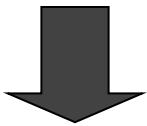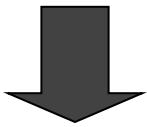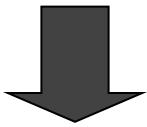
II. ELEMENTS OF THE SYSTEM

F. The Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program

Overview of the PAR Program

The Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program is a mechanism for maintaining systemwide quality control and ensuring that all MCPS teachers responsible for teaching students meet MCPS standards of performance. Through this program, intensive, individualized assistance is provided for all novice teachers and experienced teachers who are judged to be "below standard."

The design of the PAR program is a result of a collaborative relationship between the Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA), the Montgomery County Association of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel (MCAASP), and MCPS regarding teacher evaluation. The focus of the PAR program is to improve instruction by supporting novice and under-performing teachers. Thus, the MCPS administration, MCEA, and MCAASP, as partners in the establishment and implementation of the PAR program, strive to support the recommendations of the PAR Panel to the superintendent regarding the employment status of teachers in the program.

For experienced teachers, the "below standard" rating given by principals during the formal evaluation process and subsequent referral to the PAR program indicate that the teacher is seriously at risk. PAR is not designed for teachers who simply could use some improvement in their teaching techniques. Other supports, such as staff development teachers (SDTs), mentors, team leaders, RTs, IRTs, or other available school resources may be more appropriate for these teachers.

The PAR program addresses issues and concerns that are related to instructional skills. If there are other concerns about employment responsibilities, the principal confers with the teacher and completes written notification of the conference. If the issues continue, the principal notifies the OHR director of performance evaluation to determine who will provide resolution in these cases.

The superintendent and/or his/her designee retain the right to make personnel decisions in rare egregious cases.

The PAR program has two components: the PAR Panel and Consulting Teachers (CTs). The PAR Panel consists of equal numbers of teachers and principals, recommended by their respective employee unions and appointed by the superintendent. CTs provide direct instructional support to teachers and collect data through formal observations. CTs report monthly on the progress of the teachers to the PAR Pair, one teacher and one principal who are members of the PAR Panel, assigned to oversee the work of a small group of CTs. The CT writes a final summative report at the conclusion of the period of support. Based on the data and information gathered through the program, the PAR Panel makes recommendations in March (for probationary teachers) and May (for tenured teachers) to the superintendent regarding contract renewal, recommendation for a second year in PAR, or contract termination.

Components of the PAR Program

The PAR Panel

The PAR Panel consists of sixteen members appointed by the superintendent: eight teacher representatives recommended by MCEA and eight school-based administrators recommended by MCAASP. PAR Panel members are accountable to their respective organizations to ensure organizational and institutional support of the PAR program. The PAR Panel sends its recommendations directly to the superintendent, who reviews and makes all final decisions on matters related to an individual teacher's nonrenewal, dismissal, or continuation of contract.

The duties of the PAR Panel include the following:
- Reviewing all cases referred to the PAR Panel as a result of the formal evaluation process.
- Recruiting, interviewing, and selecting CTs.
- Evaluating the performance of CTs.
- Meeting with CTs to review reports and receive updates on teachers in PAR.
- Advising CTs regarding supports to teachers.
- Reviewing concerns of participating teachers or principals regarding the PAR program.
- Making one of the following personnel recommendations to the superintendent (based on CT reports, the principal's formal evaluation, and other supporting data):
  - Successful completion of the program and return to the regular professional growth cycle.
  - Termination of contract: dismissal (tenured teacher) or nonrenewal (probationary teacher).
  - An additional year of PAR assistance.
  - A third year in nontenured status for probationary teachers (in accord with MSDE regulations).

Consulting Teachers (CTs)

CTs are experienced teaching professionals who are selected by the PAR Panel. A rigorous selection process ensures that they are outstanding teaching professionals and that they are able to communicate their knowledge and strategies about best practices to adult learners. They receive extensive training (including OAT 1 and 2) to develop and refine their observation and analysis of teaching skills.

The duties of a CT include the following:

For novice teachers—
- providing information about strategies for teaching and suggestions about resources;
- offering demonstration lessons, team teaching experiences, informal feedback, etc.;
- making frequent visits with informal support;
- conducting a minimum of three observations with at least one per semester
- preparing and submitting to the PAR Panel a midyear and final summative report regarding the teacher's instructional skills; and
- making a recommendation regarding future employment for the probationary teacher.

For teachers evaluated as "below standard" by their administrators—

- completing the review process;
- reviewing the most recent formal evaluation and soliciting additional information as appropriate;
- making recommendations to the PAR Panel regarding inclusion in the PAR program;
- planning and implementing an intensive program of intervention and support, which includes a minimum of three formal observations, ongoing communication with the teacher, analysis of student data, demonstration lessons, etc.;
- preparing and submitting to the PAR Panel a midyear and final summative report regarding instructional skill levels; and
- making a recommendation regarding future employment.

The Role of the Principal and Other School Staff Related to the PAR Program

Principals, APs, RTs, IRTs, team leaders, and SDTs all have important roles in the multi-year professional growth cycle, the core of the TPGS, in their work with teachers. The PAR program enhances the system by creating an additional, intensive support program for novice and under-performing teachers. The role of the CT in the PAR program is complementary to the roles of school-based personnel. Principals remain responsible for the evaluations of all teachers in their years leading to the granting of tenure.

For tenured teachers in PAR, the evaluation will be written by the co-chairs of the PAR Panel. The immediate supervisor is required to complete at least one formal observation with a post-observation conference and subsequent report. The immediate supervisor is encouraged to document the progress of the teacher by collecting data from a variety of sources. MCPS Evaluation Form 425-39 is not completed by principals for tenured teachers supported by the PAR program.

For both probationary and tenured teachers in PAR, the CT shares formal observation reports and final summative reports with the principal. However, the documentation of the CT and the formal evaluation by the administrator are independent of each other. **No information from CT reports may be used in the administrator's evaluation.**

The CT writes a growth plan for each client included in PAR due to performance concerns. The purpose of a growth plan is to explicitly identify high priority areas for improvement and to align support in those areas. The growth plan may not address all areas of need; observation feedback should include areas addressed in the growth plan, but should also continue to address any other aspects of teaching and learning that the observer deems significant.

The growth plan for a teacher recommended for a second year of PAR is typically written by the end of the school year in which that recommendation was made. The growth plan for a teacher included in PAR via the review process is typically written during the first semester of support, following the first formal observation by the CT.

The CT will seek input from the principal and from the client while drafting the growth plan. The principal will coordinate support by school-based staff identified in the growth plan while preserving appropriate levels of confidentiality regarding the teacher's inclusion in PAR.

While an underperforming or novice teacher is in the PAR program, the principal continues to supervise the teacher. S/he observes, provides feedback, coordinates school support, responds to

parent concerns, etc. Communication and coordination among the CT, the principal, and other members of the school's instructional leadership team are essential. Such collaboration will ensure that the teacher receives complementary, consistent messages about expectations and instructional improvements from all who are providing support. These messages should include information about areas of concern on the part of the CT and/or administration and the possible consequences of these areas of concern resulting in a below standard evaluation.

The principal or immediate supervisor may provide the PAR Panel with additional information to substantiate the CT's report if s/he feels it is necessary. When the principal or immediate supervisor disagrees with the final summative report of the CT, s/he may appear before the PAR Panel and provide further information with documentation. When this occurs, the teacher will also be invited to appear before the PAR Panel to provide additional information.

The principal or immediate supervisor will be asked to complete a feedback survey on the performance of each CT working in his/her building. This is in addition to the survey that each client teacher completes to provide feedback on the performance of his/her CT.

Teachers Served by the PAR Program

The following categories of teachers will be included in the PAR program:
- Novice teachers.
- Experienced teachers new to MCPS with serious instructional concerns identified (based on a minimum of two formal observations) and reported to OHR **prior to November 1**. After PAR referral, CT support may occur as early as the first year of probation.
- Probationary teachers referred to PAR and included after the formal review process.
- All third-year probationary teachers.
- Tenured teachers referred to PAR and included after the formal review process.

The Review Process

When a teacher who is not currently in the PAR program is given a "below standard" rating on the formal evaluation report, the OHR notifies the PAR Panel co-chairs. A CT is assigned to complete a review of that teacher's instructional skills. The review consists of the following:

The CT—
- meets with the principal and the teacher;
- completes a minimum of two formal observations (one announced and one unannounced); and
- reports the information and makes a recommendation to the PAR Panel.

The PAR Panel—
- hears the report from the CT;
- decides on inclusion or noninclusion in the program; and
- notifies the teacher and administrator of the decision.

If the CT concurs that the needs of the teacher warrant the support of the program, the teacher may ask to make a presentation to the PAR Panel in order to provide additional information. This presentation provides for a meaningful appeal of the principal's "below standard" evaluation. The PAR Panel considers the CT review to be information that can be used in the appeal process. If the teacher requests to make a presentation, the PAR Panel also will provide

an opportunity for the principal to present information and documentation. In addition, the CT will be questioned to clarify information in his/her reports and in regard to his/her recommendation. Information from all three sources will be considered before rendering a decision. After the presentation, the PAR Panel will affirm or negate the "below standard" administrative evaluation, and will recommend inclusion or non-inclusion in PAR. If the PAR Panel recommends inclusion in the PAR program, a CT is assigned to provide a year of instructional support. Inclusion in the PAR program is not voluntary and cannot be appealed by the teacher. If the PAR Panel recommends non-inclusion, and the teacher therefore is determined to "meet standard," the PAR Panel will notify the principal, who will work with staff from the Center for Skillful Teaching, and the co-chairs of the PAR Panel, to ensure that the formal evaluation is revised to conform with a "meets standard" rating (this applies to probationary as well as tenured teachers).

If the CT does not concur that the needs of the teacher are severe enough to warrant the support of the program, the principal may ask to make a presentation to the PAR Panel in order to provide additional data. When considering a presentation by a principal, the PAR Panel always will examine all relevant written documentation, including the most current formal evaluation report and post- observation conference reports. If the principal requests to make a presentation, the PAR Panel also will provide an opportunity for the teacher to present information and documentation. In addition, the CT will be questioned to clarify information in his/her reports and in regard to his/her recommendation. Information from all three sources will be considered before rendering a decision. After reviewing all of the information, the PAR Panel will either recommend inclusion into the PAR program or return to the Professional Growth Cycle with support in the school. If the PAR Panel recommends non-inclusion, and the teacher therefore is determined to "meet standard," the PAR Panel will notify the principal, who will work with staff from the Center for Skillful Teaching, and the co-chairs of the PAR Panel, to ensure that the formal evaluation is revised to conform with a "meets standard" rating (this applies to probationary as well as tenured teachers).

For a client in PAR or a teacher receiving a "below standard" evaluation and subsequent CT review prior to inclusion in PAR, if the PAR Panel makes a final recommendation of "meets standard" that is in disagreement with the final evaluation of the principal:
1. The principal (supported by CST staff) will rewrite the evaluation within 30 days to demonstrate the teacher is meeting standard.
2. The rewritten evaluation will be considered and affirmed by the PAR Panel co-chairs.
   a. If affirmed, the rewritten evaluation will replace the original evaluation at OHRD.
   b. If the co-chairs do not affirm the rewritten evaluation, the original evaluation will be removed from the employee's file at OHRD.
3. All observations completed by the principal and the CT remain as a part of the employee's cumulative performance folder for the current professional growth cycle.

Normally, formal evaluations are completed by June 1. Teachers in the PAR program are not permitted to voluntarily transfer to another school. A teacher in the PAR program may be selected for involuntary transfer, according to the conditions and procedures of the MCEA negotiated agreement.

Late Reviews

Reviews for teachers with "below standard" evaluations not completed in the spring will be assigned to CT's and completed in the fall of the following school year. The review will be completed as soon as possible for decisions at the October or November PAR Panel meeting. The two review observations will count as <u>one</u> of the three required observations for the year. Thus, at least two more observations by the CT are needed.

PAR Support Timelines
The normal period of support in the PAR program is from September to March 1 (probationary teachers) or September to April 30 (tenured teachers). In rare cases, there may be mitigating circumstances that result in a PAR Panel decision recommending a longer or shorter period of PAR support.   These decisions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

There is an expectation that the processes of the program will be completed for a teacher in the PAR program, either novice or experienced. This is based on the belief that the feedback provided by the CT and administrator can support the teacher throughout the school year. If a teacher in the PAR program tenders his/her resignation to the OHR to be effective at the end of that school year, the CT cease normal data gathering (formal observation reports, summative reports) but will continue to provide support to the teacher as requested by the teacher or principal.   Submission of a notification of intent to retire at the end of the school year will not affect the data gathering or support provided by the CT nor will it affect the PAR Panel's processes.

<u>Decisions</u>

Meets standard

When the CT and Principal rate the client teacher "meets standard", the PAR Panel makes a final recommendation that probationary teacher will enter the PGC or the tenured teacher will return to the PGC.

Below standard

When the CT and/or the principal rate the teacher as "below standard", the CT will present the case to the entire PAR Panel. This will occur at the regular March meeting for probationary teachers and at the regular May meeting for tenured teachers. The PAR Panel will make a tentative recommendation of entrance or return to the PGC, a second year of PAR, or non-renewal (for probationary teachers) or dismissal (for tenured teachers).

The co-chairs will notify the client teacher and his/her principal in writing of the Panel's recommendation. The letter will include the information on the process to appeal the tentative recommendation, including a date by which the client teacher or principal must request to present to the Panel.

Second year in the PAR program
The PAR Panel uses the following criteria when considering a second consecutive year in the PAR program:
1. The client teacher demonstrated emerging skills and potential to be successful
2. The client teacher is not certified or not teaching in his/her area of certification
3. The client teacher has no student teaching experience
4. The CT reports there are limited resources for support in the building

5. There are circumstances that may have had an effect on the performance of the client teacher, such as, but not limited to, class schedule, no classroom.

If a teacher is placed in the PAR program for a second successive year, input will be sought from the principal and the previous CT regarding the assignment of the CT for the second year. Factors that will be considered are the years of experience of the CT, the certification areas, subject knowledge and expertise of the CT, and the specific needs of the client. The assignment of the CT is recommended by the Lead CTs and affirmed by the Panel co-chairs.

The decision of the PAR Panel to continue a client teacher in the PAR program for a second successive year may not be appealed.

The Appeal Process

In any instance in which the client teacher or principal wishes to appeal the tentative recommendation of the PAR Panel, both the teacher and principal involved will each be invited to make a presentation before the Panel.

Principal Appeal Presentations

The principal may appeal the tentative recommendation at a PAR Panel meeting. The presentation will be scheduled for twenty minutes for probationary teachers and thirty for tenured teachers. The first half of the allotted time is a presentation of evidence to support the principal's evaluation. The second half of the allotted time is used for questions from the Panel. The principal may bring written documentation based on the standards to support his/her point of view and will give copies to each PAR Panel member. All documentation presented to the PAR Panel must have been shared with the client teacher in advance of this meeting. The principal may be accompanied by another administrator of the principal's choosing to assist in the presentation.

The principal (or supervisor if the client is not school based) is expected to present in these cases. She/he may be accompanied by the assistant principal or resource teacher as appropriate.

Teacher Appeal Presentations

The client teacher may appeal a tentative recommendation of non-renewal or dismissal at a PAR Panel meeting. The client teacher may not appeal a tentative recommendation of a second year in the PAR program. The presentation is scheduled for twenty minutes for probationary teachers and thirty for tenured teachers. The first half of the allotted time is a presentation of evidence to support the teacher's view of his/her performance. The second half of the allotted time is used for questions from the Panel. The teacher may bring written documentation based on the standards to support his/her point of view and will give copies to each PAR Panel member. The teacher may contact a MCEA Uniserv representative for assistance. The teacher may be accompanied by a MCEA Uniserv representative, an attorney or other guest but the guest may not speak during the proceedings.

Final recommendations

The Panel discusses the case following appeal presentations and re-considers its tentative recommendation without the presence of either the client or the administration. The co-chairs notify the client teacher and his/her principal in writing of the Panel's final recommendation to the Superintendent.

If neither the client teacher nor the principal appeal the PAR panel's tentative recommendation, that recommendation becomes the final recommendation.

Tenured teachers may appeal the Panel's final recommendation to the Superintendent through the process outlined in MCPS and MSDE employment procedures.

Emergency leave while in the PAR program
If a teacher goes on emergency leave while in the PAR program, the process will be completed and the PAR Panel will decide on any adjustments to the process on a case by case basis.

Data gathering involved in the PAR Program
Principals and teachers involved in the PAR program should gather data throughout the year. This data may include any or all of the items mentioned in the Final Evaluation Report section of this handbook.

Presentations to the PAR Panel are strengthened by such data. When possible, grade distributions and test results should include comparable data for like classes or teachers in order to provide a context in which to interpret such data.

Follow-up to Successful Release from the PAR Program
In the year following successful release from PAR, the teacher will have a Special Evaluation to ensure maintenance of skills. If the teacher's skills are rated "below standard" in the next school year, the PAR Panel will reconsider the case. The principal and teacher will be asked to bring documentation and evidence to the PAR Panel meeting in May. At that time, based on the evidence provided, the PAR Panel could recommend a return to the Professional Growth Cycle, additional PAR support, or termination of contract.

If a teacher who has been successfully released from the PAR program receives a "below standard" evaluation for a school year after the year immediately following the successful release, a CT will be assigned to conduct a review as detailed on page 19. The CT will make a recommendation to the PAR Panel as to re-inclusion of the teacher in the PAR program.

If the CT recommends re-inclusion for a teacher whose previous inclusion in the PAR program was the result of a below standard evaluation, the principal will be given the option of agreeing with that recommendation. If the principal agrees, re-inclusion in the PAR program is not voluntary and cannot be appealed by the teacher. If the principal does not agree and requests consideration of dismissal from MCPS employment, the CT, principal, and teacher will each be invited to make a presentation at the June meeting of the PAR Panel. The Panel could recommend a return to the Professional Growth Cycle, re-inclusion in the PAR program, or dismissal from MCPS employment.

In the case where a teacher had previously been released from PAR at least one year earlier, *after* referral to PAR and if the CT Review results in the recommendation of re-inclusion, the option of *dismissal* will be limited to teachers who have previously entered PAR as a result of a below standard evaluation.

If the CT does not recommend re-inclusion for a teacher whose previous inclusion in the PAR program was the result of a below standard evaluation, the principal will be given the option of agreeing with that recommendation. If the principal agrees with the recommendation, the teacher will return to the professional growth system. In this circumstance, the principal will re-write the evaluation to demonstrate that the teacher is meeting standard. If the principal disagrees, the CT, principal, and teacher will each be invited to make a presentation at the June meeting of the PAR Panel. The Panel could recommend a return to the Professional Growth Cycle, re-inclusion in the PAR program, or dismissal from MCPS employment.

If the CT recommends re-inclusion for a teacher whose previous inclusion in the PAR program was as a novice teacher, re-inclusion in the PAR program is not voluntary and cannot be appealed by the teacher.

If the CT does not recommend re-inclusion for a teacher whose previous inclusion in the PAR program was as a novice teacher, the principal will be given the option of agreeing with that recommendation. If the principal agrees with the recommendation, the teacher will return to the professional growth system. In this circumstance, the principal will re-write the evaluation to demonstrate that the teacher is meeting standard. If the principal disagrees, the CT, principal, and teacher will each be invited to make a presentation at the June meeting of the PAR Panel. The Panel could recommend a return to the Professional Growth Cycle or re-inclusion in the PAR program.

Peer Assistance and Review Program

The purpose of the joint MCEA/MCPS Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program is to assist all teachers to meet standards for proficient teaching. It provides intensive support for experienced teachers who have been identified as performing below MCPS standards of proficiency, experienced teachers new to MCPS who need assistance, and teachers new to teaching. As a result, the PAR program is the MCPS mechanism for maintaining system wide quality control and ensuring that all MCPS teachers are functioning at or above MCPS standards of performance.

Part 1: Tenured Teachers Flow Chart

Formal evaluation conducted by principal during Professional Growth Cycle or special evaluation done at any time in the cycle.

Teacher meets or exceeds professional standards

If the principal completes a below-standard evaluation, the evaluation is forwarded to the PAR Panel.

Teacher continues in Multiyear Professional Growth cycle.

PAR Panel assigns consulting teacher to complete the review process and subsequently decides whether teacher is admitted to the PAR program.

PAR Program
Teachers included in the PAR program will be assigned a consulting teacher who does the following:
a. Observe, work intensively with, and provide support for each new teacher to develop competencies.
b. Consult with, RT, and IRT to share information, as appropriate.
c. Write a mid-year summary and final summative report (both forwarded to the principal) and make recommendations to the PAR panel.

PAR Panel

Recommends dismissal.

Recommends an additional year in PAR.

Recommends return to formal evaluation year in multiyear cycle.

Part 2: Teachers New to Teaching Flow Chart

First Year:

PAR Program

Teachers new to teaching will be assigned a consulting teacher who does the following:
a. Observe, work intensively with, and provide support for each new teacher to develop competencies.
b. Consult with principal, RT, and IRT to share information, as appropriate.
c. Write a mid-year summary and final summative report (both forwarded to the principal) and make recommendations to the PAR Panel.

During the first year, principals observe, assist, and evaluate all new teachers. If the evaluation is below standard, the results are forwarded to the PAR Panel.

PAR Panel

Recommends PAR support in year 2.

Recommends second probationary year with school supports and principal evaluation.

Recommends non-renewal.

Second Year:

Principal's observations and evaluation of all second-year teachers leads to a recommendation for continued employment and tenure or referral to the PAR Panel.

PAR Panel

Recommends non-renewal.

Recommends continued employment with tenure.

PAR Panel

Recommends non-renewal.

Recommends continued employment with tenure.

Recommends third year without tenure, with PAR support.

Recommends continued employment with tenure.

Part 3: Experienced Teachers New to MCPS Flow Chart

First Year:

In November:
Principal completes two formal observations by November 1. If serious deficits are found, a request is made for PAR support through OHR and the PAR Panel assigns a consulting teacher.

PAR Program

Teachers included in the PAR program will be assigned a consulting teacher who will do the following:
a. Observe, work intensively with, and provide support for reach new teacher to develop competencies.
b. Consult with principal, RT, and IRT to share information, as appropriate.
c. Write a mid-year summary and final summative report (both forwarded to the principal) and make recommendations to the PAR Panel.

In March:
If the principal completes a below-standard evaluation, the PAR Panel assigns a consulting teacher to complete the review process and subsequently decides whether the teacher is assigned to the PAR Program for the subsequent school year.

PAR Panel

Recommends non-renewal.

Recommends continued employment.

PAR Panel

Recommends placement in the PAR program for the following school year..

Recommends continued employment.

Second Year

Principal's observations and evaluation of experienced teachers in their second year in MCPS lead to a recommendation for tenure or referral to the PAR Panel. If the principal completes a below-standard evaluation, the PAR Panel assigns a consulting teacher to complete the review process and subsequently decides whether the teacher is assigned to the PAR Program for the subsequent school year.

PAR Panel

Recommends non-renewal

Recommends continued employment.

Recommends third year without tenure, with PAR support.

Recommends continued employment with tenure.

II. ELEMENTS OF THE SYSTEM

G. The Mentoring Program

The Mentoring program is a mechanism for providing intensive, individualized assistance to all experienced teachers who are new to MCPS.

Mentors should be tenured, exemplary, veteran classroom teachers who have been trained and are willing to assume this responsibility. As new teachers are hired, are asked to assign them a school-based peer mentor and to advise the new teacher and mentor of this assignment. The principal, coordinator, or staff development teacher should notify the Office of Human Resources and Development (OHRD) about the assignment. OHRD maintains a database of school-based mentors in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).

A one-to-one mentor/mentee assignment is optimal. In some cases, the mentor caseload may exceed this one-to-one ratio. However, no new teacher should have more than one mentor. Key to this relationship is meeting the needs of the new teachers without compromising mentor effectiveness.

All mentors will be trained before assuming mentor responsibilities. The New Teacher Induction Program includes summer, fall, and spring offerings of the course, Mentoring the New Teacher (TOT 02), for those who have not received training in mentoring a new teacher. Veteran teachers can take the course concurrently with their first mentoring experience. An additional year-long course, Seminar in Mentoring the New Teacher (TOT 03), will be offered to mentors who have taken TOT 02 to support and supplement their mentoring activities. Mentor and new teacher workshops are also offered during the year. Mentors are asked to encourage their new teacher's participation in the New Teacher training courses and on-going workshops offered for new teachers throughout the year.

Mentors should initiate & maintain weekly/monthly contact with new teacher. The responsibility for the mentoring relationship should not be placed on the shoulders of the new teacher. Mentors should spend one hour a week or four hours monthly with their new teacher. These hours may vary by time of year and needs of each new teacher; however, a weekly contact is strongly recommended. Mentors and their new teachers need dedicated time together.

Mentors should maintain confidentiality**.** Mentors are advised not to discuss aspects of the mentor relationship with anyone.

Mentors should assess the different needs of each mentee and address the different needs of each individual. The mentor may serve as a coach and may do informal observations, but this should not replace the role of administrators, resource teachers, staff development teachers and consulting teachers in providing support to new staff. The mentor relationship is an additional avenue for the support of new teachers. **The mentor teacher does not have a role in the evaluation of the new teacher.**

Mentors should provide curriculum support. Each mentor and mentee should have the same grade/subject assignment. The mentor is encouraged to provide information to new teachers on current "Best Practices" in teaching, classroom management and discipline, culture of the school/system, and information on how to access other county supports.

II. ELEMENTS OF THE SYSTEM

H. Professional Development Years for Tenured Teachers

Each tenured teacher designs a multi-year Professional Development Plan (PDP) for continuous improvement covering the professional development years (one to four years). The only teachers who are not required to work on a PDP are-
  • probationary teachers;
  • tenured teachers receiving PAR support; and
  • tenured teachers in their formal evaluation year.

The term "senior status" applies only to state renewal of certification.
 It **does not** exempt tenured MCPS teachers from the PDP requirement.

The path of activity that teachers choose to undertake in the professional development years of the Professional Growth cycle is reflected in the PDP. The focus of the PDP is to support professional development activities that are of value to teachers and that are planned to improve student and school results. The activities that are listed as options in the professional development cycle are designed to support collaboration among and learning between teachers. The SDT and principal or AP review the plan annually.

The plan—
  • provides structure and accountability;
  • exhibits clarity, rigor, and substance;
  • requires that a support team be identified;
  • provides for review of student results as part of the planning process;
  • aligns with an aspect of the School Improvement Plan (SIP);
  • provides for the integration of the results from the teacher's formal evaluations;
  • can be a long-range plan and may be adjusted annually; and
  • requires a minimum of two (2) peer visits with reflection in at least one year in each professional growth cycle.

In a well-developed PDP, it is clear what the teacher intends to do (clarity), what significant expected outcomes that support student learning are targeted (substance), and how time and energy are focused to accomplish the outcomes (rigor).   The PDP is meant to be developed by the teacher and implemented collaboratively with colleagues, staff development teachers, resource teachers, administrators, and other key school leaders. The PDP must be meaningful to the teacher and address his/her interests. Each teacher defines a support team consisting of colleagues who can provide assistance and constructive feedback. Continual reflection should be a natural part of this process. The PDP should be aligned with the SIP to the extent that it directly addresses one or more of the school's improvement plan goals or supports the goals in a related manner. The goal of the PDP is to improve instruction. The SIP should serve as a point of reference rather than a restrictive framework. Greater flexibility in aligning the PDP with the SIP will allow the teacher to develop PDP goals that focus on student learning in that teacher's classes.

Role of Staff Development Teachers (SDTs)

SDTs are in many ways the linchpins to the professional development process and to the goal of creating a professional learning community in each school. They are the facilitators of job-embedded professional development.

SDTs do the following:
- Work with the administrator(s) and teachers to communicate the value and importance of the PDP.
- Review and monitor the progress of the plan along with the principal, AP, RT, or IRT.
- Facilitate meaningful professional development strategies for teachers.
- Support teachers' professional development by guiding planning, securing resources (including time), and informing teachers of professional development opportunities.
- Offer instructional assistance by building the teachers' knowledge base and increasing the repertoire of teaching skills.
- Support staff in efforts to improve student achievement.
- Ensure that the instructional staff uses data to plan, deliver, and assess instructional practices.
- Engage teachers in collaborative and reflective practice.
- Allocate time for professional development activities by utilizing staff development substitute teachers (SDSTs) to enable teachers to work collaboratively and observe best practices and to provide time for teachers to do so within the normal work day hours;
- Organize and coordinate the schedule of SDSTs.
- Document the utilization of the allocated substitute time.

The role of the SDT is to support teachers. It is not evaluative in nature. SDTs are required to administer staff surveys to assess the needs of staff members as well as to assess the effectiveness and quality of work provided by the SDT. SDTs meet annually with representatives of the staff to discuss the results of the feedback surveys.

Role of the Administrator, IRT, RT

The administrator, IRT, and RT play a critical role in the professional development process of teachers.

The administrator, IRT, and RT work with teachers to:
- reflect on the rationale for their professional development goals;
- share with teachers current educational research and best practices that relate to their PDPs;
- integrate the analysis of student achievement data into the PDP;
- reflect on the impact on teacher practice of PDP goals and data;
- integrate the results from the teachers' formal evaluations into the PDP;
- reflect on the impact on teacher practice of peer visits with reflection;
- discuss PDP goals and data during observation and /or evaluation conferences; and
- discuss peer visit with reflection and impact on teaching practices.

Activities for Professional Development

Activities that improve teaching and learning are critical components of a professional learning community. These activities include team teaching and team planning, new curriculum development, development of instructional materials, review of professional literature,

audio/videotape analysis, study groups, networking groups, delivery of workshops or courses, participation on a task force or committee, participation in a teacher exchange program, professional visits (to visit another teacher or program), action research, or training (school-based workshop, out-of-school workshop, or conference). (See Appendix C, PDP Form: Professional Development Options, page A-17).

A particularly valuable professional development strategy is **peer visits with reflection.** Teachers are encouraged to engage in this activity throughout the professional development cycle. Peer visits with reflection (being observed a minimum of two times at your request) are a required strategy for at least one of the professional development years during each cycle. This process of peer reflective conversations should be commonplace. Training is provided on how to use classroom visits to give useful feedback to colleagues. Peer visits with reflection are not evaluative, and are in no way part of the evaluation process.

A peer visit with reflection is a process that involves inviting a peer to observe a specific aspect of teaching, so together the colleagues may reflect on the teaching and learning taking place. The teacher may ask a teaching peer, RT/IRT, or MCPS educator in another position to do the observing. The teacher chooses a focus that will help him/her meet a particular learning goal, rather than asking a colleague to observe and give general feedback. Peer visits also might become a mutual process in which the teacher is not only observed, but also has an opportunity to observe another teacher in a similarly planned way. Following the peer visit, participants engage in a reflective conversation, in which the teacher, not the observer, does the majority of the talking. These conversations promote authentic professional examination of teaching practices among colleagues in an atmosphere of mutual support, trust, and a belief in the necessity of constant learning and improvement.

III. CONCLUSION

Through the TPGS, the school system provides an environment in which teachers are afforded time, support, and opportunities for continuous growth and improvement. Components of the system include new teacher support, SDTs at each school who facilitate a professional growth process for each teacher, the PAR program, and clear performance standards for teaching within a rigorous evaluation system with supports for teachers who are not meeting MCPS standards. Taken together, the components of the TPGS are designed to improve the quality of teaching and to ensure the success of all students.

APPENDIX A

Teacher Evaluation Performance Standards, Performance Criteria, and Descriptive Examples

> The six performance standards are defined and further supported by performance criteria. Descriptive examples of what a teacher might be doing in order to meet a specific standard are provided. The purpose of the examples is to create a sample picture of what teaching looks like when it meets and when it does not meet the MCPS performance standards. These examples are not provided to suggest that every teacher is expected to be doing all or everything that is described in either column. These examples can serve as a template against which to compare a teacher's overall performance on the six performance standards. They are **not** intended to isolate teaching strategies or behaviors in a checklist for assigning a numerical rating to teaching. They define a range of behaviors and provide examples and indicators. The examples that are provided are intentionally designed to reflect a high standard of performance.

Standard I: Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Performance Criteria

A. The teacher acts on the belief that every student can learn and that all can master a challenging curriculum with appropriate accommodations.
B. The teacher sets quantifiable learning outcomes for students and holds the students and themselves accountable for meeting those objectives.
C. The teacher produces measurable growth in student achievement toward goals he/she has set on systemwide accountability measures.
D. The teacher recognizes individual differences in his/her students and adjusts his/her practices accordingly.
E. The teacher understands how students develop and learn.
F. The teacher extends his/her mission beyond the academic growth of students.

Examples of evidence of beliefs, commitment, and tenacity

The teacher ....

Meets standard	Below standard
holds all students to high standards and expectations, regardless of differences such as racial/ethnic group membership, gender, disabilities, socioeconomic background, or prior educational background and achievement	does not hold all students to high standards and expectations
plans and delivers lessons that challenge students without overwhelming them	delivers lessons that bore or frustrate students
sends these key messages to students through instructional practices and interactive behavior: a) This is important. b) You can do it. c) I won't give up on you. d) Effective effort leads to achievement.	gives students the message that they are not all capable of learning a challenging curriculum

Standard I: Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

teaches students strategies for exerting effective effort, e.g. time management, study skills, knowledge, and use of resources including teacher, family, and peers	assumes that students know strategies for exerting effective effort and does not discuss or directly instruct students in these strategies
motivates and inspires in all students the willingness to learn, self-confidence, and/or perseverance	shows little or no concern for and/or discourages students' willingness to learn, self-confidence, or perseverance
encourages students to challenge themselves for personal growth in academic, vocational, arts, and extracurricular areas	does not encourage students to challenge themselves for personal growth in academic, vocational, arts, and other extracurricular areas
promotes students' social and emotional development	ignores students' social and emotional skill development
encourages students to set their own academic, social, and extracurricular goals	does not involve students in academic, social, and extracurricular goal-setting
teaches students to reflect on and to apply standards and criteria to their work	does not give students the information they need to evaluate their own work
provides prompt and specific feedback to students on their work and progress toward goals	does not provide prompt and/or specific feedback to students on their work and progress toward goals
takes responsibility for academic growth and achievement of all students	takes the approach that says: ―taught it. If they didn't learn it, it's their fault"
provides opportunities for students to receive individual support as needed; perseveres in outreach to students	does not provide opportunities for individual support to students
uses different instructional strategies when students do not meet objectives	does not modify instructional strategies when students do not meet objectives
uses differentiated activities and assignments that reflect high standards for all students	uses assignments and activities that do not reflect high standards for all students **OR** does not differentiate assignments and activities
shows students how differentiated assignments and learning activities are to assist them in meeting high standards	communicates to students that a differentiated assignment means a lack of the teacher's confidence in student ability to meet high standards
demonstrates/models sensitivity to all students; treats all students respectfully and equitably	does not demonstrate/model sensitivity to all students; does not treat all students respectfully and equitably
uses research and other information on students' developmental stages and how students think and learn in planning instruction	uses instructional practices that do not reflect research and other information on students' developmental stages and how students think and learn in planning instruction

Standard II: Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

Performance Criteria

A. The teacher understands the content of his/her subject area(s) and how knowledge in his/her subject field is created, organized, and linked to other disciplines.
B. The teacher demonstrates subject area knowledge and conveys his/her knowledge clearly to students.
C. The teacher generates multiple paths to knowledge.
D. The teacher uses comprehensive planning skills to design effective instruction focused on student mastery of curriculum goals.

Examples of evidence of knowledge, planning skills, and successful instruction

The teacher ....

Meets standard	Below standard
displays deep and broad content knowledge in his/her field(s)	gives incorrect or insufficient information; does not correct student content errors; omits critical content from instruction
teaches the curriculum for his/her grade level(s) and subject(s) as defined by Maryland and MCPS curriculum standards	does not teach the curriculum for his/her grade level(s) and subject(s) as defined by Maryland and MCPS curriculum standards
plans for the year, semester, marking period, unit, and day; includes all curricular goals with appropriate sequencing and time allocation	plans lessons that do not include, sequence, and balance all curricular goals
plans instruction in specific thinking skills and learning experiences that require student use of those skills	does not plan direct instruction in specific thinking skills; plans instruction that does not require students to use thinking skills beyond factual recall and basic comprehension
provides clear explanations	provides explanations that are limited, vague, or lack coherence
asks questions appropriate to the mastery objective	asks questions that are not appropriate to the mastery objective
requires students to support their responses with evidence	accepts minimal student responses; does not probe for support or justification of responses
anticipates student misconceptions, difficulties, and confusion and adjusts instruction accordingly	delivers lessons without consideration of possible student misconceptions, difficulties, and confusion
identifies and uses a variety of sources of information within his/her subject(s)	uses a limited variety of sources of information within his/her subject(s)
teaches students how to access information about a subject from multiple sources	does not teach students how to access multiple sources of information
models and teaches a variety of organizational strategies to link ideas and develop understanding	does not use or teach a variety of organizational strategies
models and teaches a variety of research strategies	does not teach research strategies

Standard II: Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

provides appropriate opportunities for divergent thinking	does not allow disagreement or different views
models and teaches students a variety of ways to share their learning	does not give students an opportunity to share their learning
uses research and other information on students' developmental stages and how students think and learn in planning instruction	uses instructional practices that do not reflect research on students' developmental stages and how students think and learn
assigns homework, papers, projects, and other out-of-class activities that are extensions of classroom instruction	assigns homework, papers, projects, and other out-of-class activities that are not useful or relevant
plans lessons that focus on mastery objectives and communicates those objectives to students	plans lessons that focus only on coverage or activities
pre-assesses (formally and/or informally) student knowledge and skills in order to plan instruction	does not pre-assess student knowledge and skills
plans learning activities that are appropriately matched to curricular goals	plans learning activities that do not align with curricular goals
plans activities that create links between students' prior understanding and new knowledge	fails to link instruction to students' prior knowledge
consults with colleagues (in or outside the building) to develop lessons or units	plans only in isolation; never collaborates with colleagues in planning
identifies the appropriate criteria for students' demonstration of understanding of curricular objectives and communicates them explicitly	does not identify criteria for successful completion of the objective and/or does not clearly communicate the criteria to students
uses strategies that apply to a variety of learning styles	uses one type of strategy that applies to one learning style
checks for understanding in a variety of ways and modifies instruction to meet student needs	rarely or never checks for understanding
provides opportunities for students to summarize/reflect on what they have learned, articulate why it is important, and extend their thinking	provides few or no opportunities for students to summarize/reflect on what they have learned, articulate why it is important, and extend their thinking
uses instructional materials that reflect diversity and emphasize the commonality of all people	uses instructional materials that do not reflect diversity or emphasize the commonality of all people
uses a variety of appropriate instructional materials, including technology	does not use a variety of appropriate instructional materials
integrates a variety of technology tools and applications into instructional design and implementation	integrates few or no technology tools and applications into instructional design and implementation
provides lessons that relate to daily life and are relevant to students; links learning to real-life applications	does not relate lessons to students' daily life or to real-life applications
plans for flexible student grouping to maximize student learning	provides only whole-class instruction or keeps students in same inflexible groups for instruction

Standard III: Teachers are responsible for establishing and managing student learning in a positive learning environment.

Performance Criteria

A. The teacher creates a classroom climate that promotes openness, mutual respect, support, and inquiry.
B. The teacher creates an organized classroom that maximizes engaged student learning time.
C. The teacher establishes and maintains respectful, productive partnerships with families in support of student learning and well-being.
D. The teacher orchestrates learning in a variety of settings.
E. The teacher involves all students in meaningful learning activities.

Examples of evidence of positive climate, management, and family partnerships

The teacher ....

Meets standard	Below standard
creates a classroom atmosphere that fosters students using each other as sources of knowledge, listening to, and showing respect for others' contributions	discourages students from using each other as sources of knowledge; does not model or promote listening to and showing respect for others' contributions
communicates the following messages: You can do it Effective effort leads to achievement	gives students the message that they are not all capable of learning a challenging curriculum
promotes positive interpersonal relationships among students	does not promote positive interpersonal relationships among students
builds positive interpersonal relationships with students	does not build positive interpersonal relationships with students
encourages all students to participate in class discussions and to take risks in the learning process	does not encourage all students to participate in class discussions and/or to take risks in the learning process
designs a classroom rich in multicultural resources; creates lessons that incorporate these resources; works with media specialist and other resources/experts to obtain multicultural resources	uses few multicultural resources; makes no effort to obtain multicultural resources
involves students in setting classroom standards	sets most or all classroom standards without student input
uses a repertoire of strategies matched to student needs to avoid and/or address behavior problems	fails to anticipate and/or appropriately address behavior problems
establishes routines to meet group/individual needs and to maximize engaged student learning time	establishes no routines or establishes inflexible routines that do not meet group/individual needs
maximizes engaged student learning time by appropriately pacing lessons, making seamless transitions, having materials ready and organized, etc.	wastes learning time by not appropriately pacing lessons, failing to make smooth transitions or not having materials ready

creates a classroom atmosphere for students and families in which all are welcomed and valued	creates a classroom atmosphere for students and families in which all do not feel welcomed and valued
solicits/uses information from families about their children's learning style, strengths, and needs	does not solicit or use information from families about their children's learning style, strengths, and needs
communicates academic and/or behavioral concerns to families in order to develop collaborative solutions	does not communicate academic and/or behavioral concerns to families in order to develop collaborative solutions
communicates positive and/or negative feedback to families in a timely manner	limits feedback to the negative; does not provide feedback in a timely manner
communicates (telephone calls, interim reports, notes, conferences with family members, etc.) with families and responds to concerns	fails to communicate with families
provides opportunities for students to work positively and productively with others in a variety of groupings	provides limited or no opportunities for students to work positively and productively with others; consistently designs lessons that are centered on the teacher
uses a variety of instructional groupings appropriate to learning goals	uses little variety of instructional groupings or instructional groupings inappropriate to learning goals
arranges space, equipment, and materials to support instruction	does not arrange space, equipment, and/or materials to support instruction
arranges space, equipment, and materials to accommodate the needs of all students	allows the use of equipment, materials and/or the arrangement of furniture to inhibit engagement in learning.
extends the learning environment beyond the classroom to include the media center, computer lab, community, etc.	does not use resources beyond the textbook
uses activities that are based on meaningful content	uses activities that are not meaningful to students

Standard IV: Teachers continually assess student progress, analyze the results, and adapt instruction to improve student achievement.

Performance Criteria

A. The teacher uses a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques.

B. The teacher analyzes student information and results and plans instruction accordingly.

Examples of evidence of assessment, analysis, and adaptation of instruction

The teacher ....

Meets standard	Below standard
gathers data about student performance and other relevant information from a variety of sources: previous teachers, guidance counselor, other staff, records, etc.; shares data with students' subsequent teachers and other staff	gathers little or no data about student's previous performance; does not share data with students' subsequent teachers and other staff
uses a variety of formal and informal assessment formats and techniques	uses a limited or no variety of formal and informal assessment formats and/or techniques
makes adjustments to assessment to meet the needs of students with differing learning styles or special needs	makes few or no adjustments to assessment to meet the needs of students with differing learning styles or special needs; assesses all students in the same way
develops and communicates clear criteria for success for student work; uses models, rubrics, exemplars/anchor papers, etc.	does not communicate clear criteria for success for student work; does not use models, rubrics, exemplars/anchor papers, etc.
assesses student progress before instruction *(pre-assessment),* during instruction *(formative assessment)*, and after instruction *(summative assessment)*	assesses student progress infrequently or only at the end of instruction
develops and uses a clearly defined grading system that is consistent with the MCPS Grading and Reporting Policy and Regulations	does not use a clearly defined grading system or uses a grading system that is inconsistent with the MCPS Grading and Reporting Policy and Regulations
maintains clear and accurate records of student performance	maintains no records of student performance; maintains records of student performance that are inaccurate, illegible, out of date, incomplete, etc.
informs students and families of student progress on a regular basis	fails to inform students and families of student progress
uses assessment data to ensure that every student is progressing toward state, local, and school system standards	does not use assessment data to analyze student progress
analyzes data about student performance and other relevant information and plans instruction accordingly	does not analyze and use data about student performance and other relevant information to plan instruction
adapts instruction based on assessment information; reteaches using different strategies when assessment indicates lack of mastery	does not adapt instruction based on assessment information; moves forward in the curriculum despite evidence of students' lack of mastery

Standard V: Teachers are committed to continuous improvement and professional development.

Performance Criteria

A. The teacher continually reflects upon his/her practice in promoting student learning and adjusts instruction accordingly.
B. The teacher draws upon educational research and research-based strategies in planning instructional content and delivery.
C. The teacher is an active member of professional learning communities.

Examples of evidence of reflection and collaboration for personal growth

The teacher ....

Meets standard	Below standard
reflects on own strengths and weaknesses and modifies instruction accordingly	does not reflect on the effectiveness of their instructional practice
develops a professional development plan (PDP); implements strategies that support PDP outcomes	does not develop a professional development plan (PDP); does not implement strategies that support PDP outcomes
develops and maintains a portfolio or other means of assembling evidence of meeting evaluation standards	assembles little or no evidence of meeting evaluation standards
analyzes the success of efforts undertaken during the professional growth years of the cycle; initiates reflective conversations with PDP support team, other peers, staff development teacher (SDT), or supervisory staff	does not use the evaluation year to analyze the success of efforts undertaken during the professional growth years of the cycle; does not initiate reflective conversations with PDP support team, other peers, staff development teacher (SDT), or supervisory staff
participates in workshops, conferences, activities sponsored by professional organizations, etc.; brings ideas back to the school and tries them in own instructional practice	never participates in workshops, conferences, activities sponsored by professional organizations, etc.
reviews current research; uses current research as a foundation for planning instructional content and delivery	does not review or use current research as a foundation for planning instructional content and delivery
appropriately modifies instruction based on solicited and unsolicited feedback from students and parents/guardians	does not solicit feedback from students and parents/guardians; does not act on any feedback, whether solicited or unsolicited
appropriately modifies instruction based on feedback from formal and informal observations	does not modify instruction based on feedback from formal and informal observations
engages in peer visits and reflection	completes a full multi-year evaluation cycle without engaging in peer visitation with reflection
examines student work with colleagues to analyze and adjust instruction	does not work with colleagues to analyze student work

Standard V: Teachers are committed to continuous improvement and professional development.

supports vertical teaming efforts	does not support vertical teaming efforts even when time is provided
shares materials and experiences with colleagues; plans, evaluates, and reflects with colleagues on lessons	does not share materials and experiences with colleagues; does not plan, evaluate, or reflect with colleagues on lessons
actively participates in own informal and formal feedback conversations by analyzing teacher and student behaviors and making appropriate comments, questions, and suggestions for improvement	participates passively, defensively, or reluctantly in own informal and formal feedback conversations; makes few or no comments or suggestions related to improving instruction
seeks the support of colleagues and is open to applying advice or suggestions	does not accept the support of colleagues

Standard VI: Teachers exhibit a high degree of professionalism.

Performance Criteria

A. The teacher understands and supports the vision of the school system.
B. The teacher views him/herself as a leader in the educational community.
C. The teacher contributes to the smooth functioning of the school environment.

Examples of evidence of leadership, professionalism, and routines

The teacher ....

Meets standard	Below standard
uses practices and procedures that align with MCPS vision, goals, policies, and regulations	uses practices and procedures that are inconsistent with MCPS vision, goals, policies, and regulations
works with colleagues to analyze school needs and identify and implement strategies for school improvement and to support the mission of the school system	does not participate in school improvement planning and implementation
participates in and/or takes a leadership role in professional development activities, committees, or school-level decision making (i.e., Faculty Administration Collaboration Committees)	does not participate in required professional development or leadership activities within the school
participates in system-based representative structures (Council on Teaching and Learning, Council on Instruction or district wide work groups) and professional organizations	does not use appropriate avenues for expressing professional concerns
engages in dialogue, problem solving, planning, or curricular improvement with other teachers in the same grade level or subject discipline within the school or across the district	does not respond to opportunities for dialogue or collaborative work with teachers in the same subject or grade level
serves as a formal or informal mentor to others	seldom dialogues with colleagues about teaching
represents the school well when dealing with students, parents, and other members of the community	does not represent the school well when dealing with students, parents, and other members of the community
interacts in a respectful manner with all members of the school community	shows a lack of respect or professional courtesy to some members of the school community
participates in development and implementation of local school improvement goals	does not participate in development and implementation of local school improvement goals
develops and teaches objectives that reflect local school improvement goals	does not teach objectives consistent with local school improvement goals

Standard VI: Teachers exhibit a high degree of professionalism.

establishes classroom standards and policies that are consistent with school-wide policies	establishes classroom standards and policies that are inconsistent with school-wide policies
participates in setting goals and implementing school-wide plans for student behavior management	does not participate in setting goals and/or implementing school-wide plans for student behavior management
sponsors, actively participates in, and/or supports student extracurricular and/or co-curricular activities such as clubs, teams, cultural productions, etc.	does not participate in or support any student extracurricular activities
participates in required staff, team, committee, department meetings, and parent conferences	frequently misses or arrives late to meetings or conferences
performs required nonclassroom school duties such as hall monitoring, bus monitoring, chaperoning	is late for or is absent from required nonclassroom school duties
regularly monitors student behavior beyond the classroom and reinforces appropriate student behavior	does not address student behavior beyond the classroom
reports discipline or other problems to the administration in a timely manner after making appropriate attempts to solve problematic classroom situations	frequently refers students for disciplinary action without adequate cause or documentation; does not take responsibility for attempting to solve problems
meets professional obligations in a timely fashion (e.g., submits paperwork, reports, and responses to requests for information on time)	does not meet professional obligations in a timely fashion; does not submit paperwork
attends work regularly, arrives at work on time, and does not leave before the end of the defined work day	is frequently absent, arrives at work late, and/or leaves before the end of the defined work day
starts and ends class on time	does not start and/or end class on time
leaves well-planned lessons when absent	leaves poor or no lesson plans when absent
provides data and feedback about student progress for course placement, parent conferences, Educational Management Team (EMT), meetings, annual reviews, etc., as requested and in a timely manner	provides little or no data and feedback about student progress for course placement, parent conferences, Educational Management Team (EMT), meetings, or annual reviews, does not provide data and feedback in a timely manner

APPENDIX B

Sources of Data Beyond Classroom Observation

Performance Standard I: Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Evidence of beliefs, commitment, and tenacity

- Appointments with students (artifact examination and observation)
- Assignments, projects, warm-ups
- Communication of standards and criteria for success on tasks
- Communications to students and parents
- Feedback on student work
- Grading policies and practices
- Records of data analysis and goal setting
- Reteaching loops and material to challenge high-performing students
- Student work samples and portfolios
- Unit or long-term lesson plans

Performance Standard II: Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

Evidence of knowledge, planning skills, and successful instruction

- Annotated portfolio of support materials (beyond kit or textbook) for concept attainment or to convey mastery of key information
- Assessments
- Assignments, project descriptions, etc.
- Documents distributed to students and parents, e.g., course syllabi, topic outlines, study guides, graphic organizers etc.
- Material designed to teach thinking skills related to content concepts
- Room set-up
- Short-term lesson plans and supporting materials
- Unit or long-term lesson plans and materials designed to support those plans
- Work displays

Performance Standard III: Teachers are responsible for establishing and managing student learning in a positive learning environment.

Evidence of positive climate, management, and family partnerships

- Feedback on work and on student-set goals
- Grouping policies and practices
- Planning for technology incorporation
- Reflective conversations about responses to situations, overarching objectives, routines and expectations, student goal setting
- Room tours (e.g., what public messages are posted, what values are revealed)
- Records of communication to parents
- Student records of goal setting and self-analysis of work

- Student and parent survey data

Performance Standard IV: Teachers continually assess student progress, analyze the results, and adapt instruction to improve student achievement.

Evidence of assessment, analysis, and adaptation of instruction

- Assessment samples
- Feedback on work
- Grade book and other record-keeping artifacts
- Group and individual teacher reports on data analysis, findings, and recommendations
- Logs minutes and records of grade-level, department, and curriculum meetings
- Meeting notes with students, parents, and specialists
- Meeting notes with teacher on self-assessment and application to planning
- Videos of student portfolio conferences

Performance Standard V: Teachers are committed to continuous improvement and professional development.

Evidence of reflection and collaboration for personal growth

- Collection of ideas, research, articles, etc. related to the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and shared with colleagues
- Interview and conference data
- Log of professional development activities
- Observation data gathered from meetings, hallway interactions with colleagues, interactions with curriculum support staff, etc.
- Personal accounts of persistence and problem solving: ―What do you do when you're stuck?"
- Professional articles or presentations
- Writings in learning logs, journals, school newsletters, and reports

Performance Standard VI: Teachers exhibit a high degree of professionalism.

Evidence of leadership, professionalism, and routines

- Attendance records (work, meeting)
- Documentation that validates that the teacher was observed performing assigned duties and supporting school priorities outside the classroom
- Letters of thanks and commendations for participation in initiatives/activities inside and outside of the school
- List of committee participation, presentations, etc.
- Logs, minutes, records of staff development or vertical team meetings
- Meeting agendas, minutes, notes
- Personal calendar
- Records/logs of meetings with students or staff members
- Schedule of meetings/activities of sponsored clubs

APPENDIX C
COMAR Regulation on evaluation

.02 Minimum Requirements for Evaluation of Professionally Certificated Personnel

A. General Standards.

(1) An evaluation shall be based on written criteria established by the local board of education, including but not limited to scholarship, instructional effectiveness, management skills, professional ethics, and interpersonal relationships.

(2) An evaluation shall provide, at a minimum, for an overall rating.

(3) An overall rating that is not satisfactory or better is considered unsatisfactory.

(4) An evaluation shall be based on at least two observations during the school year.

(5) An unsatisfactory evaluation shall include at least at least one observation by an individual other than the immediate supervisor.

(6) The written evaluation report shall be shared with the certificated individual who is the subject of the evaluation.

(7) The certificated individual shall receive a copy of and sign the evaluation report.

(8) The signature of the certificated individual does not necessarily indicate agreement with the evaluation report.

(9) An evaluation shall provide for written comments and reactions by the individual being evaluated, which shall be attached to the evaluation report.

B. Frequency of evaluations.

(1) Standard Professional Certificate. An individual holding a Standard Professional Certificate shall be evaluated at least once annually.

(2) Advanced Professional Certificate

(a) An individual holding an Advanced Professional Certificate shall receive an evaluation at least twice during the validity period of each certificate. The first evaluation shall occur during the initial year of the certificate.

(b) An individual holding an Advanced Professional Certificate who receives an unsatisfactory overall rating shall be evaluated at least once annually until receiving a satisfactory rating.

(c) If an individual holding an Advanced Professional Certificate receives an overall rating of satisfactory or better, subsequent annual performance shall be considered satisfactory in the absence of an annual evaluation.

Forms

Montgomery County Public Schools
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH SYSTEM
Post-Observation Conference Report
(MCPS Form 425-38)

Teacher:_____ Observation Date:_____
Observer:_____ Observation Time: _____to_____

School:_____ Conference Date: _____

Subject/Grade:_____

Directions: Observer completes a narrative description of the classroom observation and observation conference based on the MCPS Performance Standards. Use additional sheets as necessary.

Observer's Signature_____Date_____

Teacher's Signature_____Date_____

(The teacher's signature indicates that the teacher has read and reviewed the Post-Observation Conference Report, not necessarily that the teacher concurs with the contents. Teachers may attach their comments.)

Montgomery County Public Schools
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH SYSTEM
FINAL EVALUATION REPORT: TEACHER
(MCPS Form 425-39)

Teacher: _____   Employee Number: _____

Principal: _____   Years of MCPS Experience: _____

Type: _____ First-Year Probationary   _____ Tenured (3-year cycle)
                    _____ with CT   _____ Tenured (4-year cycle)
                    _____ without CT   _____ Tenured (5-year cycle)
               _____ Second-Year Probationary
               _____ Third-Year Probationary
               _____ Special Evaluation

School: _____

Subject or Grade level: _____

Directions: Evaluators complete a narrative description based on the following performance standards. The description includes classroom observations; analysis and review of student results as described in the shared accountability system; contributions to overall school mission and environment; review of student and parent surveys; and review of professional growth plans and implementation results; and information from any other documents collected by the evaluator and/or the teacher during the full length of the cycle.

Performance Standards:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for establishing and managing student learning in a positive learning environment.
4. Teachers continually assess student progress, analyze the results, and adapt instruction to improve student achievement.
5. Teachers are committed to continuous improvement and professional development.
6. Teachers exhibit a high degree of professionalism.

Dates of Observations: _____   _____   _____   _____

Dates of Conferences: _____   _____   _____   _____

Final Rating: ( ) Meets Standard
                  ( ) Below Standard

Evaluator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

(The teacher's signature indicates that the teacher has read and reviewed the final evaluation, not necessarily that the teacher concurs with the contents. Teachers may attach their comments.)

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PEER ASSISTANCE AND REVIEW PROGRAM
Evaluation Form for Tenured Teachers in PAR

This form is compiled by the co-chairs of the Peer Assistance and Review Panel.

Teacher in PAR:
School Year:
School:
Principal:
Consulting Teacher:

Rating _____ Meets Standard   _____ Below Standard

Standard I: Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Standard II: Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

Standard III: Teachers are responsible for establishing and managing student learning in a positive learning environment.

Standard IV: Teachers continually assess student progress, analyze the results, and adapt instruction to improve student achievement.

Standard V: Teachers are committed to continuous improvement and professional development.

Standard VI: Teachers exhibit a high degree of professionalism.

Date(s) of observations by principal, immediate supervisor or qualified observer

Observation   _____

Post-observation conference _____

I have submitted the observation reports and other pertinent data on this teacher's performance to the PAR Panel.

_____
Principal or Immediate Supervisor   Date

Date(s) of observations by Consulting Teacher

Observation   _____

Post-observation conference _____

I have submitted the observation reports, the Final Summative report and other pertinent data on this teacher's performance to the PAR Panel.

_____
Consulting Teacher   Date

We affirm that the PAR Panel has reviewed the observation reports, the Final Summative report and other pertinent data on this teacher's performance. The rating above is the result of this review, the appeal process, and the PAR Panel discussion and decision as stipulated in the Teacher PGS handbook.

_____
Principal PAR Panel co-chair   Date

_____
Teacher PAR Panel co-chair   Date

Yearly Evaluation Report for MSDE Certificate Renewal for Tenured Teachers in Professional Growth Years

This form, to be completed by the principal, certifies to the state that the teacher's performance **is satisfactory** (—meets standard") during the professional growth years. This form should be kept in school files. It is suggested that the principal give the teacher a copy of this form at check-out on the last day of school. This form is available on-line.

Office of Human Resources **MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS** **Rockville, Maryland 20855**	**YEARLY EVALUATION REPORT FOR** **MSDE CERTIFICATE RENEWAL**

INSTRUCTIONS: To comply with the MSDE certification bylaws, please complete this evaluation report for all certificate holders by the dates established by MCPS procedures. Based on Maryland state law, performance criteria must include, but not be limited to, scholarship, instructional effectiveness (if applicable), management skills, professional ethics, and interpersonal relationships. Professionals (certificate holders) will be evaluated using the appropriate performance standards developed for their assignment.

Certificate holder's name _____ _____ _____
                                                            Last   *First*   *MI*

Position _____ Social Security Number _____-___-_____

Location _____

OVERALL EVALUATION (check one):

    ( ) Satisfactory/Meets standard   ( ) Unsatisfactory/Below standard

Overall evaluation is based upon the six MCPS performance standards. If performance is Unsatisfactory/Below standard, the PAR process will be initiated.

Written comments by the certificate holder can be attached

_____ _____
Signature, Certificate Holder   *Date*

_____ _____
Signature, Principal/Director/Supervisor   Date

MCPS Form 430-66, 10/02   DISTRIBUTION: ORIGINAL/School and Office file with observation/conference records; COPY 2/Certificate holder.

Montgomery County Public Schools
Peer Assistance and Review Program
Mid-Year Summative

Name of Teacher:

Consulting Teacher:

Status:

School:

Date Entered Program:

Areas of Strength:

Areas of Need:

Interventions / Supports:

Number of visits:

*Next Steps / Current Status Regarding Meeting Standards:

Not meeting MCPS teacher standards could result in non-renewal/dismissal.

(Consulting Teacher's Name)

Consulting Teacher   _____   Date: _____

Teacher _____   Date: _____

Teacher's signature indicates that teacher has read and reviewed the mid-year summary, not necessarily that the teacher concurs with the contents. Teachers may choose to attach comments.

*   If a **growth plan** has been developed, please attach a copy.*

Montgomery County Public Schools
PEER ASSISTANCE AND REVIEW PROGRAM
Final Summative Report

TEACHER: DATE:

STATUS:

SCHOOL: SUBJECT/GRADE:

OBSERVER:

Directions: Observers complete a narrative description based on the following standards and the indicators. The description includes classroom observations, and any other documents collected by the observer and/or the teacher during the length of the time in the PAR Program.

Performance Standards:
I.   Teachers are committed to students and their learning
II.   Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students
III.   Teachers are responsible for establishing and managing student learning in a positive learning environment
IV.   Teachers continually assess student progress, analyze the results, and adapt instruction to improve student achievement
V.   Teachers are committed to continuous improvement and professional development
VI.   Teachers exhibit a high degree of professionalism

Performance Standard I. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Performance Standard II. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach them to students.

Performance Standard III. Teachers are responsible for establishing and managing student learning in a positive learning environment.

Performance Standard IV. Teachers continually assess student progress, analyze the results, and adapt instruction to improve student achievement.

Performance Standard V. Teachers are committed to continuous improvement and professional development.

Performance Standard VI. Teachers exhibit a high degree of professionalism.

Summary

Dates of Observations:
Dates of Conferences:

Final Rating: ( ) Meets Standards

                        ( ) Below Standards

Observer's Signature _____ Date _____

Teacher's Signature _____ Date _____

Teacher's signature above indicates he/she has read the report. Signature does not necessarily indicate agreement with the report.

Montgomery County Public Schools
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PDP) FORM
(MCPS Form 425-35)

Name: _____   Date: _____

Position: _____

School: _____

Length of Professional Growth Cycle: ___3-year   ___4-year   ___5-year   (check one)

Duration of Plan: from _____ to _____

Year in Cycle: _____

---

1. What is my desired outcome for professional growth?

---

2. How does the outcome relate to MCPS goals and my school's goals (School Improvement Plan)?

---

3. What data sources did I use to establish my outcome? What data will I use to assess achievement of my outcome?

4. Which of the professional development options/strategies/techniques listed below will I use?

Collaborative Options:

_____ Peer Reflective Conversations
_____ Committee or Task Force Participation
_____ Delivery of Workshops/Courses
_____ Development of Instructional Materials
_____ Study Groups
_____ Action Research
_____ Networking Group
_____ New Curriculum Development
_____ Participation in Teacher Exchange
      Program
_____ Team Teaching
_____ Team Planning
_____ Audio/Videotape Analysis
_____ Professional Visits (to visit another
      teacher)
_____ [*]**Peer Visits with Reflection (being
      observed twice by a peer at your
      request)**
_____ Other (be specific)

[*] Required one year of each evaluation cycle

Independent Options:

_____ Audio/Videotape Analysis
_____ Delivery of Workshops/Courses
_____ Development of Instructional Materials
_____ Action Research
_____ Professional Visits (to visit programs)
_____ Review of Professional Literature
_____ Training
          _____ school-based workshop
          _____ out-of-school workshop
          _____ conference(s)

Please describe this (these) staff development activity (activities):

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

_____ Writing of an analytic or reflective journal
_____ Other (be specific)

---

5. PDP Support Team (i.e., staff development teacher/IRT/RT/peers):

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

---

6. List anticipated/needed resources:

7. Devise a tentative timeline for the implementation of your plan with periodic benchmarks to judge your progress.

Signature: _____   _____
                                                              (Date)

Supported by Staff Development Teacher: _____   _____
                                                                              (Signature)   (Date)

Approved by Principal/Administrator: _____   _____
                                                                      (Signature)   (Date)

Progress Check Point Date: _____

Professional Development Options

These are options for years of the professional growth cycle.

Peer Reflective Conversations
- Invite a peer to discuss and help you reflect on a specific aspect of your teaching.
- Choose a reference point for these conversations such as student work samples, videotape of a lesson, or peer visit information.

Peer Visit with Reflection
- Invite a peer to observe a specific aspect of your teaching, so that together you can reflect on the teaching and learning taking place.
- Participate in a planning conversation to identify the focus of the lesson.
- Participate in a reflective conversation to discuss ideas for improving teaching and learning.

Professional Visits
- Ask to observe a peer or a program.
- Participate in a planning conversation to identify the focus of the visit.
- Participate in a reflective conversation to discuss application ideas and clarify questions.

Action Research
- Study your own teaching/learning practices (as an individual or with a group) to make formal decisions on ways to improve instruction.
- Engage in action research steps in the following sequential order: observe situation; identify and pose a question; collect data; analyze data; identify action steps and implement; document and discuss; summarize and share lesson learned, implications, or conclusions.

Study Group
- Meet with a small group of educators on a voluntary basis to study and experiment with topics of interest around your craft that will increase your professional repertoire for the benefit of students.

Audio/Videotaping
- Create a tape to collect data for analysis and/or reflection.
- Participate in a peer reflective conversation focused on the audio/videotape.

Delivery of Workshops/Courses
- Prepare, develop, and/or deliver courses or workshops.
- Provide a measurable educational impact for peers, parents, or others.

Develop Instructional Materials
- Create collections of thematically related materials and share with colleagues.

Journal Writing
- Reflect on or synthesize professional readings.
- Critique your own teaching or the teaching of a colleague.
- Record data from classroom observations; analyze trends.
- Write for a specific length of time or amount in response to a prompt, stem, or question.

Networking
- Participate in regular or frequent collegial dialogues and collaborative activities focused on school improvement
- Work with practitioners from different schools.
- Conduct purposeful work focused on educational change.
- Engage in practitioner-driven school-based renewal.

New Curriculum Development
- Develop and pilot new curriculum and share with colleagues.

Participation in a Course
- Apply strategies learned in the course to current instructional practice and share with colleagues.

Teacher Exchange Program
- Teach in another school, district, or country and share insights with staff.

Team Teaching
- Plan, teach, and evaluate a unit collaboratively.
- Share responsibility for developing, presenting, and assessing a lesson.

Montgomery County Public Schools
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
PROGRESS CHECK POINT
(MCPS Form 425-36)

Name: _____   Date: _____

Position: _____

School: _____
Length of Professional Growth Cycle: ___3-year   ___4-year   ___5-year   (check one)
Duration of Plan: from _____ to _____
Year in Cycle_____

1. What's working?

2. What needs to be worked on?

3. Are there any changes to the PDP needed? If yes, what changes are needed?

4. What additional support do I need to implement the plan?

Next Review Date:_____

Montgomery County Public Schools
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
END OF PDP CYCLE REVIEW FORM
(MCPS Form 425-37)

To be completed by teacher before conference with staff development teacher.

Name: _____   Date: _____

Position: _____

School: _____

Length of Professional Growth Cycle: ____3-year ____4-year ____5-year (check one)
Duration of Plan: from _____ to _____
Year in Cycle_____

1. What have I accomplished?

2. What have I learned?

3. What new strategies have I used? What practices have I changed? What worked and what didn't?

4. What impact have these changes had on the students (share student work/ performance/results)? What data were used?

5. What are the appropriate next steps in my professional development to improve both the instruction I deliver and student learning and achievement?

Teacher: _____
                    (Signature)

Staff Development Teacher: _____
                                        (Signature)

Date of Conference: _____

Reviewed by Principal/Administrator: _____
                                              (Signature)

APPENDIX E

Sample Post-Observation Conference Reports and Sample Evaluation Reports

The following documents are provided to illustrate the format of observations and evaluations.

When reviewing the **observation documents**, note—
- the connections between teacher behaviors and the impact on student achievement,
- the opportunity for the teacher to reflect on data to inform the practice of teaching, and
- the dialogue between the teacher and the observer around professional growth and student achievement.

When reviewing the **evaluation documents**, note the multiple data sources that can be used to capture a teacher's effectiveness in supporting student achievement as well as their own professional growth.

Office of Human Resources **MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS** **Rockville, Maryland 20855**	**PROFESSIONAL GROWTH SYSTEM** **Observation Conference Report**

INSTRUCTIONS: Observer completes a narrative description of the classroom observation and observation conference based on the MCPS Performance Standards. Use additional sheets as necessary.

Name: __Ms. Alice Wells_____

Observation Date: ___January 8, 2008_____

Observer: __Mrs. Dionne Smith_____

Observation Time: from _1:15 to 1:38 pm [announced]

School: ___Montgomery ES_____

Observation Conference Date: _____January 10, 2008

Subject/Grade: ___Reading Grade 4_____

Observer Description

Ms. Wells is a veteran teacher of 5 years. She is currently in her first year of teaching fourth grade and her first year of teaching at Montgomery Elementary School. The class consisted of 23 students (12 girls, 11 boys.) There were eight ESOL students and one student with an IEP for speech. Students were seated at their desks in three tables facing the white board. The lesson was from the MCPS Grade 4 Quarter 2 Curriculum Guide. This lesson comes in the middle of a lesson sequence focusing on identifying mood and theme. In the fourth grade schedule, reading takes place in the afternoon following lunch, recess, and a 15 minute ―cool down"/silent reading period. Following reading, students have writing. This was an announced observation.

Where Ms. Wells clearly defined what students were to know by the end of the lesson, the lesson did not support mastery of the concept of theme. The posted and stated objective of the lesson was for students to ―identify the theme of poetry and historical fiction text through analyzing the author's word choice." The modeled activity and instruction presented to students focused more on mood than theme. Ms. Wells shared a poem highlighting vocabulary for ESOL students, and specific words an author chose for a purpose of communicating the theme and mood. Students were instructed to think about and visualize how the author's words made them feel. A whole group discussion on the theme and mood of the poem

followed. The class then transitioned into guided reading groups where Ms. Wells modeled again using a historical fiction text. At the end of this story, students were to determine the theme individually. Ms. Wells assessed the students by having them complete a BCR explaining the theme of a text using supporting evidence from the text. 18 of the 23 students successfully completed their BCR.

Throughout the lesson, Ms. Wells used a number of explanatory devices to effectively present information to the class. At the beginning of the lesson, she showed various pictures of daffodils to students while explaining the way they grow. She said, ―This will give you a visual.‖ Thus, students had a visual reference of the subject of the poem read later in the lesson. Ms. Wells also used the document camera projector to highlight various vocabulary words in the poem by underlining them. She pointed to each underlined word and explained their meaning. She said, ―Let‗s go over some vocabulary…‗Haste‗ is to move quickly…Decay. We talked about it in science when things go in the earth and disappear.‖ By previewing certain vocabulary, students would be able to better understand the poem as it was being read. In the small group setting, Ms. Wells explicitly modeled a strategy for students through the use of a think aloud. She said, ―What I will do is model a strategy. Every time I think the author put in a word to make me feel, I will use a sticky note.‖ As a result, students were able to see how they should go about using the sticky note strategy when they read independently. (Std 2)

Ms. Wells was able to get inside students‗ heads by checking for understanding and unscrambling confusion several times throughout the lesson. When highlighting new vocabulary, Ms. Wells asked students if they had any questions. One student commented about how ―dew‖ would appear when it rained. Ms. Wells said, ―No, dew is when it didn‗t rain and it is still wet.‖ Thus, the student‗s thinking was corrected in a manner which helped him to gain a better understanding of the poem‗s vocabulary. Ms. Wells also checked for understanding later in the lesson when she asked students, ―So, is this a happy poem?‖ As a result of student raised hand responses, Ms. Wells was able to quickly assess their understanding of the poem‗s mood. After the class had finished their discussion about the poem, Ms. Wells explained to students their assignments during guided reading groups. After her explanation, Ms. Wells asked, ―Any questions before we start?‖ Thus, students were given the opportunity to assess their understanding of the directions and ask any questions they had before working independently. (Std 2)

Ms. Wells effectively used tools to create mental engagement. She invited students to make cognitive connections when she asked, ―How do people feel when they get flowers?...Cheery, so maybe don‗t think about that. It‗s a hint.‖ ―How did you feel when you saw the flowers?‖ Thus, students had to think about what they already knew about the poems subject, and then, based on Ms. Wells‗ ―hint,‖ remember to determine if their connections fit the poem. Later in the lesson, Ms. Wells continued to make cognitive connections for students by contrasting what they have already learned to the text they were about to read. She said, ―Our characters don‗t fit what we read before because we‗re reading historical fiction, unlike before where we read realistic fiction.‖ As a result, students were able to mentally prepare themselves to read about new characters, rather than the ones they had been reading about up to this point. Ms. Wells used the think-pair-share strategy five times. After reading some passages, she said, ―…. Think for 10 seconds and then tell an elbow partner...‖ Thus, students were able to process what they heard and check on their understanding. (Std 1,2)

Ms. Wells continually created a positive climate to motivate her students. She gave and negotiated tasks with students. She said, ―You don‗t have to underline.‖ As a result, students were given the opportunity to develop ownership of their learning by deciding whether or not to use this strategy. Ms. Wells also responded to student answers in a way which allowed for students to feel comfortable answering questions. She responded to students in various ways such as, ―Ok, Jenny [on observing Jenny complete a task.]‖ and ―You picked up on it completely!‖ Thus, the students experienced her message that they could do the work. Ms. Wells also used grouping to differentiate student learning by ability levels. She

said, ―I put three groups on the back board…Check your group." Thus, students are put in flexible groupings that can change showing they can learn from each other. (Std 1, 3)

During the post-observation conference, we discussed the day's objective, how the students were assessed, what happened next, instructional strategies used in the classroom, and Ms. Wells' reflection of the lesson. Reflecting on the mastery objective, Ms. Wells stated that she would have changed the mastery objective to state that students were to use the author's word choice to determine the mood of a text, not the theme. She said that ―talking about the mood helps lead the students to the theme." She said that discussing them at the same time did cause some confusion. She went on to state that this would be a topic addressed in the next couple of lessons.

Ms. Wells' analysis of the BCR results led her to plan a small group re-teaching session for the five who did not meet the objective. (Std 4) When asked about her giving students ownership of their learning by allowing them the choice to underline or not, Ms. Wells stated, ―A choice was given because some students need interaction and others get distracted from it. Plus, they were to later highlight and circle, so not making them underline was a choice so they would not have too many marks on their paper." When asked if there was anything she would upgrade, Ms. Wells reflected on her choice of text. She felt that it was too long to use in a small group. She would use a shorter text to model the sticky note strategy so there would be more emphasis on the strategy, and less on the story. She also repeated that she would have changed the objective to center around mood instead of theme. After reflection and discussion, Ms. Wells stated a goal saying, ―I am going to try to make my objectives more specific to the day's lesson, rather than to the lesson sequence I am in the middle of teaching."

In summary, Ms. Wells taught a lesson based on curriculum indicators without an appropriately focused mastery objective. In her instruction, Ms. Wells used explanatory devices to present information to her students, got inside her students' heads by checking for understanding and unscrambling confusion, used various tools to create mental engagement, and created a positive climate. Furthermore, she had students demonstrate their understanding of the objective by having them complete a BCR. As a reflective practitioner, she openly discussed how she would upgrade her lesson in the future, and set a goal to make sure her mastery objective closely matches her daily instruction.

Observer's Signature_____ Date_____

Signature_____ Date_____

(Signature indicates that the teacher has read and reviewed the Observation Conference Report, not necessarily that the teacher concurs with the contents.)

<table>
<tr>
<td colspan="2" align="center">Office of Human Resources
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland 20855</td>
<td align="center">PROFESSIONAL GROWTH SYSTEM
Observation Conference Report</td>
</tr>
</table>

INSTRUCTIONS: Observer completes a narrative description of the classroom observation and observation conference based on the MCPS Performance Standards. Use additional sheets as necessary.

Name: ____Mr. Carl Jones

Observation Date: ____Nov 17, 2008

Observer: __Mr. Sean Leeder

Observation Time: from _10:10_ to _10:40_ [unannounced]

School: __Montgomery MS

Observation Conference Date: ___Nov 19, 2008

Subject/Grade: ____Algebra / Grade 8

Observer Description

Mr. Jones is a first year teacher. There were twenty students present, eleven boys and nine girls [5 ELL, 1 with a 504, 5 African American, 2 Hispanic, 8 Caucasian, and 5 Asian. Desks were arranged in groups of three to four students. This was the second lesson for the students regarding direct variation from Unit 2 of the algebra curriculum. The observation was unannounced.

The lesson was planned for mastery. The objective ―SWBAT write and graph direct variation and solve problems involving direct variation*"*, and the agenda were posted and verbally reviewed. The lesson followed the math block [warm up involving linear functions, exploration on the patterns as a small group activity, guided practice with students working in pairs, and a summarizer with a self assessment]. Students were able to master the content as assessed through teacher observation, class discussion, and completion of class work and an independent exit card. All 20 students successfully completed the exit card requiring them to complete a graph and complete one application problem.

Mr. Jones had varying degrees of effectiveness in communicating standards for her students.
- She reinforced the standard for working in groups.
  - *"If you need to talk with your buddies next to you that's OK, but you have to keep your voices down."*
  - *"Maybe you could move your book over a little bit."* [to a student in a group struggling to find space for the exploration.]
- She held students accountable for completing work.
  - While students worked on the warm-up, she checked to see who had their homework and recorded the information on sticky notes.
  - ―What you don't finish today will be homework, so it's in your best interest to work hard."

As a result, students knew these standards were important in Mr. Jones's classroom. (S-3)
- She did not provide clear directions for the different activities.
  - To start the exploration activity she said, ―You are going to work in groups to complete the data analysis worksheet and then we will discuss the patterns."

As a result, students did not know who to sit with or how long they had for the task. This lack of direction resulted in 4 minutes being spent creating groups and another 5 minutes transitioning out of the activity.

Mr. Jones was somewhat effective guiding students' thinking to be focused on the objective.
- During the warm up, Mr. Jones consistently asked students for answers and then asked them to explain how they attained the answer. ―Juan, what is #3? … What did you do to get that value?"

As a result, students were focused on the justification of the answer rather than just the correctness.
- After the exploration she summarized the findings rather than elicit responses. ―In #1 you should have looked at the ratios between x and y. Since all the ratios are… your equation would be…." ―Ok, we talked about a positive and negative slope… a zero slope … if m = 0 … We can easily find the K if the y values are the same and the x values

are different…"

By not being asked questions, students did not experience the thinking process used to arrive at the conclusions.

- The exploration worksheet's directions focused students on tables and charts of data. Mr. Jones posed the question, ―What patterns do you see in the data?"

As a result of this broad question, students were observed identifying patterns within the individual independent variable entries and the dependent variable entries rather than on the relationship pattern between the independent and the dependent variables. (S-2)

Mr. Jones used effective personal relationship techniques.

- She celebrated a student's birthday. ―OK it's Lana's birthday so we'll start a card around. Lana, how old are you?"
- She invited students into activities. ―I like you close to me, Angelise, so you can help me out… You are doing a nice job this morning… Thank you, Lee, for being a model of our classroom standards." These comments also served to re-gain the attention of off-task students.
- She called on a variety of students always using their first names. *Jason…Deena…Vicky…Tomas*

As a result, students appear to feel valued as important members of the group. (S-3)

Mr. Jones adapted her instruction based on student performance on an exit card given during the previous lesson.

Mr. Jones shared her reasoning for the review of previously taught concepts during the post-observation conference. She said, ―They had a difficulty accurately seeing patterns within tables. They knew how to graph the values but could not generate the equations." Because of this, Mr. Jones decided that she should begin with linear functions to build the concept of variation. She shared their exit cards saying, ―Now they have it. They made the connection from patterns in tables from Chapter 4." As a result of Mr. Jones's change in plans, students were able to build the connection of prior learning to their understanding of direct variation. (S-4)

The following topics were discussed in the post-observation conference:

- Mr. Jones discussed the scope and sequence of the last few concepts she has taught. She said, ―It would have been nice to teach the patterns from Chapter 4 first, then teach direct variation, and then go on to slope and slope-intercept form." It was suggested that even though the concept of slope was taught before direct variation, she could still use the students' understanding of patterns as a way to introduce direct variation. She will continue to work to plan lessons that provide connections to previously taught concepts.
- Mr. Jones reflected upon her review of concepts saying, ―I'm only reviewing it for the ones that got it (when going over the notes.) The ones that don't understand need to look from another perspective." It was suggested that she use constructivist strategies whenever possible. This may enable students to build concrete understanding before moving on to more abstract models. It was also suggested that Mr. Jones might want to first model solving example problems, and then have students practice while she checks for understanding, before having them work independently. Mr. Jones has set a goal to plan lessons to help students to first gain concrete and pictorial understanding before having them move towards a more abstract understanding. She will also work to give sufficient guided practice before independent work is assigned.
- Mr. Jones previously set a goal to utilize more effective classroom management strategies. She is working on giving clear directions and setting a time frame before having students begin working. She said, ―When I forget to do this, that is when things fall apart." She communicated that behavior in this class has improved, however she will continue to use new management strategies and reflect upon their effect on her students.

In summary, Mr. Jones planned and implemented a lesson for student mastery. Mr. Jones had varying degrees of effectiveness in communicating standards for her students. Mr. Jones was somewhat effective guiding students' thinking to be focused on the objective. Mr. Jones used effective personal relationship techniques. Mr. Jones adapted her instruction based on student performance on an exit card given during the previous lesson. She has set goals to build lessons that make more connection and use a constructivist approach. She will continue to reflect on her use of management techniques and the impact of her directions and structures.

Observer's Signature_____ Date_____

Signature_____ Date_____

(Signature indicates that the teacher has read and reviewed the Observation Conference Report, not necessarily that the teacher concurs with the contents.)

Sample Post-Observation Conference Reports and Sample Evaluation Reports

Montgomery County Public Schools
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH SYSTEM
FINAL EVALUATION REPORT: TEACHER
(MCPS Form 425-39)

Teacher: James Palmer   Employee Number: 00009991

Principal: Mr. Phil Kimberlin   Years of MCPS Experience: 2

Type: _____ First-Year Probationary   _____ Tenured (3-year cycle)
                          _____ with CT   _____ Tenured (4-year cycle)
                          _____ without CT   _____ Tenured (5-year cycle)
                     x Second-Year Probationary
                          _____ Third-Year Probationary
                          _____ Special Evaluation

School: Southeast Elementary School

Subject or Grade Level: Grade 3, all subjects

Directions: Evaluators complete a narrative description based on the following performance standards. The description includes classroom observations; analysis and review of student results as described in the shared accountability system; contributions to overall school mission and environment; review of student and parent surveys; and review of professional growth plans and implementation results; and any other documents collected by the evaluator and/or the teacher during the full length of the cycle.

Performance Standards:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for establishing and managing student learning in a positive learning environment.
4. Teachers continually assess student progress, analyze the results, and adapt instruction to improve student achievement.
5. Teachers are committed to continuous improvement and professional development.
6. Teachers exhibit a high degree of professionalism.

Dates of Observations: 10/11/07   11/27/07   12/20/07   2/20/08

Dates of Conferences: 10/11/07   11/29/07   12/23/07   2/27/08

Final Rating: (x) Meets Standard

                                   (   ) Below Standard

Evaluator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mr. Palmer is in his fifth year of public school teaching, his second year in MCPS. He teaches all elementary subjects to third grade students. The three teachers at this grade level meet together regularly (at least biweekly) to plan. Students are regrouped across the grade level for math and reading. Mr. Palmer teaches one content area to the whole grade; a colleague teaches all of the science. Mr. Palmer has a master of arts in teaching. His undergraduate major was not education.

Performance Standard I: Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Classroom instruction and lesson plans in Mr. Palmer's class consistently reflect the overarching curriculum goals and state and local student learning objectives. In our pre-observation conference Mr. Palmer was able to articulate and show the MCPS framework objective and unit planning from which the observed lesson had been developed. He explained what students had accomplished before and what his mastery objective was for the lesson. During the lesson he taught to this mastery objective (see observation reports of 10/11/07 and 12/20/07). During staff development days with his team, the reading specialist, and staff development teacher, Mr. Palmer actively referred to the curriculum to plan for the upcoming month of instruction. Student needs were in the forefront of his planning effort as evidenced in the statement, ―our students have already mastered this part of the third grade curriculum. What do we want to do here—go ahead to fourth grade concepts or provide some enrichment here?" His careful match of the curriculum to the actual need of the students results in students being successful in meeting state and local goals on assessments and performing consistently at high levels on grade reports.

- Mr. Palmer has demonstrated tremendous growth in encouraging all students by giving them the message that they are capable of learning a challenging curriculum. During our first conference (see report of 10/11/07 observation), we had an extensive and thoughtful discussion because of evidence of inappropriately differentiated expectations for several instructional groups. In the interim, Mr. Palmer's continuous positive efforts such as use of previewing strategies, targeted use of the instructional assistant, resource teacher, and reading specialist, and greater use of visuals like concept maps and graphic organizers have resulted in greater participation and success rates of students whose pretest scores are the lowest.

- Mr. Palmer has extended his mission beyond students' academic growth to include the social-emotional health of his students. He had a student this year with a significant psychological problem that needed some careful handling and specific techniques of intervention periodically (see 12/20/07). Mr. Palmer willingly learned the techniques and even stated, ―working with A—has helped me become calmer myself. I find I use the breathing technique now when I am in stressful conditions." Because of his willingness to extend himself, he was able to keep a child in school who would have otherwise continued to miss a significant number of class days. In addition, by learning specific calming strategies, he was able to share learned techniques with other students and to apply them himself.

Standard II: Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students
- Mr. Palmer consistently provides clear explanations to all students. During observations he used many visuals including the chalkboard, computer projections, overheads, charts, graphs, and tables on poster board to assist students in achieving the learning outcomes. (See observation reports dated 10/11/07, 12/20/07, and 2/20/08). Visuals were used both to help clarify instruction and posted to aid as reminders for students to refer to later. For example the geometry concept map was blown up to be a large laminated poster that was on the front wall for the entire unit. As lessons within the unit were taught, the class progress was highlighted on that concept map. Consistent use of comprehension questions uncovers any confusion students may have. For example, during the observation of 2/20/08 he asked, ―A—what is the solution to the story's problem statement?" Following the student's

response which was incomplete he said, "Did everyone get what they wanted?" which helped the student to elaborate and demonstrate his understanding. He then asked the group, "What questions do you still have in your head that have not been answered in the story?" in reference to a K-W-L chart he had used to help students organize their prior knowledge before reading the story. Mr. Palmer uses a variety of every-pupil response techniques to check frequently and broadly for student understanding. For example, he frequently will say, "Tap your head if you agree with F." Another device frequently used is the individual white board, which all students will write on then show their answers at a given signal. As a result of his clear explanations and his frequent monitoring of understanding across the class, all students consistently master the outcomes of the lesson.

Standard III: Teachers are responsible for establishing and managing student learning in a positive learning environment.

- Mr. Palmer has provided his students with models for listening carefully to other students' arguments/rationales and for participating in discussions so that they will consistently show respect for one another's ideas. For example, during an observation the class was given the language, "So you're going to say _M—and M—I disagree with you because….." Mr. Palmer asked "Is there anybody who came in thinking one way but now sees this a different way after listening to the others?" Because of this modeling, students both felt safe to offer a variety of ideas and displayed a high degree of focus and on-task behavior throughout the lesson.

- Mr. Palmer greets his students daily and demonstrates an interest in their well-being. He frequently asks about ongoing events in their lives, for example how sports teams they are on are doing.

Standard IV: Teachers continually assess student progress, analyze the results, and adapt instruction to improve student achievement.

- Mr. Palmer participates in biweekly team meetings where the students are discussed across the grade in both reading and math. Students are given assessments approximately every two weeks and are regrouped about every four to six weeks to keep instructional groupings fluid and flexible. His report card grades reflect good progress on the part of his students. Referrals to EMT are made as needed. There is evidence that required adjustments are made to student programs as needed by IEP's or 504 plans. This represents an area of particular growth for Mr. Palmer, for which he is to be commended.

- During monthly grade-level staff development days Mr. Palmer actively participated in the creation of several performance assessments to be used with the third graders that mirror the type of assessment students will meet in Grade 5 MSPAP. The assessments were tools to gather further data on a group of students who were targeted for monitoring from their performance as third graders. He analyzed student performance with the reading specialist and identified specific, targeted skill-building opportunities for those students. In some cases he found time within the school day, and in others he provided time before school. The progress in the second semester for these students has been very promising, as evidenced by their most recent assessment.

Standard V: Teachers are committed to continuous improvement and professional development.

- Mr. Palmer has become a very reflective practitioner. He is able to reflect on a teaching episode and to make recommendations for his own improvement (see observation reports 10/11/07 and 12/20/07). For example, he said, ‒I could have said that better if I began with the thought of what will help him get the answer instead of wow, he does not have the answer." Follow-up observations note the changes in performance (see observation report of 2/20/08) where he said, ‒You seem to be thinking of a different story, how did Meagan feel when they turned out the lights in …." In particular, this year's progress has been made in working with all students in a manner that communicates high expectations (see standard I above) and provides strategies to improve their performance (see standard IV). As a result of his effort and skill development in teaching, fewer students are performing below grade level.
- Active participation was demonstrated by Mr. Palmer in biweekly team meetings, three of which I attended, and monthly staff development days, all of which I attended. Mr. Palmer has also attended three professional workshops outside of school and taken the Studying Skillful Teaching course. As a result, Mr. Palmer has used many new teaching strategies. His repertoire is expanding.

Standard VI: Teachers exhibit a high degree of professionalism.

- Mr. Palmer works cooperatively with his colleagues to support the mission of the school through regular, punctual attendance at all staff meetings, grade-level meetings, and staff development days. He serves as team leader, prepares an agenda for each meeting, and submits notes to the principal and teammates after the meeting. Mr. Palmer coordinates the field trips for his grade level, making sure all forms, procedures, and regulations are in order. He arrives on time for his assigned duties, shares responsibility for the halls, and delivers and retrieves his class on time, respecting the schedules of other staff members. Mr. Palmer meets with other team leaders to provide seamless articulation K–5 on issues of mutual concern.

Summary

Mr. Palmer has shown a great deal of growth in his teaching skill, and in his ability to program effectively for all learners in a positive learning environment. The work he has done this year with his grade level in developing useful performance assessments and in targeted interventions for students who struggle with concept acquisition can be instructive to the entire staff.

Sample Post-Observation Conference Reports and Sample Evaluation Reports

Montgomery County Public Schools
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH SYSTEM
FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
(MCPS Form 425-39)

Teacher: <u>Sylvia Marsh</u>   Employee Number: <u>00009999</u>

Principal: <u>Ms. Brenda Espisito</u>   Years of MCPS Experience: <u>5</u>

Type: _____ First-Year Probationary   _____ Tenured (3-year cycle)
                            _____ with CT   _____ Tenured (4-year cycle)
                            _____ without CT   <u> x </u>Tenured (5-year cycle)
                      _____ Second-Year Probationary
                      _____ Third-Year Probationary
                      _____ Special Evaluation

SCHOOL: <u>Sample Middle School</u>

SUBJECT OR GRADE LEVEL: <u>Math 7 and 8</u>

Directions: Evaluators complete a narrative description based on the following performance standards. The description includes classroom observations; analysis and review of student results as described in the shared accountability system; contributions to overall school mission and environment; review of student and parent surveys; and review of professional growth plans and implementation results; and any other documents collected by the evaluator and/or the teacher during the full length of the cycle.

Performance Standards:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for establishing and managing student learning in a positive learning environment.
4. Teachers continually assess student progress, analyze the results, and adapt instruction to improve student achievement.
5. Teachers are committed to continuous improvement and professional development.
6. Teachers exhibit a high degree of professionalism.

Dates of Observations: <u>10/16/07</u>   <u>11/28/07</u>   <u>2/12/08</u>   <u>3/21/08</u>

Dates of Conferences: <u>10/17/07</u>   <u>11/29/07</u>   <u>2/14/08</u> <u>3/25/08</u>

Final Rating: ( ) Meets Standard
                                    (x) Below Standard

Evaluator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Ms. Marsh is in her fifth year of teaching with MCPS. She teaches Math B, Math C, and Algebra. The teachers within the grade level teams meet regularly to discuss students and interdisciplinary units. The teachers within the math department meet regularly to discuss curriculum issues, strategies, and students. Ms. Marsh has a master of arts in teaching with a minor in mathematics.

Standard I: Teachers are committed to students and their learning

- Ms. Marsh's pattern of communicating expectations and structuring instruction is not designed to help all students in the classroom learn and achieve at high levels. During three separate announced observations (10/16/07, 11/28/07, 3/21/08), Ms. Marsh went through the same process of reviewing homework problems one by one and calling only on students who raised their hands to assist her in solutions she was working through on the board. Three or four students, all male, did most of the responding in each instance. The majority of students in the class were neither called upon nor checked to see if they were following her explanations.

  On both 10/16 and 11/28, I observed several students copying problems off the board, which suggested they had not done the homework. Questioned about those students in the post-observation conferences, Ms. Marsh remarked that the class was ―above some of the students' heads" and that she knew precisely who they were. She said at least by letting them have something to hand in they could hold on to a bit of self-esteem. She rejected my suggestion that self-esteem comes through achievement and mastery and that she was not doing them a favor by allowing them to slide through. When asked how they performed on quizzes and exams, she replied, ―They fail, most of them." When asked what supplementary instruction she arranged for these students, she replied, ―It's really not much use when I have so many other motivated kids who need my help." When asked (10/16) why she gives these students tests she knows they will fail instead of using test time for some remedial instruction, she said she hadn't thought of it, but it might be a good idea. At the April conference, she said she had not had time to try that strategy yet.

- I observed no examples of varying instruction for different learning styles or for students with different cultural backgrounds. When asked how she provides for such differences, Ms. Marsh replied that the daily extra time she provides after school is when she individualizes.

- Ms. Marsh is consistently available in her classroom after period 7. On several drop-in visits over the past three years I noted that sometimes she was alone and sometimes one or two students were working with her. These were students from the top third of the class working with her for help on extra credit problems. On the second occasion I asked if any of the low-performing students every showed up. She said, ―Rarely." When I suggested she make appointments with the ones who she felt needed the most help, she replied, ―I feel they have to take responsibility for their own learning. Isn't that one of the goals of our school?"

- Ms. Marsh's lack of follow-through with low-performing students, together with the minimal interaction she has with them in class is sending consistent low expectation messages to a substantial segment of her students. Their confidence needs to be boosted through contact, help, encouragement, and concrete skill building. This is not happening at an acceptable level.

Standard II: Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students

- Ms. Marsh's performance does not meet this standard. The lack of both variety in instructional methods and relevance to students' lives makes Ms. Marsh's instruction boring and deprives students of alternate ways to think about and master concepts which are available to their classmates in other sections. The lack of opportunities to talk through their thinking in pairs, pose questions, find extensions, or work with complex problems means that students currently performing in the middle and lower third of the class are less likely to be successful on the mandatory High School Assessments tasks and will be limited from taking higher-level courses and certain science courses.

- All classes observed were recitation lessons involving teacher-generated recall questions and student answers. The posted objectives were expressed as "covering" Chapter X or the material that had been assigned. The delivery of the lesson was designed for coverage of the material, not for the students' mastery. These periods involved teacher lecture/presentation on the board followed by having individual students practice for about 10 minutes up to the bell. No group work or use of manipulatives were observed. Ms. Marsh missed the opportunity to have students work in pairs and help each other. She circulated once around the class during the last five minutes; other than that time, she waited at her desk for the bell. There was neither a teacher-led nor a student-generated summary.

- After the 10/16 observation, the resource teacher suggested connecting the mathematics to real-life situations and using some of the county assessment sample problems, which students generally find complex and engaging. Ms. Marsh "doubted they would benefit from that." Ms. Marsh and the resource teacher discussed having the students make up word problems that would employ the single variables she was working with. She agreed to try the idea. Later that month she reported to the resource teacher "it had been beyond most of them." When asked to see samples of what they had produced, she said that she had discarded them.

- Instruction relies entirely on paper and pencil practice and the use of the whiteboard. During four different drop-in visits during the previous two years and the three announced observations from this year, there was no use of technology, concrete models, visuals, or demonstrations using manipulatives or of the supplementary problem packet prepared by the math department. Graphing calculators were used only once. Ms. Marsh admits that she has not yet included technology in her course designs or in supplemental work with students. She intends to make it a focus for her professional development next year.

Standard III: Teachers are responsible for establishing and managing student learning in a positive learning environment

- Ms. Marsh tolerates a high degree of low-level talking and off-task behavior. This is documented in all three observations conducted this year. Student scans at five-minute intervals revealed over 50 percent off-task time for two-thirds of the students. This is unacceptable.

- When asked about the persistence of recitation lessons, Ms. Marsh said the format was the best choice for maintaining control and keeping the class on task. Data (cited above) collected from observations does not support this assertion. Ms. Marsh explained the off-task behavior by saying the students were having a bad day. When confronted with the fact that the figures were consistent for all three observations, she replied, "I don't think you can tell that much from kids' body language."

- Neither observations nor examinations of student work and teacher feedback yielded evidence that Ms. Marsh works on student goal setting or risk taking. Ms. Marsh's response pattern has been documented under Standard I. Periodic observations over the past three-year by the resource teacher indicate that Ms. Marsh's feedback on student work contains no specific comments about what to improve, and no corrections or "see me" messages. This is her practice despite the departmental focus on supporting students through structured feedback. I neither observed nor heard accounts of supplemental instruction or persistence with students who struggle. Students who asked for help were treated differently depending upon whether Ms. Marsh perceived them to be "bright" (see 3/21/08).

Standard IV: Teachers continually assess student progress, analyze the results, and adapt instruction to improve student achievement

- Four different reviews of lesson and unit plans during the school year yielded no evidence that Ms. Marsh knew and was attempting to develop the competencies being assessed either as part of local school or countywide assessments. Three of these lesson plan reviews (12/4/07, 3/21/08, 4/2/08) occurred—
  a. after Ms. Marsh had indicated that she did not understand how she was to ―use all this test stuff‖ (10/16/07) and had subsequently been given two months of planning support from her instructional resource teacher, and
  b. after both the principal and the mathematics curriculum specialist met with Ms. Marsh for a total of six hours each to help her practice analyzing student work and planning a variety of ways to re-teach concepts which children found troubling.

Thus, while students in other classes were able to work on developing background knowledge and experiences necessary for their future understanding of Algebra, Ms. Marsh‗s students received little or no opportunity to do so.

- At her request Ms. Marsh was given copies of the appropriate curriculum guides and grade level standards on three different occasions between August 2006 and March 2008. When we conferred on 4/2/08, however, Ms. Marsh was unable to find any one of the copies. Thus, she was unable to respond to questions about what progress students in her class should have made by early April and what next steps they would need to take in order to be ready to demonstrate what they knew.

- At each pre-conference Ms. Marsh was asked to be prepared to show (a) how she used informal diagnostic assessments to get data about individual and group performance and (b) how she used that data to modify instruction. In three of the four classroom observations (10/16/07, 11/28/07, and 3/21/08) Ms. Marsh responded to this request by distributing worksheets and a game, both of which were yellowed and several years old.   In a fourth session she had students engage in the practice of skills not assigned to her grade level and told them that ―my diagnosis is that you all disappointed me. I was sure you were smarter than this work shows.‖ Student responses to the computer challenge exercises used during the observation of 3/21/08 and to the requirement that they work in groups to solve problems indicated that they were unfamiliar with both tasks (see 3/21/02).

- On informal pretesting conducted by the seventh grade teams in November 2007 and again in January 2008, Ms. Marsh‗s students were significantly less able to correctly complete geometry questions. Ms. Marsh explained that the results were not surprising because she ―had not had time to do any geometry yet.‖ When she was asked to examine four years of comparative data showing that her classes had consistently lower performance on geometry items and on open-ended questions requiring application of geometry concepts, Ms. Marsh said she did not like geometry and probably had skipped many of the activities in the geometry strand because she ―thought the kids would get it later.‖

- When she was asked whether she knew about her students‗ pattern of poor performance and had made any attempt to change her instruction, Ms. Marsh said that ―There is not much I can do when the kids come into seventh grade with such weak arithmetic skills and I have to review their number facts over and over again. Something has to go and geometry is it.‖ At no point during a 45-minute discussion of how patterns revealed by test data could be helpful did Ms. Marsh offer a suggestion about what she might think about or do differently.

Standard V: Teachers are committed to continuous improvement and professional development

- Her portfolio documents attendance at a professional development course last year in the use of the graphing calculator. Her-end-of year report cites introduction of the calculator to her eighth grade algebra class last year, but not her math 8 class, where the county data shows it contributes most to student gain scores. When confronted with this information, Ms. Marsh said her students were not ready for the graphing calculator since they still had basic algorithms to master. Denying students access to the visual modeling and rapid processing of graphing calculators keeps low-performing pupils from a significant learning aid. It is both a serious instructional mistake and reveals a lack of belief that all students can improve their performance incrementally given effective strategies to support effective effort.

- Ms. Marsh shared her portfolio from the past three years. There was a listing of the various staff development trainings the school held, the three county trainings she attended, and a math conference. There was no evidence of reflection on data provided from observations (formal or informal) or on any analysis of student performance within her classroom. We discussed the offer made by the staff development teacher to provide observation data in areas designated by the teacher. Where she was intrigued by the presented information on ‒wait time", Ms. Marsh said she did not feel she had enough time to cover course content and also to intentionally use ‒wait time" so she dismissed the offer. She similarly dismissed the value of investigating other topics that had been presented during the staff development days.

Standard VI: Teachers exhibit a high degree of professionalism

- Ms. Marsh has attended department and school faculty meetings during which School Improvement Plans were made and assessed. She makes substantive contributions to the discussions when the topic is programs for gifted and talented students or teacher professional development.

- Ms. Marsh's absences are infrequent and always in conjunction with appropriate communication to the substitute system and comprehensive lesson plans.

- She reports to work and to meetings on time.

- Ms. Marsh performs expected hall duties and files reports and attendance sheets in a timely manner.

Summary

Ms. Marsh's overall performance is not meeting the needs of all students. I find her response to suggestions and directions for improvement unsatisfactory. I, therefore, recommend her for entrance into the PAR program and intensive assistance throughout next year.

In response to the evaluation Ms. Marsh appeared receptive to our discussion about means for improvement. She acknowledged that hearing the stories shared by other teachers who have seen successes when using focused strategies on at-risk students is now sounding like something she should consider. I acknowledged the positive in her willingness to consider that there are ways to support students beyond what she has done. Where she does not like the feeling of the evaluation, she is willing to accept the supports that could be offered to her next year through the PAR program.