

Ten Questions

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The Toledo Plan:

Intern, Intervention, Evaluation Top 10 Questions

1. What is The Toledo Plan?

The Toledo Plan is a cooperative union/management program of teacher evaluation and mentoring in Toledo, Ohio. The Toledo Plan is an effective teacher performance tool based on peer assistance, coaching, and evaluation. The intern-intervention-evaluation program uses outstanding experienced teachers to train and evaluate beginning teachers and to assist experienced teachers whose skills are severely deficient.

2. When did The Toledo Plan begin...Why was The Toledo Plan implemented...What need did it address?

In 1981 the Toledo Federation of Teachers (TFT), an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), successfully negotiated the first peer-evaluation system of its kind in the United States. The Toledo Plan was the brainchild of Dal Lawrence, TFT president. The underlying assumption of this program was that experienced teachers were in the best position to screen new entrants into the profession. Additionally, experienced teachers were identified as being the most qualified to be consultants/mentors for first year teachers. The specific need that is addressed by the Toledo Plan is the expressed need of first year teachers/interns for one-on-one peer assistance from experienced teachers.

3. What is the difference between the intern program and the intervention program...How are teachers identified to be placed in the intervention program?

The "intern" program is designed to provide assistance and evaluation by experienced teachers (consultants) for first-year teachers, long-term substitutes, and teachers new to the Toledo Public Schools. The intern consulting teacher and the intern work cooperatively by establishing mutual goals based on the strengths and weaknesses of the intern. The consulting teacher assists in the professional development of the intern through support, advice, and guidance. The consultant ensures that the intern is fully aware of the performance standards that must be met or exceeded.

The "intervention" program is designed to assist and evaluate non-probationary teachers

(third year teachers and beyond) who have been identified by school staff (principal and/or TFT committee) as performing in a way so unsatisfactory that termination or improvement is imperative. Often the difficulties that these teachers are having involve classroom management or an inability to present material clearly. A consultant is assigned to the identified teacher, and the goal of the intervention is an improvement in performance to an acceptable level.

Both the principal and/or union building committee may recommend that a teacher should be assigned to intervention. This identification process is designed so that a check and balance is present to avoid abuse of intervention by either union or management. Additional steps that assure consistency and fairness in procedures have been developed (see The Toledo Plan).

4. What are the goals of the Intern Program?

There are two goals. (1) Remove from the profession those first year teachers who can't meet the performance criteria even with extensive mentoring; and (2) Provide support and professional development so that after the intern year teachers are able to build a successful classroom career on their own.

5. How are consultants chosen...How many years can they serve as a consultant?

Prospective intern teacher consultants submit an application to the Intern Board of Review. The minimum qualifications are: (a) five years of outstanding teaching service, (b) favorable references from three fellow teachers who are in the same building, and (c) a favorable reference from the building principal. After a preliminary paper screening, applicants are interviewed, and teaching performance is observed by senior consulting teachers.

Consultants are released from regular classroom duties so that they can devote 100% of their time to their interns. Consulting teachers are limited to three years of service and are compensated an additional \$5165.00.

6. What is the evaluation component of the Intern Program?

The evaluation process is one of continuous mutual goal-setting based on detailed observations and follow-up conferences where the consulting teacher and intern can establish goals for improvement based on specific evaluation criteria. Consulting teachers submit periodic reports to the Intern Board of Review regarding the status of each of the interns with whom they are working. During the first year, the observations and subsequent evaluations are completed solely by the consulting teacher. Consultants submit a final evaluation of interns' progress in December and March and recommend to the Intern Board of Review the future status of interns' employment with the Toledo Public Schools.

Areas in which the interns are evaluated include: (a) teaching procedures, (b) classroom management, (c) knowledge of subject, and (d) academic preparation which includes

personal characteristics and professional responsibility.

7. What is the Intern Board of Review...Who serves on the board...What is their role?

The Intern Board of Review is the governing body of the Toledo Plan. The board consists of five appointed union representatives and four management representatives named by the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. Six votes are required to reverse a consulting teacher's recommendation. The chairmanship of the Intern Review Board rotates annually between the president of the Toledo Federation of Teachers and the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel.

The Intern Review Board accepts or rejects the evaluation recommendations of the consulting teachers, assigns and monitors consulting teachers, plans and implements applicable inservices, manages the budget, and is responsible for all other aspects of the program. Recommendations of the Intern Review Board are sent to the superintendent who, under Ohio law, recommends employment, non-renewal, or termination to the Toledo Board of Education.

8. Do principals have any role in the evaluation of first year students/interns?

During the first year, principals do not observe classroom performance nor evaluate interns. However, principals complete the principal's summary form which indicates the intern's conformance to school and district regulations (e.g., attendance, adherence to school policies, discipline procedures) and submit it to consulting teachers who share the evaluation with interns. During the second year of probation, it is the principals' responsibility to evaluate and make recommendations regarding the status of interns using the same standards and criteria as those used by the consulting teachers during the first year.

9. Can teachers appeal the decisions of the Intern Board of Review...Can newly hired teachers refuse to participate in the Toledo Plan?

All newly hired teachers are subject to inclusion in the Intern Program. The only Toledo Public School personnel that are excluded from the Toledo Plan are those not performing regular classroom duties (e.g., short-term substitutes, tutors, teachers on a one-year only contract). Exceptions are decided by co-chairs of the Intern Board of Review and procedures for the evaluation of personnel excluded from the Toledo Plan can be found in Articles IX and XVIII of the Toledo Federation of Teachers-Toledo Board of Education agreement.

In the event that first year teachers' contracts are not renewed or they are terminated, they may personally appeal the decision. However, if the review panel confirmed the recommendation of non-renewal or termination, the Toledo Federation of Teachers will not process a grievance contesting the non-renewal or termination on behalf of the teacher. Teachers in the intervention program may appeal if they feel that they have been improperly placed in the program. The teacher's appeal must be filed within five days to an impartial arbitrator whose decision is binding. Representation and due process

rights/procedures are available for intervention teachers who are subject to termination.

10. *How will the Toledo Plan improve the way Toledo teachers teach...To date, what have been the outcomes of the intervention program...How have students benefited from the program?*

Before the implementation of the Toledo Plan, teachers were evaluated by building principals. These traditional methods of teacher evaluation proved to be ineffective and burdensome, with frequent battles between labor and management concerning incomplete or delinquent evaluations. Principals did not have adequate time to evaluate and assist new teachers and a direct consequence of this was that contracts were awarded to inferior teachers. In the five years prior to the implementation of the Toledo Plan only one new teacher was terminated. In the last five years of the program, excluding 2009-10 which has not been concluded, 392 interns have been served. 33 interns were non-renewed or terminated. Among veteran teachers during this time, 13 teachers are in intervention. 4 of them have left the district.

The goal of the intern-intervention-evaluation program is to bring positive benefits to students by improving the quality of instruction and promoting the professional growth of the teaching staff. The purpose of the Toledo Plan is to meet the unique needs of first year teachers through contact with experienced colleagues. The Intern Program is designed to nurture, support, and encourage the efforts of first year teachers through peer interaction with a consulting teacher.

11. *If other school districts would like to establish their own intern-intervention-evaluation program how would they start?*

Initially, there must be widespread support from the teachers, the union, and the administration. The union must be strong and have the trust and confidence of its members, as well as a solid contract that firmly protects the rights of teachers. The administration must be willing to change the existing relational agreements which means that they must be willing to give up some power and to give teachers more responsibility.

Additionally, any peer assistance and evaluation program should have a detailed plan with procedures that clearly specify desired goals and outcomes. The plan should also reflect the unique characteristics of a particular school district.

For those school districts that would like more information on the Toledo Plan they can call the Toledo Federation of Teachers (419) 535-3013 or the Toledo Public Schools (419) 671-8329.

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