

## Evaluating Minnesota's School Principals

***K-12 principals must be evaluated annually; student academic growth accounts for 35 percent of the evaluation***

The 2011 Legislature enacted laws ([Minn. Stat. §§ 123B.143](#), subd. 1, and [123B.147](#), subd. 3) to assess school principals' performance using K-12 principal competencies and to enhance principals' professional growth through annual evaluations. The legislature directed the education commissioner and school principal and administrator associations to develop a performance-based evaluation model and an annual evaluation process. The 2012 Legislature also made student academic growth account for 35 percent of the principal evaluation.

***The superintendent evaluates a principal's performance over a three-to-five year cycle***

The evaluation model anticipates a three-to-five year performance improvement cycle. In the first year, the principal must set measurable goals for the entire evaluation cycle. The goals require self-assessment, professional development, and demonstrating performance on core principal competencies. The goals also require ongoing performance reviews throughout the cycle. The superintendent must annually evaluate the principal's progress in realizing those goals.

A superintendent (or designee) must use core principal competencies to evaluate the principal's performance. The principal and superintendent may focus the evaluation on different core competencies in different years based on a principal's identified areas of professional strength and needed improvement. A superintendent concerned about a principal's performance may modify the evaluation process and the principal's professional growth plan but must notify the principal. A principal who fails to improve may be terminated.

A superintendent may use all or parts of the evaluation model to assess a school principal's performance.

***The superintendent uses seven core competencies to evaluate a principal's performance***

The evaluation model contains seven core elements that reflect the general principal competencies contained in state rules:

- Strategic leadership: create the school's vision, mission, and goals
- Instructional leadership: set high standards for professional instruction and student performance
- Managerial leadership: promote student achievement and success
- Cultural leadership: understand the culture of the school, the students, and the community and positively invoke cultural norms
- Communications leadership: communicate internally and externally in a clear and effective manner appropriate to different audiences and individuals
- School community leadership: structure processes and opportunities for broad engagement in, support for, and ownership of the school by others

- Ethical and professional leadership: collaborate with staff and the community to ensure educational equity and demonstrate professionalism

The core competencies are detailed in *The Evaluation of Minnesota's School Principals*, available on the Minnesota Elementary Schools Principals' Association website ([http://www.mespa.net/sites/2961a8e8-4b04-4b38-8da2-75542594a9f1/uploads/Evaluation\\_of\\_MN\\_School\\_Principals.pdf](http://www.mespa.net/sites/2961a8e8-4b04-4b38-8da2-75542594a9f1/uploads/Evaluation_of_MN_School_Principals.pdf)).

***A principal may be rated as unsatisfactory, developing, proficient, accomplished, or distinguished***

A principal's progress in realizing performance goals in core competencies may be rated: "unsatisfactory" if the principal does not meet acceptable performance standards; "developing" if the principal does not meet acceptable performance standards but demonstrates adequate growth toward meeting the standards; "proficient" if the principal demonstrates basic competency on performance standards; "accomplished" if the principal generally exceeds basic competency on performance standards; and "distinguished" if the principal consistently and significantly exceeds basic competency on performance standards.

***The annual principal evaluation involves a six-step process***

The principal evaluation process involves six steps:

- The superintendent orients the principal with information about the evaluation process and a summary of the principal's previous school improvement and professional growth plan
- The principal undertakes pre-evaluation planning to establish preliminary performance goals that will be measured using core competencies
- The superintendent and the principal discuss the principal's performance goals and the implicated core competencies and agree on the evidence, processes, and measures the superintendent will use for the evaluation; a superintendent must notify a principal if the evaluation focus is remediation
- The principal engages in self-reflection and collects evidence such as core competency data, individual and community feedback, professional development, and longitudinal data on student academic growth and achievement to demonstrate progress in realizing the principal's performance goals; the superintendent collects additional evidence from teachers and others and through observations
- The principal synthesizes the collected evidence summarizing the principal's performance while the superintendent prepares a preliminary assessment
- The principal and superintendent discuss their findings, the principal's previous evaluation, and their respective assessments, agree upon the principal's performance goals and a professional growth plan containing achievement measures, needed resources, and a timeline, and sign and file a summary evaluation report; a superintendent concerned about a principal's performance may unilaterally decide on evidence and performance goals for evaluating the principal

**For more information:** Contact legislative analyst Lisa Larson at 651-296-8036. Also see the House Research publication *Principal and Teacher Accountability Laws*, July 2012.

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