



TRAIN Handbook

Table of Contents

[Preface](#)
[Preamble](#)
[PAR Program Overview](#)
[Roles & Responsibilities](#)
[Guidance for the Observation Cycle](#)

Acknowledgements

We wish to express appreciation to Ohio PAR Consulting Teachers, Pam Million and Linda Lohr, who have willingly and most graciously offered their support and guidance. Additionally we wish to acknowledge the PAR foundation established by both the Columbus and Toledo School Districts.

PAR Panel Members

Craig Bickley
 Maribeth Calabro
 Susan Chin
 Robyn Gormley-Jackson
 Kathleen McDonough
 Nkolika Onye
 Melissa Parkerson

PAR Consulting Teachers

Laura Almagno
 Peter Bellisle
 Andrew Benn
 Christin Brierly
 Melissa Cimini
 Ed German

Lenora Goodwin
 Jennifer Johnson
 Ana Montalban
 Melissa Palumbo
 Lillian Turnipseed
 Erin Wilson

Preface

Congratulations and welcome to the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program. Your selection for this program reflects your expertise as a classroom teacher, your ability to communicate professionally your willingness to assume a revolutionary leadership role, and your desire to guide your peers towards excellence. In this time of increased public demand for stringent teaching standards, the Providence Public School District (PPSD) and the Providence Teachers Union (PTU) are joining a national trend through this Peer Assistance and Review Program.

This innovative program assists new and experienced PPSD teachers in need of instructional support. This union and management partnership ensures that quality teachers are in all PPSD classrooms. Your role as a PAR Consulting Teacher is a complex one, which calls upon your most creative resources to assist you in working with your professional colleagues. Simultaneously PAR Consulting Teachers will support one another in this endeavor. The purpose of this document is to provide you with the compiled experiences of previous PAR Consulting Teachers. It is an accumulation of best practices which will help you as you assume your Consulting Teacher role.

Those who have preceded you as PAR Consulting Teachers around the country have wholeheartedly accepted the responsibility and challenge of becoming a part of this new and exciting paradigm. As this program evolves, the commitment of the Consulting Teacher will become even more significant, for you will play a vital role in the professional lives of your colleagues and in the profession itself. Once again, welcome and thank you for your commitment to Peer Assistance & Review.

[-back to top-](#)

Preamble

The Peer Assistance & Review program is a reflection of the Providence School District and the Providence Teachers Union's joint understanding and commitment to improving the quality of teachers in Providence. It is a manifestation of the recognition that both parties, as well as all staff, share a joint interest in identifying,

supporting, developing and retaining quality educators in Providence Schools. The program that follows will be developed and implemented in a collaborative model, acknowledging both parties share and own the accountability for the overall quality of teaching staff. It represents a distinct cultural change not just in the sense of a labor and management collaboration, but also in terms of their professional teaching philosophies.

[-back to top-](#)

PAR Program Overview

Providence Schools and the Providence Teachers' Union will develop and implement a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program beginning September of 2012. The PAR program will provide intensive support to teachers, whether they have newly entered the profession or are veteran teachers. Using a phased implementation approach, the initial rollout of the program in 2012-13 will target all teachers new to the district as well as staff and teachers with baseline effectiveness ratings of "Developing" or "Ineffective" in schools identified as "Innovation" schools. Annually a PAR chairperson will be identified and will organize meetings and serve as primary contacts for PAR CT's.

[-back to top-](#)

Roles & Responsibilities

The Par Panel

The PAR Panel will consist of four teachers and three administrators for a total of seven members. The PTU will appoint the four teachers and the superintendent will appoint the three administrators. Consensus will be the preferred decision-making model; however, ultimately majority vote of the members will be used to make decisions when consensus cannot be reached

[-back to top-](#)

PAR Panel Responsibilities

- Selection of PAR Consulting Teachers
- Meetings with PAR Consulting Teachers periodically to receive reports
- Making decisions for PAR participation based on PAR Consulting Teachers' reports
- Overseeing training of PAR Consulting Teachers
- Evaluation of the PAR Consulting Teachers
- Approval of policies and procedures that govern the program
- Administration of the PAR program

[-back to top-](#)

The Consulting Teacher's Role

The Consulting Teacher and the Participating Teacher will conference approximately every other week. Additionally, the consulting teacher will meet with the building administrator to discuss the participating teacher's progress. Formal documentation by the Consulting Teacher will focus on mutually identified goals and growth toward those goals. The Consulting Teacher must also maintain documentation of all contact with stakeholders (i.e. Building Principal and PAR Panel). All peer assistance and review will be aligned with the Providence specific RIIC evaluation model.

In the fall, winter and spring, all CT's are required to provide a report for each of their participating teachers (PT's), to the PAR Panel. The PAR Panel consists of four teachers (Kathleen McDonough, Robyn Gormley-

PAR Consulting Teacher Responsibilities

- **PAR CT's MUST DO the following:**
 - meet with PT's a minimum of 15 times per year
 - observe and conference with teachers
 - provide PT's with immediate feedback
 - provide PT's with resources, materials, support and guidance
 - meet with school administration regularly at the administrator's convenience
 - complete FFTPS certification as well as any other required evaluation training
 - report progress (or lack thereof) to the PAR panel three times per year-Fall, Winter, Spring
 - recommend teachers for positive or negative release from the PAR program (Winter and Spring)
 - maintain confidentiality
- **Support Participating Teachers by:**
 - support planning and preparation
 - plan and present new teacher reception and orientation
 - conduct workshops for teachers on pedagogy, pupil relations and classroom management
 - Serve for a minimum of one (1) with a maximum of three (3) years

A PAR "Bootcamp" will be held each August by national experts. In addition, PAR CT's will be required to take a four-day evaluation training facilitated by the Evaluation Specialist to gain context and deep understanding of the RIIESS rubrics and tools. All PAR Consulting teachers will undergo 20 hours of evaluation training via Teachscape's Framework for Effective Teaching and will be required to take and pass a rigorous exam designed to ensure that they are well suited to use the district's evaluation tool. There will be ongoing training throughout the school year. Rhode Island College, a partner with the district's PAR program, will provide professional development for PAR CT's on an on-going basis, conducting the summer Bootcamp in subsequent years and year-long monitoring and support to CT's. Further, professional development opportunities aligned to the identified needs of PPSD PAR participants will be developed including distance and traditional learning opportunities.

Confidentiality

As a PAR Consulting Teacher, you are the guardian of the reputations of those professionals with whom you work. The success of Peer Assistance and Review depends upon a relationship of mutual trust between you and the participating teacher. The teachers to whom you are assigned will depend upon your professional expertise and, just as importantly, upon your professional discretion. Your discussions about concerns regarding participating teachers must be in strictest confidence, and only with building administrators, members of the PAR Panel, and other consulting teachers. Your new job as a consulting teacher requires that you gain the confidence of those with whom you work. Do not betray that confidence. Your professional success and the ultimate success of the PAR Program depend upon it.

The CT will report the PT's progress to the PAR Panel throughout the year. The Consulting Teacher, along with administrators, will jointly make recommendations regarding the novice Participating Teachers' continued employment with PPSD to the PAR panel. For the tenured teachers who received a baseline effectiveness rating of Ineffective or Developing during the previous school year, the CT and administrator will jointly recommend if the PT should be positively or negatively released from the PAR program. For those teachers who self-refer or are referred by administration, their release from the program can occur any time after they have received the minimum number of visits.

Rapport

Beginning with the initial contact, an effective PAR Consulting Teacher must work towards establishing positive rapport as soon as possible. Remember that you are working on Peer Assistance and Review; you and your participating teacher will have a much more productive relationship if it is a cooperative one. **Your role is not that of a supervisor or an administrator; you are a teacher working to assist and support another professional.**

Evaluation

PAR Consulting Teachers will be trained in the Providence specific RIIC Evaluation model. This tool is the basis for assessments conducted by PAR CT's. All supports will be aligned to RIIC. The building administrators will remain the formal evaluator of all teachers, including participating teachers. PAR CT's will not participate in the final effectiveness rating. The PAR Consulting Teacher will maintain close communication with the building administrator in regards to making a final recommendation to the PAR panel. Typically, a recommendation will be made to either positively or negatively release a teacher from PAR services on an annual basis. PAR Consulting Teachers who participate in the PAR program will be exempt from the district's standard evaluation program for the duration of their assignment in the PAR program. The PAR Panel will require all CT's performance to be evaluated using the PAR Audit Report.

Participating Teachers

Participating Teachers include:

- Newly Hired teachers who do not already receive mentoring support from RIDE Induction coaches, AFT or RFT
- Intervention Teachers who are identified as receiving a baseline effectiveness rating of Ineffective or Developing
- Teachers referred for consideration to the PAR Panel (self or administration)

All Participating Teachers receive at least 15 observations and/or conferences from a PAR Consulting Teacher.

The intervention portion of the PAR program will provide intensive supports needed for those teachers who receive a baseline effectiveness rating of Ineffective or Developing on their evaluation. These teachers will be required to participate in the PAR program until they are positively or negatively released from the program. Should the teacher refuse services, the PAR Panel will submit a negative release from the program to administration. If a teacher refuses supports available via the PAR program they are still responsible to achieve an Effective or Highly Effective rating on the Teacher Evaluation Model. Refusal to participate in the PAR program will be indicated by a signed PAR Participation Refusal document.

Teachers may also self-refer to the PAR Panel to request services if they believe they are struggling. Teachers may be referred by the Principal to the PAR program if they are deemed to be experiencing extreme difficulty in the classroom. In either case, the co-chairs of the PAR Panel will evaluate all requests for acceptance to the program and render decisions. Because intervention candidates may enter the program at any time during the school

year, recommendations for their release from the program can occur any time after they have received the minimum number of intervention visits.

Guidance for the Observation Cycle

The First Week

The first week should be used to review the list of participating teachers and assign caseloads to individual Consulting Teachers. Consultant's certification, grade level, experience and previous building assignments are to be considered when new participating teachers are assigned. Assignment lists will be submitted to the PAR Panel for approval. The CT will then initiate contacts in the schools. The building principals and teacher leaders can offer assistance on all questions around curricula. To ensure a successful start to the new school year, a deliberate plan must be established. All PAR CT's must share their calendars with the Executive Director of Performance Management.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Locate all assigned schools.
- Become familiar with predetermined procedures and forms to be used.
- The PAR secretary will order business cards for CT's via PCTA
- Read PPSD PAR Manual for Consulting Teachers. Be sure to clarify any questions.
- Contact principals and union delegates of the assigned buildings.
- Contact participating teachers to schedule the first meeting.
- Ask questions. Take advantage of the first week when experienced Consulting Teachers are often available.

Initial Participating Teacher Contact

Make contact with Participating Teachers. The first visit should serve the purpose of introduction only. Make an effort to allay your participating teacher's apprehensions about being in the PAR Program. Take this time to explain PAR expectations to your Participating Teachers. Emphasize the peer assistance nature of the program and reinforce that you will review the participating teachers progress with administration and the PAR Panel. Stress that your goal is to work cooperatively toward a successful year.

During the first conference, the Consulting Teacher should:

- Provide an overview of what the Participating Teacher will be able to expect from the PAR Program.
- Share background and experience.
- Ask Participating Teacher to complete the Background Information Sheet.
- Discuss how best to be introduced to the students.
- Discuss where PAR consulting teacher should sit
- Discuss how observation notes will be shared.
- Give the Participating Teacher time to express his/her concerns.
- Provide a business card with current contact information.
- Arrange for the first two or three observations and explain the observation/conference procedures.

Consulting Teacher Conferences

Establish a routine of conferencing prior to an observation, observation, and a conference following an observation. As the Participating Teacher's skills develop, he/she should assume a more directive role in the conferencing process.

Conference prior to an Observation

The Consulting Teacher may facilitate this Participating Teacher growth by beginning with a conference prior to an observation with such questions as, "What special concerns do you have?" or "What would you like me to look for during my next observation?" During the conference prior to an observation, the Participating Teacher is encouraged to choose a specific focus for the upcoming observation.

Some examples of focal points for observations may include:

- Time management
- Behavior management
- Use of space/ grouping
- Questioning
- Differentiation
- Procedures for student response

Follow-up Conferences

During the follow-up conference, observation notes are shared to help the Participating Teacher analyze the gleaned data in respect to the pre-established focus of the observation. The PAR Consulting Teacher's role is to guide the PT in using the data to inform future instruction and

teaching strategies. The Consulting Teacher should reference a conference prior to an observation, helping the Participating Teacher to focus on concerns and to interpret observation findings.

Conference Format

The Consulting Teacher uses the Providence specific RIIC evaluation tool during the observation.

The Participating and Consulting Teachers analyze and interpret the lesson as evidenced by the data.

Recognize and acknowledge instances of best practice and areas for growth

Together develop possible alternative approaches emulating best practices.

Conferencing Techniques - Listening More and Talking Less

The Consulting Teacher must listen attentively to the Participating Teacher. The Consulting Teacher must not anticipate the concerns of the Participating Teacher and then dominate the first few minutes of the conference. The best practice is for the Consulting Teacher to start the conference with an open-ended question or statement that invites the Participating Teacher to reflect and share. The Consulting Teacher should begin with such statements or questions as:

- Are there any things that you note in the data that you would like to discuss?
- What parts did you like?
- Is there anything you would like to change?
- If you were a student in the class, would there be anything you would like to change?

Such statements and questions reveal the Participating Teacher's opinions and concerns. The Consulting Teacher should listen attentively to the Participating Teacher's response.

Once the Participating Teacher has begun to talk, it is vital that the Consulting Teacher continue to listen to the Participating Teacher. The Consulting Teacher should have a conference objective, but should not let the desire to move toward that objective interfere with giving full attention to what the teacher says.

Acknowledging, Paraphrasing and Expanding

Even when the Consulting Teacher listens attentively, perception of what the Participating Teacher says quite often differs from what the Participating Teacher means. Before proceeding to the solution of any problem, the Consulting Teacher should offer the teacher an understanding of what was said. The Participating Teacher then is able to correct any misperception and can continue the discussion, knowing that the Consulting Teacher is acknowledging and following the Participating Teacher's train of thought.

Paraphrases can be started with words such as:

- My understanding of what you said is...
- What I think you're saying is...
- Did I hear you correctly? You said...
- Do you mean...
- Let me try to repeat what you said so we can be sure that I understand...

Any technique can be overdone, and paraphrasing becomes ridiculous when it's used unnecessarily.

At times when clarity is in question, the Consulting Teacher must decide whether to respond with a clarifying question, a paraphrase, a statement, or simply not to respond. The statement "I feel tired today" may deserve further probing, but paraphrasing is probably the least effective way to do it. Eye contact, tone of voice, gesture, body position, and facial expressions can deliver the acknowledging messages.

Avoid Direct Advice

Some Consulting Teachers tend to use a direct style in stating their perceptions of the Participating Teacher's problems and of the techniques that the Participating Teacher should be using. For example, a Consulting Teacher might say, "Your problem is that you respond to Tommy only when he's misbehaving," or "You ought to try making more use of audiovisual aids." Because the Participating Teacher is not involved in forming these conclusions, the Participating Teacher will likely ignore the advice or react defensively to it.

A Consulting Teacher can share a perception, an idea or a teaching technique indirectly and with less judgment: "You said that Tommy misbehaves a lot. What do you think might be causing this? What strategies have you already tried?"

Providing Specific Feedback

The PPSD observation protocols emphasize techniques that help teachers become self-analytical and self-directed rather than be dependent upon the approval and leadership of another person. Evidence from research and from practical experience supports the effectiveness of praising a specific instance--such as the teacher's use of a desired technique, improved interaction patterns, or other observable growth toward the objectives, upon which the Consulting and Participating Teachers have agreed. For example, instead of saying, "That was a good lesson," the Consulting Teacher might comment, "Your use of higher cognitive questions has increased considerably since the last lesson I observed." The Consulting Teacher thus praises

the Participating Teacher and indicates the basis for that praise.

Types of Conferences

ALL conferences should be guided by the use of the RIIC evaluation tool. Identified goals must be aligned to the RIIC evaluation in order to make certain that all supports given will ensure clear focus on best practices as identified in the RIIC tool.

Reinforcement: Identify, label and explain the Participating Teacher's effective instructional behavior. This practice will guide the Participating Teacher toward identifying and continuing the use of effective teaching techniques. The focus is only on those aspects of instruction which were effective thus bringing effective behaviors to a conscious level.

Expansion: Another type of conference is designed to stimulate the development of a repertoire of effective teaching responses so the teacher is not limited to those most frequently used. This will generate alternatives to behaviors which were effective in the observed lesson in case they should be less effective in a different situation.

Remediation: Another type of conference encourages Participating Teachers to identify those parts of a lesson which were not successful. With you, they may develop strategies for reducing or eliminating future unsatisfactory outcomes. The Participating Teacher will identify solutions for changing aspects thought to be unsatisfactory. Give the teacher the first opportunity to suggest solutions. This conference poses tremendous potential for Participating Teacher growth in instructional effectiveness.

Guiding Questions to Use During Conferencing

Questions that Help Analyze Students' Behavior

- Why is this (action, behavior) important?
- What did you notice about student behavior during the observation (on task time, level of engagement)?
- How were the students different from each other in the way they responded?

Questions that Develop Participating Teachers Awareness

- Why did you select this text (or problem)?
- How will this text (or problem) help the student?
- What were you hoping would happen during your introduction?
- What went well in the lesson?
- Did you change your plan at any time during the lesson? Why?
- Did you change your plan because of students' responses? How?
- Looking back, what changes would you make in your lesson?
- What work or problem solving did you expect the children to do during this lesson?

Questions that Deepen Participating Teachers Understanding

- What did the students learn from this lesson?
- Where in the lesson did they have trouble? What do you think caused the problem?
- What did the students learn today that they can use in the lesson tomorrow?
- How can you help students develop this (knowledge, strategy, process) in other learning contexts?

Questions that Empower Participating Teachers

- What have you learned about your teaching today?
- Our focus for today was _____; When did you feel successful? What still concerns you?
- How did your analysis of the lesson help you?

Thoughts on Feedback

- It is specific rather than general. For example, instead of saying someone has no time management skills, a CT could say, "I noticed that it took 7 minutes before the students were engaged in classroom activity. How might you shorten that transition time?"
- It takes into account the needs of both the receiver and giver of feedback. Feedback can be destructive when it serves only the giver's needs and fails to consider the needs of the person on the receiving end.
- It is directed towards situations which the classroom teacher can control. Do not, for example, focus on class size which the teacher cannot change.
- It is well timed. In general, feedback is most useful at the earliest opportunity after the exhibited behavior (depending, of course, on the person's readiness to hear it.) It will be best received when a collaborative relationship has been formed.

- It is checked to insure clear communication. This is done by the Consulting Teacher asking clarifying questions, listening more and talking less, and paraphrasing what the Participating Teacher said.
- It is descriptive rather than evaluative. The Participating Teacher is free to use the feedback or not to use it. By avoiding evaluative language, the Consulting Teacher helps the teacher to avoid responding defensively.

Purposes of Observation

The goal of observation is feedback. The goal of feedback is improvement. But very often, observation of teachers is part of the formal personnel evaluation and is viewed with apprehension.

A novice archer might have a coach and a book of instructions, but if the archer shoots every arrow into dense fog without knowing whether it is getting closer to or farther from the target, interest in improving the technique will be hard to sustain, and improving aim will be virtually impossible. Teaching is seldom aimless, but teachers rarely get a systematic look at their techniques with respect to their aims. Observation can be an excellent means for providing feedback for teachers to improve their instruction. That purpose is emphasized here.

Techniques of Observation

Observing and analyzing archery is probably easier than analyzing teaching. Many more variables can affect a teacher's performance, but many aspects of teaching can be broken down into observable factors. Some recording tools and observation techniques concentrate on the verbal parts of teaching; others chart physical movement or non-verbal communication. Some focus on the students; others, on the teacher. Some record the interactions between and among students and teachers. A few techniques are designed to take a global view of classroom dynamics; others are used to record and analyze more specific behaviors of teachers and students.

What happens when one educator observes another? One view is that the teacher being observed will always put on a special show. Another view is that students will not behave normally when there is an outsider in the room. Despite these limitations, observation can be extremely useful in helping teachers analyze what they are doing (or not doing) and take steps to improve. Observation must be more than a random activity. Particular techniques change observation from "just watching" to a professional, expert activity. Teachers are often defensive about what goes on in their classrooms; however, collaboration between the Participating Teacher and the Consulting Teacher will guide the focus of conferences and observations.

The techniques for systematic observation advocated here are based on two assumptions:

Unsafe Classroom Environment

There may be occasions when a Consulting Teacher witnesses unsafe situations within a classroom. They may range from Level 1 to Level 3 offenses as identified in the district's Student Code of Conduct. Below are some examples of unsafe conditions within classroom environments along with suggested steps/procedures to address the situation.

Examples of an Unsafe Classroom Environment

- Students poking pencils, scissors, or other pointed objects at each other
- Fighting
- Threats of violence towards self, teacher or other students
- Gang signs and symbols
- Threat of sexual acts
- Participating Teacher leaving the classroom unattended
- Mishandling of school equipment

Addressing an Unsafe Classroom Environment

- Tell the student or students to stop.
- Inform a building administrator.
- Call Nkoli Onye or Craig Bickley at (401)456-9100. They will make further phone calls if deemed necessary.
- Conduct a follow-up conference as soon as possible with the Participating Teacher to discuss unsafe classroom environment.

Types of Assistance

As a PAR Consulting Teacher, you will find innumerable ways to offer assistance to your Participating Teacher. Your own experiences, familiarity with the PPSD, discussion with colleagues, and the flexibility of your schedule should enable you to offer a variety of supportive assistance. The following list suggests kinds of help commonly offered:

- Observation feedback
- Opportunities to observe other classrooms
 - As a PAR Consulting Teacher, you may request a substitute so that a participating teacher may have release time to observe in other classrooms and buildings. A form for this request is available in the school's office.

- Contact with resource personnel, e.g., content area coordinators, directors, PTU, PAR Panel members
- Assistance in setting professional goals. Goal Setting Forms can be found in this manual and are also available in the PAR Office
- Professional reading and conversation
- Suggestions about helpful workshops, in-service programs, and university courses
- Help in effective lesson planning
- Suggestions for improving classroom atmosphere and environment
- Encouragement for seeking another professional with whom the Participating Teacher may share ideas and experiences
- Making arrangement for participating teachers to be videotaped to be used for Participating Teacher self reflection.
- Written materials

Documentation & Reporting

Reports to the Panel

Monthly, the Consulting Teacher will meet with the PAR panel to discuss issues regarding the Par program. At these meetings, policies and procedures will be reviewed and any necessary changes will be presented to the PAR panel for approval.

The PAR Consulting Teachers will meet regularly with the PAR chairperson.

In the fall, winter and spring, all CT's are required to appear in person to in front of the PAR Panel and provide a report for each of their participating teachers (PT's). The PAR Panel consists of four teachers, a building administrator, and two Central Office administrators.

Prior to each reporting period, the PAR Panel will have the opportunity to review comprehensive reports from each CT for each PT on his/her caseload. During the first reporting period, the CT will report on all PT's on his/her caseload. During the second reporting period, the CT will only report on those PT's for which s/he has grave concerns due to the PTs' lack of progress. At this time, the CT may make a recommendation for negative or positive release from the program for any non-tenured PT. During the final reporting period, the CT will report on all PT's on his/her caseload and make a final recommendation for positive or negative release from the PAR program. It is imperative that the building administrator meet with the CT consistently throughout the year, but especially prior to each reporting period.

Documentation

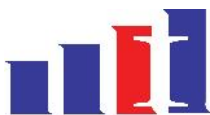
One of the most vital aspects of the Consulting Teacher's job is documentation. Because the recommendation for renewal or non-renewal is largely your responsibility, you must be prepared to account for your decisions. It is imperative to keep written records which will document Participating Teacher's level of progress made and support given. In order to ensure consistency, all CT's will use the forms provided in the appendix of this manual. Each form's intent will also be explained in the appendix.

It is necessary to be prepared to provide documentation for all of the following:

- Copies of all formal reports.
- Copies of goal setting agreements
- Observation notes and dates of observations; observation notes should include name, observation number, date, "running time", and Consulting Teacher's signature
- Detailed written conference reports and dates of conferences with Participating Teachers, and PAR stakeholders.
- Record of assistance provided
- Copies of emails and written communication with PT, administrators, and other relevant district personnel

Additional Documentation (If Applicable)

- Copies of representative tests, student handouts, etc.
- Copies of Participating Teachers' representative lesson plans, discipline plans, reading program progress (elementary) communication with students' parents, etc.



another website by LeadWorks Design

[Create a website with SnapPages](#)