Materials Overview: Peer Assistance and Review

Contact: Scott Vince (svince@wested.org)

This section includes materials related to labor-management collaboration and Peer Assistance and Review (PAR). To understand how PAR agreements have been developed and implemented, WestEd interviewed stakeholders from Detroit, Michigan; Plattsburgh, New York; Poway, California; San Juan, California; and Syracuse, New York to shed light on each district’s story. Because key contacts in Minneapolis, Minnesota were unavailable for interviews, an outside organization’s case study of the district’s PAR program has been included. Materials in this section relevant to PAR were collected from websites and district personnel. Specific materials include:

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- Perspective from Tom Alves, Executive Director of San Juan Teachers Association
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- Perspective from Kate McKenna, former President of Syracuse Teachers Association
- Syracuse City School District: Peer Assistance and Review Program

Other Resources to be Available for Download from www.WestEd.org/schoolturnarouandcenter/labormanagement

- Syracuse Peer Assistance and Review informational PowerPoint presentation
- Syracuse 2009-10 Peer Assistance and Review Intern Handbook

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A User's Guide to Peer Assistance and Review

A User's Guide to Peer Assistance and Review (PAR)

All students deserve great teachers, but too often they don't get them. Sometimes their teachers are inexperienced. Sometimes they are simply ineffective. This happens for various reasons. Many schools shortchange new teachers, failing to give them the support they need as they start their career. Administrators often neglect to make careful judgments about who deserves tenure. Some schools do not create a culture where teachers continually enhance and update their practice. Or, everyone assumes that it's impossible to dismiss poor teachers.

Many educators and policy makers—including President Obama and Secretary of Education Duncan—see great promise in Peer Assistance and Review (PAR), a program that began as a labor-management initiative in Toledo over 25 years ago. PAR relies on expert teachers to help both new and struggling teachers. It also ensures that teachers who should leave do leave.

This website draws on the experiences of seven school districts, each with an established PAR program. It offers a wealth of practical information and advice about how to create and sustain PAR. It describes how PAR begins and how it works. It lays out the choices to be made in creating a PAR program and it provides examples, insights and documents that will assist reformers in the process.

Barack Obama on PAR:

“Now, if we do all this and find that there are teachers who are still struggling and underperforming, we should provide them with individual help and support. And if they're still underperforming after that, we should find a quick and fair way to put another teacher in that classroom. Teacher associations and school boards in a number of cities have led the way by developing Peer Assistance and Review plans that do exactly this - setting professional standards that put children first. We owe our teachers that, and we owe our children that.”

— November 20, 2007

A User's Guide to Peer Assistance and Review online:
http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ngt/par/

The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers:
http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ngt/
What is PAR?

PAR, the brainchild of union president Dal Lawrence, was developed in the early 1980s in Toledo, OH. In PAR, the local teachers union and district administrators jointly manage a program to improve teacher quality by having expert teachers mentor and evaluate their peers. In the past 25 years, other districts have relied on the “Toledo Plan” as their model for PAR, adapting it to meet their local needs. Today PAR is well-established in a small number of districts nationwide, although it hasn’t been adopted widely. That isn’t surprising, since it’s no simple matter to adopt an effective PAR program. PAR challenges most people’s expectations about what teachers and principals should do. It requires unusual collaboration between the union and administration. It must be grounded in a systematic approach to teacher evaluation. And it involves a substantial financial investment. However, the potential payoff of an effective PAR program is great. Increasingly, policymakers, district officials, and union leaders have pointed to PAR as a promising component of an effective human capital strategy, thus fueling interest and initiatives across the country.

“A novice teacher in Toledo”

Districts with PAR programs say that, although the program can be expensive, it has many important benefits. PAR’s mentoring component helps beginning teachers succeed and, thus, increases retention. PAR also makes it possible to help ineffective tenured teachers improve or to dismiss them without undue delay and cost because of the program’s clear assessment process and the labor-management collaboration that underpins it. This process of selective retention can lead to a stronger teaching force and promote an organizational culture focused on sound teaching practice. Union leaders say that the program professionalizes teaching by making teachers responsible for mentoring and evaluating their peers. With its specialized roles for Consulting Teachers (CTs), PAR also has the potential to differentiate the work and career opportunities of teachers.

• How does PAR work?

PAR programs typically have several common elements drawn from Toledo’s early model. Most have two components, one for novice teachers and one for ineffective experienced teachers. A joint labor-management committee, usually called the PAR Panel, runs the program and selects a group of expert teachers to serve as CTs. These CTs, who are the heart of PAR, support and assess teachers in the program. More

• Who participates in PAR?

In designing a PAR program, districts must decide whether to include novices, experienced teachers or both. Including both groups from the start integrates PAR more centrally into the district’s overall strategy, although this may be more difficult to do politically, cost more, and require greater capacity among staff to serve as CTs. More

“I’m a real supporter of PAR. I think it saves careers. The whole idea is to provide the help a teacher needs, and if they can’t step up to the plate, then they really shouldn’t be there.”

—San Juan Principal
How does PAR work?

PAR programs take their main structures from the Toledo Plan. Although the details vary, most programs contain several common elements. A joint labor-management committee, usually called the PAR Panel, typically runs the program. Expert teachers, often called CTs, support and evaluate teachers in the program. The programs usually include different procedures for novice and veteran teachers. They also alter the traditional responsibilities of principals for teacher evaluation.

**PAR Panel**
The PAR Panel is a joint labor-management group that runs the program. It designs or refines the program's components, manages the budget, and is responsible for selecting, training, and supervising CTs. The Panel holds regular meetings where CTs present their assessments of teachers and make recommendations about their future employment. Panel members listen to these presentations, question the CTs, and eventually decide whether to recommend that the district retain or dismiss the teachers. The PAR Panel includes representatives from both the teachers union and administration. Most districts include an equal number from each group or, in some cases, a slight majority of teachers. Representatives from the union and administration either co-chair the meetings or alternate as chair.

**Consulting Teachers**
Consulting teachers, who typically are known and respected as expert teachers, mentor new teachers and assist low-performing veteran teachers. They are chosen through a competitive selection process conducted by the PAR Panel. In most districts, CTs are released full-time from classroom teaching for three to five years and are responsible for a caseload of 10 to 20 teachers. They earn a substantial yearly stipend ($3,000 to $10,000) in addition to their regular pay. A few programs use part-time CTs, who split their responsibilities between PAR and classroom teaching or carry out their PAR work on top of a full-time teaching load. The CTs observe their teachers at work and provide the support they think will help them succeed in meeting the district's standards. They also conduct formal observations and keep detailed records about each teacher's performance. Based on these assessments, the CTs write comprehensive reports, documenting each teacher's progress in meeting the district's standards. They present their reports to the PAR Panel and in most districts recommend whether the teachers in their caseload should be rehired or dismissed. NOTE: Districts have various names for the CT role (e.g., Intern Consultant, Mentor, Teacher Evaluator).

**Novice Program**
In most districts, PAR serves as the induction program for new teachers. In addition to providing advice on instruction and classroom management, the CTs help their novices set up their classrooms, secure class supplies, and navigate the first year of teaching. They provide detailed feedback and support to help their novices meet the district's standards and they assess their progress. In most cases, the CTs provide a preliminary report of their novices' progress to the PAR Panel several months into the school year. Then, in the Spring, they provide a summary assessment, reporting whether the teacher has met the district standards and, in most cases, recommending whether or not the novice teacher should be rehired.
• Intervention Program

“There is incredible power in having the president of the teachers association and several teachers in the room saying, ‘[This teacher’s ] behavior isn’t acceptable. We’ve got to make a change.'”

—San Juan Panel Member

Most districts also include low-performing experienced teachers in their PAR program. CTs provide intensive support and assistance to teachers on Intervention. If they progress satisfactorily, the CT recommends to the Panel that they be released from PAR. However, if the teachers don’t improve, they can be dismissed. Usually, it’s the principal who refers an experienced teacher to Intervention, although in some districts an unsatisfactory evaluation automatically triggers a referral. Most districts allow teachers to refer their peers to PAR, although this rarely happens. Once a teacher has been recommended for Intervention, the Panel typically assigns a CT to investigate whether the teacher is meeting the district’s instructional standards. If the teacher is found to be failing, the Panel assigns a CT to the case. As with novice programs, the CT works closely with the experienced teacher, providing assistance and assessing progress. In most districts, Intervention is an open-ended process which may last up to two years. The teacher remains in PAR until she has met district standards and can be released from the program or until the Panel decides she is not making enough progress and should be dismissed. Intervention is a high-stakes process, which lays out a path to dismissal and challenges veteran teachers’ assumptions about job security under state tenure laws.

• Principals

Principals or assistant principals traditionally are the only ones responsible for evaluating teachers. That changes when a district adopts PAR and CTs evaluate some teachers. Having CTs assist with evaluation may open time for the principal to focus on other aspects of school leadership and increase the school’s capacity to support teachers. In addition, PAR eliminates the need for principals to single-handedly undertake the long process of removing ineffective teachers. However, some principals respond to PAR as a threat to their authority and either oppose or resist it. Over time, however, principals often come to accept and appreciate PAR, especially when they see the quality of work that the CTs do. Importantly, in most districts, PAR’s Intervention component cannot work effectively without principals’ support and participation in referring struggling teachers.
Who participates in PAR?

- **Does the program include novices, experienced teachers, or both?**

Most districts start by including only novices in PAR, which serves as their induction program. If new teachers don’t reach proficiency by Spring, their contracts may not be renewed. Over time, most teachers in the district have experienced the program, which reinforces a professional culture of teaching. Most districts also develop a smaller Intervention program, providing support and evaluation to experienced teachers who are struggling in the classroom. Teachers on Intervention must demonstrate clear improvement or they will be dismissed. Several districts also offer a voluntary support program for experienced teachers who decide they need additional help.

Most of the districts we studied include both novice and experienced teachers in PAR, although few did so from the start. Including both groups can enable the district to have a comprehensive and integrated approach to support and evaluation, thus sending a clear message that the district is committed to the same standards of professional practice for all teachers.

However, including experienced teachers in PAR can generate controversy among union members if they philosophically oppose peer review or personally know the teachers involved. New teachers have fewer personal relationships with other teachers and do not have permanent contracts or protections under state tenure laws. Thus, deciding not to renew a new teacher is far less challenging for a program than dismissing a tenured teacher. Thus, it may be simpler and more politically feasible to start with just a novice program. Within a few years, success with the novice component of PAR can build support for the more comprehensive program.

Because PAR programs are expensive, beginning with a novice-only program may also limit initial program costs. For example, Syracuse, which began PAR in 2005, focuses its program resources on novice teachers, although the district talked from the beginning about eventually including experienced teachers in a voluntary component.
Costs and Benefits of PAR

PAR programs are expensive, and districts often must be creative and draw on various sources to fund them. However, administrators and union leaders repeatedly said that PAR’s benefits – both financially and in terms of its effect on teacher quality – far outweigh its costs. District and union leaders talked about the program as an investment in their teachers. By reducing district costs in other areas, most PAR programs appeared to pay for themselves.

“A little bit over 70 percent of my budget is spent on people—$680 million. It’s all about people. It’s all about talent. And the process, I think, is a great process in developing great teachers and retaining great teachers. The retention is amazing.”

– Rochester Superintendent Brizard

• What does PAR cost?
PAR programs are expensive. Estimates of program costs range from approximately $4,000 to $7,000 per participant. By far, the largest expense is the cost of hiring teachers to fill the classes that CTs leave. Districts must pay additional costs, including stipends for CTs and PAR Panel members, compensation for program directors and support staff, and administrative expenses like office space, computers, and mileage.

• How do districts pay for PAR?
Most districts use local revenues to fund their PAR program, though many supplement those resources with state grants for teacher evaluation and mentoring as well as federal support for teacher quality initiatives.

• What are the financial benefits of PAR?
Districts report that PAR ultimately helps them save money in several areas. First, PAR is an intensive induction program for new teachers, which may reduce costly turnover. Second, PAR programs reduce the cost of dismissing tenured teachers, which otherwise can be very expensive.

• What are the other costs and benefits of PAR?
Even though PAR is expensive, most people described PAR’s broader effects rather than its financial costs and benefits. Respondents from all districts studied spoke of PAR as an effective way to attract, support, and retain teachers. Superintendents and union leaders both said that students pay the price for ineffective teaching. They saw PAR as a way to improve instruction, increase teacher professionalism, change the culture of teaching, and improve labor-management relations.
What does PAR cost?

Few districts could list the exact costs associated with their PAR program because those costs often were shared with other programs. In general, though, administrators acknowledged that PAR requires a substantial financial investment. The biggest cost, by far, comes from hiring teachers to fill the classes of CTs who are released either full-time or part-time. Although these replacement teachers may have less experience and earn less than the CTs, the full cost of their salary, fringe benefits, and training is significant.

Beyond the costs of replacing CTs, PAR programs must cover other expenses which may include:

- Additional stipends for Consulting Teachers (ranging from $3,000 to $10,000 across the districts studied);
- Salary and benefits for a program director;
- Salary and benefits for administrative/clerical support staff;
- Stipends for PAR Panel members;
- Substitute teachers for PAR Panel members to attend meetings;
- Substitute teachers for teachers in the program to visit and observe other classes;
- Office space for CTs;
- Computers for CTs;
- Mileage reimbursements for CT travel; and
- Training costs for CTs and PAR Panel members.

The actual costs of PAR vary widely across districts, depending on the program’s size and design. Toledo estimates that its total program costs just over $700,000 a year, with the salaries of replacement teachers accounting for nearly 80% of the budget. Cincinnati reports that their peer review program costs approximately $1.2 million a year, although this includes some costs for the larger Teacher Evaluation System. The Rochester program, which has a full-time director and nearly 200 part-time CTs, has a budget of $2 million. Given differences in the size of the districts, these costs per teacher in PAR range from approximately $4,000 in Rochester to approximately $7,000 in Toledo.

Districts considering PAR should account for the costs of programs currently in place when estimating the costs of PAR. For example, PAR often takes the place of traditional mentoring programs, which exist in most districts across the country. Intensive mentoring, like the New Teacher Center’s program, can cost between $6,000 and $7,000 per teacher. Similarly, some districts have developed career ladders that already reward teachers for specialized roles or advanced certification under the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. These teachers may be receiving a stipend yet not be performing additional, valuable work. PAR provides an opportunity to use these teachers’ knowledge and skills more effectively. In estimating the costs of PAR, a district should only consider the incremental cost of the PAR program above other programs that it will replace.
How do districts pay for PAR?

For the PAR program to be sustained, it must have consistent and stable funding. Most of the districts we studied paid for PAR from their local operating budget. This arrangement allows the district to start the program without waiting for external assistance, but it also means that the program’s funding can change unpredictably from year-to-year. For example, in Cincinnati, where local revenues fund the program, the district feared that a tax levy might fail and force cutbacks in PAR. However the levy passed and the program was maintained.

“...You need to secure funding. We’re in a position where we pretty much can predict the funding from year to year. We know what we can support. ... I think it would be devastating to the program if we had to scrape every year to see if we could cover our expenses.”

—San Juan Panel member

Given the costs of PAR, though, most districts combine local funds with support from state or federal grants. Rochester uses both federal Title I and state mentoring dollars to support its program. In San Juan, state support of PAR programs enabled the district to start its program. San Juan also relies on funding from federal Title II, Part A and state money.
What are the financial benefits of PAR?

PAR programs provide several key financial benefits to districts. Studies suggest that the financial costs of teacher turnover are high, with urban districts spending $10,000 to $20,000 to replace a novice teacher who leaves. Some evidence suggests that PAR reduces teacher turnover. Rochester, one of the districts that did track turnover, reported a retention rate of approximately 90%, far greater than in other urban districts. Although the other districts that we studied did not track turnover systematically, they reported similar patterns. It’s impossible to say for sure that PAR produced strong retention rates. However, union and district officials were convinced that PAR helps attract and keep good teachers in their districts because of the support it provides. They also said that PAR encourages selective retention, screening out teachers who fail to meet standards, identifying those who need help, and retaining those who are doing a good job.

Most districts with PAR have an Intervention program that can lead to the dismissal of experienced teachers. Dismissing teachers with tenure is ordinarily a very expensive undertaking. District officials reported that dismissals outside of PAR typically range into what one called the “double digit thousands.” PAR programs are built on strong labor-management collaboration, with union members being involved throughout the review process. Thus, districts reported that very few dismissal decisions were challenged, none successfully. Because PAR helps to ensure that teachers’ due process rights are met, unions can satisfy their duty of fair representation without facing legal challenges. In other districts, such challenges are so costly in time and dollars that the district avoids dismissals altogether.

Calculating the financial benefits of PAR is tricky, though, since the potential cost-savings of PAR often come in areas that districts tend to ignore. A district that introduces PAR won’t save money on induction unless it already invests in a comprehensive program. Similarly, districts that don’t dismiss incompetent teachers never incur the costs of dismissal. They may not save money with PAR because their dismissal costs are already negligible.
What are the other costs and benefits of PAR?

PAR programs clearly have financial costs and generate cost-savings for school districts. Nonetheless, district and union leaders did not usually talk about the program’s costs and benefits in financial terms. Instead, they focused on the broader benefits for the district and the students it serves. Some expressed concern that the program removes expert teachers from the classroom, but they also noted these teachers can have wider influence in their roles as CTs. Across the board, these officials focused on how PAR raises teacher quality and can help improve student performance. They acknowledged that the strong induction component, improved teacher retention rates, and ability to assist or remove underperforming teachers can save the district money, but they spoke more about the positive effects that PAR has on teachers and, as a result, on their students. They viewed expenses of PAR as investments in the district’s human capital rather than a cost the district had to bear. Several union members and administrators, including one Superintendent, called the program “priceless.”

“‘There’s a huge benefit because, number one, if you tenure somebody that’s not ready, those are million dollar decisions.’”

– Minneapolis District Administrator

Administrators and union leaders also talked about the price students pay when they have a poor teacher. They told of many experienced teachers who improved substantially through their experience in PAR and noted that when that intervention failed, the teacher could be removed from the classroom. In both cases, students stood to benefit.

“‘So to me, the biggest benefit is getting this dialogue, continuing this dialogue about what good teaching practice is.’”

– Cincinnati District Administrator

Key stakeholders in these districts viewed the novice program as a strong induction program, a worthwhile investment to launch careers in teaching. By closely supervising teachers as they enter the schools, PAR also improves decisions about tenure. Both administrators and union leaders recognized that granting tenure has long-term consequences for the district and said that PAR helps them make good decisions.

Beyond these specific advantages, PAR can help bring about larger cultural changes in the district. Many said that PAR contributes to a strong, professional culture of teaching and increased collegiality among peers. A steady focus on teacher evaluation stimulates dialogue about good professional practice. Several individuals argued that PAR achieves the type of broader transformation that many other induction and evaluation systems promise but seldom deliver.

Furthermore, both administrators and union leaders reported that PAR improves labor-management relations in the district. Several union leaders reported that the number of grievances overall had fallen as the parties learned to work together in PAR. Having succeeded in establishing PAR, they ventured collaboratively into other areas.
“[PAR] was by luck or genius or some combination of both, a very good thing. It was good for the district. It was good for those individual teachers. It was good for the lead teachers. It was good for the union, because it gave the union a different stake in what was going on.”

– Rochester Teachers Union Leader

Finally, PAR benefits CTs, themselves. Most said that the role offered professional challenges and opportunities that were new and rewarding. Former CTs often said that the experience was the best professional development they'd ever had. They returned to the classroom revived and inspired by a sense of new possibility and a better understanding of what makes for good and successful teaching. These former CTs also enjoyed a measure of respect as instructional experts when they returned to their classroom, where they continued to influence others' practice more widely, even outside of their formal CT role. Other former CTs eventually moved into various leadership roles, carrying with them all that they had learned about teachers, classrooms, and schools.
Detroit Public Schools: 
Peer Assistance and Review

Perspectives from:
Ivy Bailey, Peer Assistance and Review Lead Consultant
Vanessa Parnell, Peer Assistance and Review Lead Consultant

Origins

In 2008, the Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT) developed an interest in Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) after Toledo’s Dal Lawrence (the original architect of PAR) presented at a meeting of the American Federation of Teachers. The union and district were operating under a changing legal framework at this time, with state-level education reforms on the way. As Ivy Bailey and Vanessa Parnell, who became the district’s lead PAR consultants, recalled, “We were at the point where we knew we had to collaborate.”

Process

Although the PAR conversations had originally begun within the union during 1989, it was not until Keith Johnson was elected president of the Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT) in 2009 that serious conversations occurred with district officials. The union invited district management to accompany them to the Toledo Public Schools to gather information about the nation’s first implementation of PAR. The union-district team members shadowed staff involved with PAR, giving them a firsthand view of the PAR process. After the visit, both parties agreed that PAR would benefit the Detroit Public Schools.

Johnson immediately began informing union membership of the benefits of PAR and the need to adopt new programs in view of impending teacher evaluation reforms coming from the state legislature. The union hosted an informal Saturday session for its members, bringing in Lawrence to speak directly to teachers about the PAR model. Simultaneously, Johnson and the union also worked with district management to produce a simple PAR agreement that would become part of the current contract negotiations. This agreement established the Joint Labor-Management PAR Committee, which will ultimately guide the rollout and development of the district’s formal PAR program.

The district and union are currently working to finalize details of Detroit’s PAR program and appointments to the district’s Joint Labor-Management PAR Committee. Bailey said that while a formal announcement is expected in fall 2011, informal discussion are already under way as the PAR consultants provide informal coaching and assistance to selected schools within the district. Early reviews have been positive, and the informal nature of the rollout has allowed consultants to break the ice with teachers and dispel negative rumors about the program.
Bailey and Parnell have credited much of the PAR progress so far to Byrd-Bennett, Chief Academic and Accountability Auditor. According to both PAR consultants, Byrd-Bennett’s early familiarity with the program made union-management collaboration much easier.

**Recommendations**

Bailey and Parnell have urged other district and union leaders to be proactive in the face of mandated reforms. They also have suggested that districts wishing to pursue a PAR program should be willing to do a great deal of research at the front end; doing so will save considerable time and aggravation later. Above all, they said, district employees and union members should remember that educating students is the ultimate common goal.
Letter of Agreement  
between  
The School District of the City of Detroit  
and  
The Detroit Federation of Teachers  

INSTRUCTIONAL REFORM - PEER ASSISTANCE AND REVIEW

The School District of the City of Detroit ("District") and the Detroit Federation of Teachers, Local 231 ("Union") in their Letter of Understanding-Contract Extension of August 26, 2009 mutually agreed to negotiate in good faith a successor agreement focused on enhancing student achievement through Instructional Reforms, Economic Reforms, and Operational Reforms.

To this end, in order to develop specific recommendations in the area of Instructional Reform – Peer Assistance and Review, the parties agree, by their representatives’ signatures below, that during the 2009-10 school year, the District and the Union shall, through the establishment of a Joint Labor-Management Peer Assistance and Review Committee, develop the process for the implementation of the Peer Assistance and Review Program (PAR). The scope of implementation shall be contingent upon identified, sustainable funding effective the 2010-11 school year.

The Joint Labor-Management PAR Committee shall be composed of an equal number of District and Union representatives. There shall be two Committee co-chairs, one appointed by the Union and one appointed by the District. Committee members shall be identified by January 15, 2010. The Committee shall develop a calendar of no less than four (4) meetings per school year, with additional meetings scheduled as needed. Every Committee meeting shall follow a written agenda developed jointly by the Union and the District and distributed to Committee members prior to the meetings. Written minutes of Committee proceedings shall be maintained. The Committee shall operate by consensus decision making.
Prior to the Joint Labor-Management PAR Committee’s first meeting, Committee members shall receive training on the District’s academic plan. PAR will be phased in starting with a selected group of schools.

The Joint Labor-Management PAR Committee shall jointly establish the framework for PAR, to include the identification of the application, selection, and training process for members who shall serve as PAR consultants. Members selected to serve as PAR consultants shall serve in that capacity for a maximum of three (3) years and agree to participate in extensive professional development. Upon completion of the third year, the affected member shall resume the position of classroom teacher and shall have priority to return to their last teaching assignment if desired.

Teachers assigned to the position vacated by the teacher selected to be a PAR consultant shall be given a choice of schools when possible for reassignment upon the return of the PAR consultant to the classroom.

The Joint Labor-Management PAR Committee will work in consultation with the District administration in the development of a universal evaluation process and tool, accompanying rubric and evaluation manual.

For the Union:  

For the School District of the City of Detroit:

Letter of Agreement

between

The School District of the City of Detroit

and

The Detroit Federation of Teachers

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Peer Consulting Program Sees Progress

Since second semester some 40 Detroit teachers have been mentored by teachers in the district. The progressive 2009 contract initiated the program, called Peer Assistance and Review (PAR).

Now the 20 mentors — called PAR consultants — are working with the teachers, or “interns.” Although the interns may be veteran teachers, they are interning in the program to upgrade their teaching skills.

The consultants have an average of two interns but they hope to build their caseloads to 10 or 12 interns per consultant. These are veteran or novice teachers who need help with classroom management, engaging students, or adapting to technology.

One consultant is mentoring a teacher whose classroom was dysfunctional. The consultant realized the teacher needed to set up centers within the classroom and crates for each subject.

“She didn’t have a daily routine,” the consultant said. “Her students didn’t know what they were supposed to be learning.” Her lessons were scattered and sometimes she even flipped subjects.

With help from PAR, the intern is organizing her classroom and her daily curriculum.

The consultants say many of the interns have never been evaluated. Some have bad habits that have become ingrained because they were never corrected. They believe an orientation program for new teachers is essential for giving them a checklist for materials, a primer on procedures, and the assignment of a mentor teacher.

“With the district in chaos, a lot of teachers are working out of their areas and their comfort zones,” one consultant said. “Because there hasn’t been an evaluation process, they’ve been left to flounder or develop bad habits they think is the norm.”

The PAR consultants are bringing their best practices to the front line. And it’s working.

One consultant said mentors honed her skills and made her an effective teacher.

“I’ve had tons of mentors and they’ve all been Detroit teachers,” said Helen Harvin, a PAR consultant. “One of my best mentors was Jennifer Jackson, a kindergarten teacher at Pasteur. This is about us helping each other.”

One intern said the mentoring by a fellow teacher was “a positive experience.”

“When I was first told I would have a mentor, I thought, ‘I can’t believe this,’” said Maxcine Brown, a 30-year teacher. “But I would rather have a teacher come in and observe because she’s been in the classroom just recently. It’s non-threatening.”

Brown said good things came out of the experience with her PAR consultant Sheela Harris. Brown re-engaged in practices she did years ago, upgraded her computer skills, and enjoyed Harris’ calm presence.

“She’s very positive and she doesn’t look down on me,” Brown said. “Now she praises me. Sometimes teachers need that too.”

Build it, They Will Come

By Barbara Yancey-Braceful
West Side Academy

Education today is a long way from the one room school house, or is it?

At that time, students representing a diverse combination of grade and learning levels had one teacher. Today, as many of us look into our classrooms, we see a multi-facet of individuals who are on different levels. But today these classrooms are considered inclusive, mainstreamed or just mismatched due to social promotions. Unfortunately for the student, he or she is often left behind.

In a time when we have vowed “no child left behind,” alternative education is not just a panacea for these individuals, but an answer to their ever-growing needs. Research supports that like students cultivate like results. In our case, success!

West Side Academy, under the leadership of principal Andrea Ford-Ayler, has diligently structured an irrefutable learning environment. Students can graduate in a timely fashion, despite many obstacles. This alternative school has been the vision of Mrs. Ayler for the past eight years. As traditional high schools may expel the student who is overage, had a baby, new to the district, or any other reason to turn them away, West Side has been here to attend to their need: being a high school graduate.

Moving from one building to the next, the staff and students have finally found a beautiful and safe haven. Often when people hear the term alternative, they automatically think it is a student who is the bad seed. To the contrary, alternative students need an environment that welcomes them with open arms, despite their personal trials and tribulations. The staff is here to answer a calling, and is dedicated to the cause.

Because of the structure of the program — online courses, extended day, test prep café (held on Fridays), and a four-day work week — staff and students are up for the challenge. This staff has participated in Discovery Education, Learning Village, and Smart Board. We feel it is our obligation to stay abreast of the many recent, researched initiatives.

As the structure of DPS continues to change, let’s not forget why we all became part of this business: the student. It was to follow the three E’s; encourage, excite and educate. The dynamics of the playing field may be altered, but the rules stay the same: “Build it, they will come.”

If the leadership and staff are up for the challenge, and a well thought out program is in place, it doesn’t take the Pied Piper to stride through the streets. It only takes true dedication and a virtuous learning atmosphere, and it is surefire there will be a following.

Teachers in Charge

Continued from Page 1

participate in Digital Story Telling.

A third-grade teacher has an Apple Cart which she uses daily with her children. Netbooks are used for lesson plans, and other electronic programs are built into the curriculum.

We have individualized schedules for all students, making sure they are getting instruction designed to meet their specific needs. In the upper grades, students have access to Spanish, art, music, journalism, computer science, math games and physical education.

The school day at Palmer Park is longer, giving us more time to address specific learning issues. Teachers move students when they feel they are performing at a different level. Learning is fluid, not static.

Our teachers don’t have to wait for approval from the central office downtown to change an instructional plan. Lead teachers fill some administrative functions and have the authority to adjust schedules and curriculum immediately.

Our school’s focus is on the learner. We don’t come to school feeling as if we are in an adversarial relationship with the administration. At this school, we are the administration and we work together to do what is best for children.

Palmer Park Preparatory Academy is exactly what can be done when people are willing to put children, their learning, and their unique needs above all else.

First printed in the Detroit News
PAR in Minneapolis: Using Teams for Support

PAR in Minneapolis Recently Endorsed

In spring 2008, Lynn Nordgren defeated the incumbent president of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers by a margin of two to one, and proponents of the local PAR program breathed a sigh of relief. Minneapolis had developed PAR in the 1990s during an era of labor-management collaboration between long-time union president Louise Sundin and several successive superintendents. However, in an unexpected 2006 upset, Sundin was defeated by a challenger who criticized her close relationship with management. Although Sundin’s successor did not move to dismantle PAR during his term, he was not a strong advocate of the program. However, Nordgren’s decisive victory appeared to ensure renewed union support for PAR. It was Nordgren who had overseen its development over 10 years before, coordinating the various committees that planned the details—a top-down and bottom-up process that she said “created more buy-in and trust.” And it was Nordgren who drafted the 60 pages of contract language detailing PAR’s policies and practices.

At the same time that Nordgren was campaigning for president in 2008, district administrators were showing increased interest in PAR by moving it under the jurisdiction of Deputy Superintendent Bernadeia Johnson, recently returned to Minneapolis after a stint working in the Memphis Public Schools. She had known PAR as both a teacher and principal some years before and she was convinced of its potential to improve instruction. Johnson wanted to see the program both strengthened and expanded: “I really see this PAR process as part of our work.” She said that central administrators needed to “hold principals accountable and make sure that they’re working with those [underperforming] teachers.”

A Team-based Foundation for PAR

Professional support for all Minneapolis teachers is team-based. In 1995, the district replaced a traditional model of observations and evaluation by principals with the team-based Professional Development Process (PDP). PDP is designed to engage both novice and veteran teachers in ongoing learning and growth. Every teacher joins a school-based PDP team, whose members are expected to use the District’s Standards of Effective Instruction as the basis for becoming better teachers. Principals and other school administrators participate as members of PDP.
teams, providing support for teachers as they work on individual goals. In addition to providing ongoing professional development for all teachers, these PDP teams are the foundation for both the novice and veteran components of the PAR program. Until this year, principals only observed teachers when it was necessary to document poor performance or when a teacher requested feedback. Now the district has begun to reintroduce a traditional evaluation system for teachers to be used in combination with the PDP.

**PAR for Novices:** New teachers in Minneapolis participate in a 3-year induction and support program, called Achievement of Tenure (AoFT), during which they are required to meet a challenging set of expectations for professional practice. Novices choose the members of their school-based PDP team, but each also is assigned to work with one of the district’s CTs, called a “mentor” in the Minneapolis PAR program. During her first year, the teacher receives intensive assistance from the CT and additional support from colleagues on her PDP team. Often the CT also participates in the novice’s PDP meetings. In the spring of the teacher’s three probationary years, the PDP team recommends to the CT and principal whether the teacher should be rehired. Ultimately, however, it is the CT and principal who decide whether the teacher will be renewed and they submit their recommendation to the district’s Human Resource Office.

**PAR for Experienced Teachers:** If a tenured teacher is struggling and the PDP team cannot provide sufficient support, a PAR Intervention process called Professional Support Process (PSP) is used. When a principal or peer thinks that a tenured teacher requires more support, a PAR CT is called in to review the case. If the CT decides that support is required, the teacher may be placed on a Guided PDP (GPDP) with a reconstituted team of teachers recommended by the principal and CT. If the CT determines that the problems are more serious or if a teacher on GPDP fails to improve sufficiently, the teacher may be placed on a Professional Support Program (PSP), with a new team whose members include the CT, two teachers, the principal, and a labor-relations administrator who oversees due process. Although the GPDP process is understood to be supportive and non-threatening, PSP is recognized as a serious intervention that can lead to the teacher’s dismissal under PAR.

The PSP team plays a key role in assessing the teacher’s progress. If the team decides that the teacher is not improving quickly enough to meet the district’s Standards of Effective Instruction, it can recommend that the PAR Panel review the teacher for dismissal. Other districts’ PAR Panels usually read reports and hear testimony only from CTs when they consider dismissal cases. In Minneapolis, however, the PAR Panel hears from the CT, principal, team members, and a CT who has not been involved with the case. In addition, the teacher may ask another teacher to testify on his or her behalf.

**The Principal’s Role in PAR**

The teams that serve as the foundation for the Minneapolis PAR process include principals, but principals also play a key role in deciding whether experienced teachers should be placed in PSP since it is usually they—rather than the teacher’s PDP team—who call in a CT to review the teacher’s performance. On occasion a teacher will make a self-referral, especially if he or she has been placed in a new assignment. As in other districts, Minneapolis principals choose to be involved in school-based teams and PAR to different degrees. Some welcome the chance to have a CT assist them in assessing and potentially dismissing a veteran teacher. Others take a laissez-faire approach to assessment, relying on the PSP teams to provide support and possible review. Chief Academic Officer Johnson’s past experience with PAR as a Minneapolis principal was positive: “I used the contract to my advantage. And I didn’t look at it and say what I couldn’t do. I looked at it and said, ‘Oh I can figure this out,’ and did it.” Now she expects the principals she supervises to more actively use PAR as a source of administrative support in improving the quality of the district’s teaching force.
MINNEAPOLIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
LOCAL 59, AFL-CIO, AFT, NEA
AND
MINNEAPOLIS BOARD OF EDUCATION

TEACHER CONTRACT,
MEMORANDA &
POLICIES

JULY 1, 2007 TO JUNE 30, 2009

MINNEAPOLIS SCHOOLS
MINNEAPOLIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS  
LOCAL 59, AFL-CIO, AFT, NEA  
AND  
MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Special School District No. 1  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
An Equal Opportunity School District  
MINNEAPOLIS BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Lydia Lee, Chair  
Pam Costain, Director  
Peggy Flanagan, Director  
Sharon Henry-Blythe, Clerk  
Tom Madden, Director  
Chris Stewart, Director  
T. Williams, Treasurer  

NEGOTIATING COMMITTEES

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<tr>
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<td>Emma Hixson, Chief Negotiator</td>
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<td>Sue Backus, Seward</td>
<td>Bernadeia Johnson, Chief Acad. Officer</td>
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<td>Mike Bedard, Whittier</td>
<td>Steve Liss, Inter-Govt'I Affairs</td>
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<td>Dan Loewenson, Bd &amp; Comm'y Liaison</td>
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<td>Brionna Harder, Henry HS</td>
<td>Maria Mason, Employee Relations</td>
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<td>John Heegard, North HS</td>
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<td>Bonita Jones, MFT Staff</td>
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<td>Carla Korb, Northeast</td>
<td>Laurie Steiger, Employee Relations</td>
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<td>Lynn Nordgren, ATPPS</td>
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<td>Frank Suppa, Dowling</td>
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<td>Lyle Young, Transition Plus</td>
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Section E. The Professional Development Continuum

The Minneapolis Federation of Teachers in collaboration with the Minneapolis Public Schools launched its professional continuum journey in 1984 with the start of a teacher mentoring program for first year teachers. The success of this mentoring program led to the design of other programs and services to optimize the quality of teaching throughout the district. In addition, the national report, *A Nation At Risk*, called for raising the quality of teaching through the creation of a true professional model. This professional model has been developed in the district over the years by teachers, principals, administrators, parents, students, business leaders, and community members and is outlined in this article.

The Professional Development Continuum embodies the best research in educational pedagogy, human development, and effective leadership. It moves teachers through a career-long process of professional inquiry, lifelong learning, continuous quality improvement, and accountability for student results. The continuum begins with pre-service recruitment and training and continues through induction, retention, and recognition. Each step along the continuum builds from one to the next to ensure that all teachers are able to maintain the highest standards of effectiveness throughout their career. Outlined below are the basic Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) components of the continuum that deal with accountability and ongoing professional growth/improvement. The four main components of the PAR portion of the continuum are the Professional Development Process (PDP), Achievement of Tenure (A of T), Guided Professional Development Process, and the Professional Support Process (PSP). Each of the components is described in detail on the following pages of this article.
Professional Development Process (PDP)
At the heart of the PAR continuum is the Professional Development Process (PDP). All other PAR processes have been built on the beliefs and structure of PDP. PDP is:

- for all teachers tenured and non-tenured
- a professional process for teachers’ use to assist them in continuous assessment and reflection to improve their instructional skills, knowledge bases and collegial/student interactions
- a method to show accountability for the learning/achievement of all students
- both the right and the responsibility of all teachers
- implemented annually

Achievement of Tenure (A of T)
- is for teachers in their first three (3) years of service in Minneapolis Public Schools
- provides support toward achieving the Standards of Effective Instruction through successful completion of the A of T requirements. These requirements assist teachers in using the reflective skills they will need throughout their career
- is supported by a District PAR mentor in the first year of teaching

Guided Professional Development Process
- provides additional assistance to help teachers improve their practice who are not at the level of needing PSP but require additional support
- is determined by the District PDP Facilitator and/or District PAR Mentor following a thorough assessment that includes interviews and meetings with the principal(s), team members, and the teacher, as well as, observations of the teacher
- is guided by the District PDP Facilitator and/or District PAR Mentor but is the responsibility of the teacher on the Guided PDP and the PDP team (which includes the principal) to implement as agreed upon

Professional Support Process (PSP)
- provides more in depth support and mentoring for teachers whose performance does not meet expected Standards of Effective Instruction and who have not successfully done so through the PDP and/or Guided PDP
- is determined by a District PAR Mentor following a thorough assessment that includes the data from the Guided PDP
- provides an avenue for teachers to either transition back to PDP or Guided PDP after successful attainment of the PSP goals and strategies
- provides a professional and fair method for teachers who need to transition out of teaching or their position once it is determined that the teacher is unwilling or unable to meet the Standards of Effective Instruction and the PSP goals and strategies
- provides career options counseling with a District mentor to assist with the transition of moving out of the job/district

Participating in PDP, A of T, Guided PDP, and PSP When Working at Multiple Sites:
A of T Teachers Participating in PDP at Multiple Sites: When a teacher is assigned to more than one site, the administrator for each site will be notified by the District PAR mentor, if assigned. The teacher, District mentor, PDP coordinator and administrators together determine which site will provide the primary A of T Process service and the role of the other sites to support the teacher. A current A of T plan will be on file at each site. The purpose of notifying each site is to provide more comprehensive support for the teacher.

Teachers Participating in PDP at Multiple Sites: When a teacher is assigned to multiple sites, the teacher will elect which site will host their PDP. The teacher will notify the PDP Coordinator at each of their sites as to which site they will conduct the Professional Development Process and give each site’s PDP Coordinator copies of the PDP plan and progress reports to assist in the coordination of support.

Teachers Participating in PSP at Multiple Sites: When a teacher on a PSP is assigned to more than one site, the administrator for each site will be notified by the District PAR mentor. The teacher, District
PAR mentor, and the administrators together will determine which site(s) will provide the primary services and the role of the other sites to support the teacher. The purpose of notifying each site is to provide more comprehensive support for the teacher.

The Heart of the Continuum - the Professional Development Process: Why PDP?

Student growth and success is at the heart of all teaching and learning. Keeping that heart alive and well requires time for staff, exceptionally hard work, the unswerving commitment of all involved, and ongoing professional development. While time, hard work and commitment are necessary, it is through ongoing professional development that teaching knowledge and skills are continuously improved and/or changed in order to meet the needs of an ever-changing and complex student population. Supporting all students to accomplish the goal of the highest performance possible requires a high performance work place dedicated to professional excellence and ongoing development. Minneapolis Public Schools and the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers aspire to achieve this vision through the creation, implementation, and enculturation of the Professional Development Process (PDP).

The Professional Development Process (PDP) is both the right and responsibility of each professional. PDP recognizes the importance of all professionals in the successful education of all students. Whether you are classroom teacher, support specialist, social worker, psychologist, counselor, speech/language therapist, OT/PT, school nurse, TOSA, SNOsA, SWOSA, administrative intern, or District Program Coordinator, PDP provides an opportunity to work together as we focus on student success. PDP promotes high expectations and standards for teaching and learning that are rooted in current research and best practices. It is designed to help all educators assess and improve their instructional skills, their knowledge base, their collegial and family/community interactions, and their daily impact on student learning. Ultimately, PDP is designed to assist all professionals in continuously improving so they can support the achievement and success of all students.

The PDP encourages collegial planning, assessment, analysis, and reflection. While teachers play a valuable role in assessing their own skills and the needs of the students, PDP also acknowledges that peers are valuable support in trying to establish and maintain professional goals and strategies. Designing and implementing the PDP becomes both an individual, team and school effort.

In order for PDP to be successful, it must take place in a professional culture of trust, respect, and constructive support. Coaching and teaming are essential components as professionals reflect on their efforts with themselves, their students, and each other. The whole process encourages productive dialogue and action among staff, students, administrators, families, and the community. Most importantly, it promotes professional growth centered on students’ needs and opportunities.

Professional development and support are key components of the District’s work. PDP is aligned with the Strategic Plan the School Improvement Process (SIP), and staff development in philosophy, training, and forms. It uses the Minnesota State Standards, Professional Job Descriptions, and the Standards of Effective Instruction (or equivalent) as its foundation.

The mission of the PDP is to:
- Improve student results/achievement
- Improve instruction for all students
- Promote collegial and professional growth

The PDP goals are to:
- organize efforts around the real work of a site/classroom
- increase professional peer interaction and involvement
- improve communication and collaboration among professionals
- include means for student and parent participation and feedback
- be flexible and responsive to teaching and learning
- be multicultural/gender fair/ability fair/developmentally appropriate
- incorporate options, choices for professional growth
- increase inclusive leadership
- provide incentives, rewards, recognition
- create and maintain an environment supportive of reflection, change, and trust
- be research-based, action-oriented
- incorporate site-based management/shared decision-making
- be honest, open, constructive, helpful, direct, and respectful

**State Legislation:** As of July 1995, Minnesota State Law (§122A.41) on Peer Review requires all Minnesota school districts to develop and use a peer review process. In Minneapolis Public Schools, the Professional Development Process (PDP) has been adopted by the Minneapolis Board of Education and the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers to fulfill this state requirement.

**How the Professional Development Process Works:** The Professional Development Process (PDP) participant begins by assessing (formally and informally) the needs and achievement levels of students. Following that, a review is done of the Strategic Plan and School Improvement Plan (SIP), as well as, School Information Reports (SIR), Minnesota State Standards, Office of Civil Rights (OCR), and other multiple data sources. A Professional Development Process Plan is then written based on the findings of the data analysis. The plan also needs to align with the School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals and the curriculum content standards (if applicable). The overall PDP plan should focus on increased student achievement/learning and what the teacher needs to do to make that happen. The PDP plan outlines goals, teacher and student objectives, implementation strategies, indicators of success, and methods of growth, assessment, and reflection. Next, the PDP participant selects a team of 4-6 people who will serve as critical friends in the yearly process. This team meets regularly, a minimum of three (3) +times a year, (fall, winter and spring) but is encouraged to meet more frequently. The team discusses the plan, assesses progress toward goals, and assists in resourcing, reflecting, and problem solving.

Alignment of the PDP goals, as depicted here, is important to achieve full impact of the PDP work.

Reflective activities to ensure PDP goal attainment are essential to the success of the plan. In between PDP Team meetings, participants engage in a variety of reflective goal attainment activities to assist with inquiry, reflection, and assessment in an effort to promote improved student learning. These activities may include: peer coaching, study groups, action research, student/family surveys, videotaping, observations, journaling, collegial networking and the development of professional portfolios. Data, information, student work, and artifacts used and/or developed during the PDP can be shared at PDP Team meetings to help with discussion of progress and results.

In conjunction with PDP, the Standards of Effective Instruction, Minnesota State Standards and job descriptions are used to assist and guide professional performance. Participants are asked to assess PDP efforts against professional standards and job descriptions as a way of keeping professional expectations in focus. This reflection may occur in a variety of ways; for example, individually, with the PDP Team, with a coach or mentor, or with a study group.

Results from continuous assessment, both formal and informal, should inform and influence the planning, strategies, and direction of PDP efforts. The entire process is simply asking: What are we doing? Why are we doing it? What’s working? What’s not working? Why and/or why not? What do we need to do to improve so that student achievement will improve? How will we get there and when?
**Frequency of PDP:** The Professional Development Process occurs annually. Educators will have a PDP plan and a functioning team in place at all times. A minimum of three meetings takes place during the year (fall, winter, and spring) to discuss the plan and progress. It is important for professional development to be embedded in the everyday functioning of a site/school. The purpose of job-embedded professional development is to make growth and improvement relevant, intentional, hands-on, interactive, meaningful, ever-evolving, and centered on student achievement.

**Annual PDP Timeline**

**September:** All staff: Review student scores, student work, and other available data. Make observations of students to determine needs, areas of strengths, and future expectation to help focus PDP goals. Plan when to give, receive, and review family and student surveys.

**October:** Write PDP plans, preferable in electronic format, and meet with teams to share and discuss. Turn in or electronically transmit PDP plan to site PDP Coordinator.

Keep individual signed copy for your file.

**November:** Site PDP Coordinator, Steward, Staff Development Chair, Site Council Chair, Principal, and others as needed, assess PDP plans to inform site staff development to assist in the implementation of the PDP plans. Begin doing coaching, staff development, study groups, action research, etc., as planned in PDP’s and as aligned with School Improvement Plans (SIP) and Staff Development.

Administer the Student Feedback Surveys available through Site PDP Coordinator.

**December:** Continue working on the implementation of the PDP plans and staff development. Coach, observe, meet in study groups, videotape, work on action research, etc. as outlined in the plan. Tabulate the results from the Student Feedback Surveys for use at the Winter Progress Report meetings.

**January and February:**

Winter Progress Report team meetings are held in late January or early February to go over progress to date, to discuss plans and decide whether strategies are working or not. Adjustments are made as needed in the plans and activities. Completed Winter Progress Reports are turned into PDP Coordinator at the site, who then transmits them to the Professional Development Services department. Keep copies on file at school site as well.

**March:** Continue working on the plans and doing reflective growth activities (coaching, study groups, portfolios, etc.) and collecting evidence of results.

**April-May:** Administer Student Feedback Surveys if needed, or desired, as determined by teacher or PDP team.

Begin Spring Progress Report process and complete by the end of May. Signed Spring Progress Reports are turned in or electronically transmitted to the Site PDP Coordinator, who will send in or transmit copies of reports to the District PDP Facilitator.

**June:** All Spring Progress Reports have been delivered to the District PDP Facilitator from the Site PDP Coordinators. Copies of PDP Plans and Progress Reports are kept on file for a period of three years.

Please note: Throughout the entire year, staff may share good ideas and successful results from the PDP work with other staff. This may occur at staff meetings, on staff development days, or in other creative venues.

**Electronic PDP Filing:** While paper copies may be filed, teachers are urged to do their PDP Plans and Progress Reports in electronic format. PDP coordinators will be provided with the materials and training to assist teachers in this transition. PDP coordinators are urged to aggregate individual teachers PDP submissions and transmit them to the Professional Development Facilitator in a single electronic file.

*Teachers at Multiple Sites and PDP – see Section E. of this article.*

**The Professional Development Process Team:** The purpose of PDP Team is to assist in the thinking about, planning of, and reflection upon a PDP Plan. The members of the team serve as trusted, critical friends who coach, discuss, give feedback and suggestions, analyze, and provide support as needed/requested.
The professional selects the team once the PDP Plan is written. The team of 4-6 people meets a minimum of three times during the school year (fall, winter, and spring).

A team consists of:
1. the professional
2. peers/colleagues (teachers, EAs, support staff, etc. with at least some from the same school site)
3. others as needed and/or desired. This can include, district support staff, business/community members, parents, students, university staff, and/or anyone who can assist in the process.
4. the principal/supervisor* [*The principal/supervisor is a member of each team but does not need to be present at every team meeting. They should be informed, however, of PDP plans, progress reports, dates of meetings and results, etc. The intention is to be as inclusive and collaborative as possible to ensure student success.]

Each teacher conducts her/his own PDP meeting by sharing with the PDP team plans, efforts, and results. The teacher asks for and receives ideas, strategies, etc. from team members. Team members are expected to listen, coach, help the teacher reflect, and suggest/offer resources.

The PDP Team can be of invaluable support. Trust, respect, encouragement, honesty, and active participation provide the critical foundations for successful teaming and growth. Learning from one another is an essential ingredient to increasing professionalism in education.

**PDP Planning, Goal Setting, and Strategy Development:** PDP planning is at the core of the Professional Development Process. While teachers continue to work on and grow in many areas simultaneously, the PDP gives focus to a specific area of need/interest. By planning what is to be accomplished, developing support and resources needed, detailing strategies to achieve results, and creating measurement tools to assess progress and results, professionals have a much greater chance of success. Before beginning goal setting, it is important to gather the necessary data and information about the student and teacher needs. This data may include family and student surveys, School Information Report (SIR), and/or other multiple assessments including student work and Office of Civil Rights (OCR) data. It is also important to observe students before setting on a plan of action.

Once the data is collected the teacher writes a PDP plan. A teacher may write the plan individually and/or work with their team, and/or coach to think through a plan. Team or school wide PDP plans are also an option. Collaborative plans are often beneficial in that they get everyone working together in a focused direction. Each team member is still responsible for writing a plan, even if it is a collectively decided upon plan. Generally, PDP plans that achieve the best results for overall school success and student results are aligned with school improvement goals. When the majority of teachers and support staff at a site focus on common goals, a much greater impact can be achieved. However, teachers must be sure to work on what is of greatest need to improve or expand their own teaching and improve student achievement.

Goals are chosen by each teacher in accordance with their needs and the needs of their students. Ideas, suggestions, and issues may be raised at the teacher’s PDP team meeting by team members, but respectfulness and professional coaching should be used.

In between PDP team meetings, reflective activities that are focused on PDP goal attainment take place. These activities include such things as coaching, staff development, study groups, action research, observing colleagues, assessing a videotaped lesson, journaling on practice, networking with colleagues, creating a professional portfolio, reviewing student work, and coaching. These activities bring PDP to life and strengthen learning and results. PDP is centered on the real work that is already occurring in schools and classrooms and is a process that helps that work become more meaningful and successful.

If performance issues arise, the PDP Team provides initial support for relevant goal setting and interventions. If additional support is needed for the teacher to achieve the necessary goals and objectives, a member of the PDP team may make a referral to the District PDP Facilitator or PAR District Mentor who can assist teachers, teams, and sites with performance issues.

**Probationary Teachers (MS §122A.41):** During the first three years, teachers new to the District will participate in the Achievement of Tenure Process. When teachers successfully complete the MPS Achievement of Tenure Process, they participate in the Professional Development Process as described in this section. The Achievement of Tenure Process and the Professional Development Process are completely aligned and use the same mission, philosophy, and general activities. Requirements for the Achievement of Tenure Process are specified in this article in Sections G and H.
Tenured Teachers (MS §122A.41): Tenured teachers follow the Professional Development Process as outlined in this section.

Professional Peer Collaboration Time: Occupational and physical therapists, speech clinicians, psychologists, itinerant teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing students, audiologists, and social workers shall have two (2) hours per month devoted exclusively for professional peer collaboration. This time shall be part of the duty day to be used for professional growth as it pertains to job performance in the Minneapolis Public Schools. It may include discussion of professional practice issues, professional development, and networking with community/academic/professional leaders, completing projects surrounding improved student achievement, applying and supporting standards in therapy settings, and other tasks related to improved student outcomes.

Professional development time is available for other professionals as outlined in Section J of this article.

Site PDP Coordination: To ensure coordination of planning and implementation of PDP support for staff site PDP coordinator, staff development chair, site steward, site administrator, and a Site Leadership Team representative will work together under the auspices of the Site Instructional Leadership Committee as outlined in Article IV, Shared Leadership.

Site PDP Coordinator. Every site will identify a teacher leader or team of teacher leaders to coordinate the on-site support for PDP. The PDP Site Coordinator will meet the professional needs of colleagues and expectations outlined below. PDP Site Coordinator Responsibility Pay (contingent on continued funding) will be determined by the size of the site and completion of job expectations. PDP coordinators have the following roles and responsibilities:

Responsibilities directly related to all staff:

- maintain a positive, supportive, encouraging and professional attitude about the Professional Development Process
- remind staff that this is their right and their responsibility
- use good coaching skills at all times when dealing with staff
- organize PDP materials and activities at site. Ensure that all staff have what they need in order to do the PD Process efficiently and effectively
- arrange time for PDP materials and activities at site. Ensure that all staff has what they need in order to do the PD Process efficiently and effectively
- collect PDP plans and progress reports fall, winter and spring
- update the staff regarding district PDP information throughout the year at staff meetings
- model successful implementation of your PDP plan
- listen to and receive ideas, suggestions from staff regarding the PDP and about your role as the coordinator
- be a leader in raising the quality of teaching and professionalism
- advocate the alignment and integration of PDP into site work, (e.g. staff development, grant work, curriculum content standards, school improvement process, etc.)
- survey staff each spring regarding the success of the implementation of PDP at your site (use the survey provided by the PDP office)
- distribute the PDP Site Coordinator Assessment Survey provided by the District PDP office in the spring (Have the site Union Steward collect the surveys and send them to the District PDP offices.)
- Have Fun! Celebrate successes! Share the PDP work of the staff. Help make the PDP a creative, meaningful and useful tool for professional growth!

Responsibilities directly related to individual staff:

- coach those who need help getting their PDP completed
- use the Guided PDP and the Professional Support Process (PSP) when appropriate
- meet with Achievement of Tenure teachers in the fall to make sure they are on track with what is expected
- coordinate Achievement of Tenure with principal, staff development chair, and building union steward

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- ensure staff receives appropriate relicensure credit for PDP work as outlined in the Teachers Contract. (PDP Coordinators along with the Principal may sign the relicensure clock hour certificates for staff once the teacher's work has been reviewed)
- work with other committee chairs to coordinate efforts to align and integrate PDP with site goals

**Responsibilities not directly related to staff:**
- give copies of everything to the school office for filing
- create a staff checklist and send it to the District PDP office fall, winter and spring
- attend district PDP training in the fall and network meetings for coordinators three times per year (fall, winter, and spring)
- contact the District PDP Facilitator for assistance when needed
- have a strong working knowledge of Article V, Professional Development and a clear understanding of the professional continuum

**Selection Process for the Site PDP Coordinator**

Teachers who are interested in being the Site Professional Development Coordinator may apply directly to the Site Leadership Team or Site Staff Development Committee (which ever is most appropriate for the site) using the standard application form provided to the sites by the district Professional Development Process Facilitator. Sites should announce to all professional staff when the applications for the position are being accepted and allow at least one week for submission. Once the applications have been received, the applicants need to do a brief interview with the designated Site Leadership or Staff Development Committee. To ensure a common protocol is followed throughout the district for these interviews, the District PDP Facilitator will supply a set of instructions to each site. Teachers selected for this site teacher leadership position must agree to implement all the expectations of the Site PDP Coordinator as outlined in this article.

**Section F. Professional Induction For Teachers New To The District:**

Student growth and success is at the heart of all teaching and learning. Because we recognize the complexity of teaching and learning in the Minneapolis Public Schools, teachers new to the District are given guidance and assistance through the Achievement of Tenure Process outlined below.

**Achievement of Tenure:** In the State of Minnesota, tenure is defined as continued service after the completion of three consecutive years of successful teaching. (MS §122A.41) Minneapolis Public Schools and Minneapolis Federation of Teachers believes the key to nurturing this successful teaching is through ongoing professional development experienced over an entire career. To ensure all non-tenured teachers get a strong start in becoming highly skilled practitioners, the professional contractual Achievement of Tenure has been designed to support the successful achievement of tenure. Research indicates that the effects of well-prepared teachers on student achievement can be stronger than the influences of student background factors such as poverty, language background and ethnicity. (Darling-Hammond 2000).

Completion of the Achievement of Tenure involves rigorous, meaningful, and reflective work, which demonstrates that a teacher has achieved high standards for teaching and is ready to become a tenured teacher in the Minneapolis Public Schools. In recognition of the rigor, a District Achievement of Tenure Facilitator (located at PAR Office) is available to support teachers through the tenure process.

Probationary teachers must successfully complete this process by the end of their third year in the district.

The A of T Process is a team-supported induction into the profession and the Minneapolis Public Schools. It is designed to provide teachers new to the District with on-site and District support toward achieving the Standards of Effective Instruction and successful completion of Achievement of Tenure requirements. Teachers work with mentor(s) (if assigned), colleagues, and administrators to identify their A of T team members and to develop, implement, and achieve goals that support professional development to improve student achievement. These goals are to be aligned with the School Improvement Plan, and the Standards of Effective Instruction.

**Who Participates in Achievement of Tenure?**

All teachers new to teaching or new to Minneapolis Public Schools are required to do Achievement of Tenure.

The following guidelines will help determine if A of T requirements need to be fulfilled:

1) Teachers returning to work in Minneapolis Public Schools in the first three years of employment:
Teachers who were released and rehired within the first three years of teaching do not have to start the 
Achievement of Tenure process over. They may resume where they were before they were released from 
service. All the A of T requirements still apply as outlined in this article.

2) Teachers returning to work in Minneapolis Public School within five (5) years of completing the 
A of T requirements and achieving tenure do not need to do the A of T process over. However, 
if it has been longer than five years, a mentor will do an observation and complete an assessment to 
determine if the returning teacher needs to do the A of T requirements again.

3) Teachers tenured elsewhere and new to Minneapolis Public Schools: Teachers who worked in other 
school districts and are tenured will have an assessment and observation completed by a district mentor 
to determine if the teacher will need to complete the A of T requirements.

4) Retired Minneapolis teachers returning to work in Minneapolis Schools: Achievement of Tenure 
requirements are not required.

Professional Development Components of Achievement of Tenure:
Teachers during their first year of employment within the Minneapolis Public School District are required to 
attend the New Teacher Orientation in August. Teachers hired after the New Teacher Orientation shall 
attend the New Teacher Orientation held in August in the beginning of their second year.

Teachers during their first three years of employment in Minneapolis Public Schools are required to 
participate in the following staff development experiences:
° New Teacher Orientation (first year);
° At least twenty hours (20) of staff development of their choosing in support of Achievement of 
Tenure professional development goals over the three year probationary period.
° Sites will provide the equivalent of two days without loss of pay to probationary teachers for the 
purpose of observing classrooms of identified demonstration teachers. Teacher will be accompanied 
by a mentor or other A of T team member(s) during this observation.
° To be eligible for the Achievement of Tenure bonus, the new teacher must complete Peer Coaching 
(16 hours) and a PAR-approved behavior/classroom management training.

Teachers must also complete the remaining Achievement of Tenure requirements:
Steps in the A of T Process for Teachers New to the District:
1. Meet with Mentor, site and/or District staff to learn intent and details of A of T Process. This 
   session will include:
   ° Explanation of the A of T Professional Development Process (PDP) that is based on student 
     achievement and teacher professional development needs aligned with the School Improvement 
     Plan (SIP), the Standards of Effective Instruction, respective job descriptions, and the Minnesota 
     Code of Ethics and Standard of Professional Ethics found in Section B of this article.
   ° Reviewing the requirements for A of T and developing a personal timeline for completion of 
     tenure requirements.
   ° Developing a professional portfolio as a tool for growth and for documenting progress.
2. Meet with mentor, if assigned, or site colleague to identify PDP team members, and to formulate a 
PDP plan.
3. Meet with A of T PDP team to discuss plan. Plan will include:
   ° Goals, objectives, and strategies
   ° Goal attainment activities (coaching, action research, etc.)
   ° Indicators of achievement of goals.
   ° A timeline for the year that includes dates for Progress Report meetings and formal 
     observation(s) as part of the Achievement of Tenure Process.
4. Date and sign a copy of the plan and turn it in to the school’s Professional Development Coordinator 
   for retention at the site. The teacher should include a copy of their plan in their Professional 
   Portfolio. The PDP Coordinator will send paper or electronic copies of the Achievement of Tenure 
PDP Plans and Progress Reports to Professional Development Services at assigned times.
5. Participate in periodic meetings with A of T team to review and document progress toward goals, Standards of Effective Instruction and Achievement of Tenure. The Team will review progress towards development of the professional portfolio.

Schedule at least one formal observation cycle with mentor if assigned. The Achievement of Tenure PDP team may recommend a supervisor, administrator, or another Achievement of Tenure Team member do a second formal observation, during the first semester of the school year. Areas of progress and areas for further growth will be shared with the A of T PDP team.

6. First year Probationary teacher performance assessment and decision-making resides collaboratively with the A of T PDP team, which includes the mentor (if assigned), colleagues and the principal. At the end of each probationary year, the team will assess progress based on multiple indicators including observations by team members and plan next steps for the following year. The A of T PDP team will make one of the following determinations:
   - For teachers in Year 1 or 2 - continue working toward Achievement of Tenure in the following year (for teachers making satisfactory progress toward Achievement of Tenure);
   - For teachers in Year 2 or 3 - continue working toward Achievement of Tenure with the support of an assigned mentor (for teachers who need continued or added support);
   - For teachers in Year 3 who have successfully completed all the A of T requirements by the end of the probationary period - move to PDP in Year 4 as a tenured teacher.
   - For any teacher in Year 1, 2, or 3 – who has not made satisfactory progress, and who has received support from an assigned mentor for a minimum of three months, a referral will be made to Human Resources with the recommendation to discontinue employment.

NOTE: A referral to a Professional Support mentor may be made at any time during the first three years for career options counseling. Teachers may also access OPTUM for support.

Where to Send A of T Forms

The administrator will forward the Probationary Teacher Summary Reports reflecting the determination of the team to Human Resources at the end of the first, second and third years of employment.

A of T PDPs are handled the same as other staff PDPs. They are collected at the appropriate times (fall, winter, spring) and turned in to the District PDP Facilitator at the times designated.

The site PDP Coordinator will forward the Achievement of Tenure Notification form to the District PDP Facilitator for processing.

Site PDP Coordinators are to assist new teachers in the A of T process as outlined in the Site PDP Coordinators Job Description in this article.

(Teachers At Multiple Sites and A of T - see Section E of this article.)

Financial Support for Tenure Candidates

The district will allocate a Probationary Teacher Financial Support Package for each teacher new to the District. This package will cover the following:

   a. **Twenty hours of portfolio development:** Probationary teachers working toward tenure will be granted 20 (twenty) Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for the development of the A of T portfolio. These CEUs may be used for relicensure purposes.

   b. **Peer coaching class participation:** The cost for the District Peer Coaching class (maximum 16 hours), attended outside of the teacher duty day, will be paid from site staff development funds. Sixteen (16) CEUs will be given to each participant upon completion of the course. These CEUs may be used for relicensure purposes.

   c. **Site staff development funds will be accessed to provide at least one full day of reserve teacher time for peer observations.** The site should provide additional days as needed.

**Bonus Options:** Effective January 1, 2000, teachers upon Achievement of Tenure will have the option of:

   a. Receiving a taxable network-capable laptop computer valued at $1000 or,
   b. Receiving a before-tax payment of $1,000 into their deferred compensation account; or,
   c. Receiving a taxable $1,000 direct cash payment.
**Bonus Payout:**
- Bonuses are paid out in Mid-October and Mid-April depending upon date of submission of Notification of Achievement of Tenure Form. The form is due by the last teacher duty day in June for October payout, and the last school day before winter break for the April payout.
- Teachers who are actively employed by the district on the first day of school (they have not been terminated or discharged for cause) shall receive the bonus if earned.
- Teachers who go on Leave of Absence after successful completion of Achievement of Tenure will be eligible for bonus options b) and c) only. These teachers will receive the bonus regardless of leave status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples of Evidence of completion</th>
<th>Time line</th>
<th>Check Year Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Portfolio</td>
<td>Construct a professional portfolio that documents completion of all A of T activities, and that shows evidence of reflection and growth. The portfolio may be organized in a manner that reflects the individual’s position and style.</td>
<td>The teacher will build a professional portfolio, seeking assistance and feedback from their A of T team as they go.</td>
<td>Consistent participation throughout the first three years, with the completed portfolio being ready by the presentation date.</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement of Tenure Process (A of T)</td>
<td>Throughout the year, collaborate with A of T team that includes a mentor (if assigned), teacher colleagues and an administrator. Submit one A of T plan (Fall) and at least two progress reports (Winter &amp; Spring).</td>
<td>The teacher will have, with signatures and dates, a complete set of A of T documents for each of the three years, including plans, progress reports and probationary teacher summary reports.</td>
<td>Consistent participation throughout first three years.</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPS Standards and Minnesota State Graduation Standards</td>
<td>Articulate, use and assess student performance toward Standards. Non-classroom staff use and assess as appropriate to position.</td>
<td>Multiple pieces of evidence will be documented such as: lesson plans, student work, curriculum maps, syllabi, student work from performance assessments, or rubrics that clearly note which standards are taught.</td>
<td>Consistent participation throughout first three years.</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Observations and Assessments</td>
<td>A formal observation cycle is one in which there is a pre-observation conference, the observation and a post-observation conference. The formal observation may be completed with a mentor (if assigned), colleague or administrator. The formal observation will be based on A of T goals. The assessment may use a variety of tools, such as Pathwise or MPS Standards of Effective Instruction.</td>
<td>The teacher will have signed copies of the observation tool, including evidence of the pre- and post-observation conferences.</td>
<td>At least one formal observation each year (a total of three); one assessment over the three years by mentor (if assigned).</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Teacher Orientation (NTO)</td>
<td>PAR conducts an orientation each August for teachers who are new to the district. All staff that are hired under the Teacher Contract must attend this orientation, regardless of other new employee workshops offered at their site(s), or within their department.</td>
<td>The teacher will have a staff development certificate of attendance verifying attendance to entire orientation. If the teacher misses NTO they are expected to attend the following August.</td>
<td>August of their first year (or later if missed)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Development</td>
<td>Teachers will participate in twenty (20) hours over three years of staff development or course work that supports their A of T goals.</td>
<td>The teacher will have CEUs for each training that verifies attendance and participation in staff development sessions.</td>
<td>Consistent participation throughout first three years.</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer and/or Cognitive Coaching</td>
<td>Teachers will complete district 16 hour Peer and/or 40 hour Cognitive Coaching training in addition to twenty (20) hours staff development.</td>
<td>The teacher will have a staff development certificate of completion for the coaching class and earn 16 CEUs.</td>
<td>It is suggested that this course be taken during the teacher’s second year, but may be completed at any time during the teacher’s first three years.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**PAR - 33**
### Achievement of Tenure Suggested Pacing Schedule
For teachers hired for the 05-07 school years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples of Evidence of completion</th>
<th>Time line</th>
<th>Check Year Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior /Classroom Management</td>
<td>Teachers will attend at least one course on behavior and/or classroom management. Suggested courses are ENVoY, Responsive Classroom, CPI training</td>
<td>A certificate of completion</td>
<td>Completed during Year 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Students and Families</td>
<td>Using either District Surveys, or surveys written by the teacher (and approved by A of T team), survey students and families at least once each year.</td>
<td>The teacher will have representative samples of completed student and family surveys. The teacher will also include reflections from each survey.</td>
<td>At least one student set, and at least one family set each year (for a total of six sets by the end of the third year)</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videotape</td>
<td>Create at least one videotape of your work as appropriate to your position. View with your A of T team and share reflections. (Peer Coaching tape is applicable).</td>
<td>The teacher will have a copy of a videotape, and evidence of reflection.</td>
<td>At least once during the first three years of teaching.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observing Demonstration Teacher</td>
<td>Observe one or more job-alike demonstration teachers.</td>
<td>The teacher will have a written reflection of the observation.</td>
<td>At least once during the first three years of teaching.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Research</td>
<td>Complete an action research project to support A of T goal(s), and as a method of assessment to inform instruction.</td>
<td>The teacher will have a completed action research project (includes a clear question, examples of data gathered, a summary and a reflection on how what has been learned through the research has impacted your teaching.)</td>
<td>Beginning in the second year, the teacher will seek resources to inform them about the action research process, and begin formulating questions to pursue. The teacher then will complete the project in their third year of teaching.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio Presentation</td>
<td>Three full months before the teacher is to be tenured (not counting summer non-duty days), the teacher will share their portfolio with their A of T team, and if approved, present it to the Site Achievement of Tenure Review Team.</td>
<td>Upon successful completion of the tenure portfolio. the teacher is eligible to receive up to 20 (twenty) hours of CEUs that were used to develop their professional portfolio.</td>
<td>Three full months before the teacher’s tenure date.</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of Achievement Of Tenure Notification Form</td>
<td>The teacher is responsible for submitting the form to the Site PDP Coordinator.</td>
<td>Following the Tenure Review Meeting.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACHIEVEMENT OF TENURE REVIEW TEAM:

Timeline for Review: The final step in the Achievement of Tenure is the presentation of Professional Portfolio by the non-tenured teacher to their site Achievement of Tenure Review Team. This presentation should occur at the site at which the teacher is doing their current A of T Plan at least three (3) months before the non-tenured teacher’s hiring date anniversary in the third year of their employment in the District.

Panel Membership: The Achievement of Tenure Review Team will consist of the site Professional Development Process (PDP) Coordinator, union steward, a site administrator, one or more members of the teacher’s Achievement of Tenure team, and a district representative from Teacher and Instructional Services, Human Resources, and/or PAR. Team members are selected by their representative groups. All team members will be given a short orientation of the Achievement of Tenure review process before it occurs. Site PDP Coordinator will contact Achievement of Tenure Facilitator with any questions regarding panel membership.

Process of Review: The site PDP Coordinator will convene the Review Team when the non-tenured teacher notifies the site PDP Coordinator that they have met the professional contractual requirements for the Achievement of Tenure. The non-tenured teacher will present to the panel for verification their professional portfolio containing evidence of Achievement of Tenure work. Following the presentation, the panel (pursuant to the Teacher Tenure Act MS §122A.41) will provide notice to the teacher either of completion of Achievement of Tenure or of work yet to be completed by the teacher. If incomplete, the teacher will have six (6) weeks to complete and resubmit to the review team their Achievement of Tenure work. In the event the teacher did not present a full three months before the non-tenured teacher’s hiring date in the third year of employment in the district, the six (6) week extension will be waived. If six (6) weeks before the anniversary of the third year of employment with the district, the teacher has not yet presented a completed portfolio, the teacher is subject to discontinuance of employment. The teacher may appeal in writing to the Professional Review Committee if they feel injustice has occurred at the time of their portfolio review.

Submission of Notice of Completion: Once the non-tenured teacher has received their notice of completion from the site Review Team, the teacher will be responsible for submitting the notice to Achievement of Tenure Facilitator at PAR. It is important to receive this notice prior to the hiring anniversary date in the third year of the teacher’s employment in the District.

Multiple Site Participation: The teacher will notify the PDP Coordinator at each of their sites as to the determination of which site will conduct the Achievement of Tenure Process. Teachers should also give copies of their A of T Plan and Progress Reports to the PDP Coordinator at each of the sites they work at to assist in the coordination of support.

Roles, Responsibilities, Resources: The non-tenured teacher is responsible for pursuing tenure and the professional contractual requirements. At any time during the three-year process, the non-tenured teacher may request assistance from the site PDP Coordinator, Principals/Supervisors, PAR, Career Options, Professional Development Services, Teacher and Instructional Services, Human Resources, and/or the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers.

Achievement of Tenure List of Responsibilities:

Probationary Teacher:
- Complete all Achievement of Tenure requirements within the three-year timeframe documented in the teacher’s contract.
- Collect and organize materials for presentation to Tenure Review Team. Be prepared to present at least three (3) months before the anniversary of your adjusted seniority date.
- At the last A of T team meeting before Tenure Presentation, share your progress toward Achievement of Tenure with your team. Have A of T team sign “Request to Present” form when Achievement of Tenure requirements are complete.
- Submit the “Request to Present” form to site PDP coordinator or Staff Development Chair. If you are assigned at more than one site, your Achievement of Tenure meeting will be held at the site at which you participate in PDP. The PDP coordinator or Staff Development Chair will notify you regarding when and where your presentation will take place.
- Present your portfolio at the scheduled date and time. You may invite one or more of your A of T team members to accompany you.
Within six (6) weeks of your presentation complete any missing or incomplete Achievement of Tenure requirements. Once completed, contact site PDP Coordinator or Staff Development Chair to reconvene Achievement of Tenure Review Team.

Following successful completion of the Tenure Review team meeting, submit the original Notification of Achievement of Tenure form to District Achievement of Tenure Facilitator at PAR. Be sure to keep a copy for your own files.

Celebrate your professionalism and success!

**A of T Team:**

- Support and assist probationary teachers with the Achievement of Tenure Requirements.
- Assess progress toward tenure at least A of T team meeting before teacher is to present to Achievement of Tenure Review team. Encourage the teacher to be prepared at least 3 months before the anniversary of the adjusted seniority date.
- Sign “Request to Present” form once the third year teacher has completed all requirements. The teacher is to submit the form to the Achievement of Tenure Facilitator.
- Support and assist in celebration and recognition of A of T candidates

**Site Administrator(s):**

- Attend Achievement of Tenure training and understand Achievement of Tenure process as documented in the teachers’ contract.
- Meet with the Tenure Review Team at designated times to plan the process and timeline.
- Support site PDP Coordinator/Staff Development Chair in their Achievement of Tenure responsibilities.
- Set a tone of celebration and professionalism around the Achievement of Tenure process.
- Participate in the Achievement of Tenure process by attending Tenure Review Team meetings schedule by the site PDP coordinator/Staff Development Chair.

**Site PDP Coordinator/Staff Development Chair:**

- Attend Achievement of Tenure training and understand Achievement of Tenure process as documented in the teacher’s contract. Schedule and convene a Tenure Review Team meeting to plan the Achievement of Tenure process that will be used at your site.
- Survey/check with probationary teachers and their A of T teams to assess progress toward Achievement of Tenure requirements. Contact Achievement of Tenure Facilitator if there are any teachers who are not on track.
- Notify third year teachers of dates, time and locations of their Tenure Review presentation.
- Submit to the Achievement of Tenure Facilitator the names of teachers presenting and the dates that are scheduled.
- Arrange room for Tenure Review meeting. Contact the MFT Local 59 for information on reimbursement for treats and decorations for the meeting. Also arrange for certificates for the newly tenured teachers with the MFT Local 59.
- Ensure that all forms are sent to the Achievement of Tenure Facilitator at PAR in a timely fashion. Delay of sending the forms may delay the receipt of the bonus for the teacher.
- Contact the Achievement of Tenure Facilitator with any questions or concerns. If assistance is needed, the Facilitator can meet with your staff, the review team or with individual teachers.

**District Representative on-site Tenure Review Team:**

- Attend Achievement of Tenure training and understand Achievement of Tenure process as outlined in the teacher’s contract.
- Assist in planning the Tenure review meetings at the site you will be working with
- Contact the site on a regular basis, keeping up-to-date on when meetings will be held, and how you can be of help.
- Be prompt for review meetings
- Be upbeat and supportive during the review process with the non-tenured teachers.
- Maintain high professional standards; help ensure consistency across the district.
- Contact the Achievement of Tenure Facilitator with any questions or concerns.

**Achievement of Tenure Facilitator**

- Coordinate Achievement of Tenure process throughout the district.
- Support sites in the implementation of Achievement of Tenure process.
- Provide Achievement of Tenure information and forms.
- Collect Notification of Achievement of Tenure forms from sites.
- Record and submit Notification of Achievement of Tenure forms to the Benefits Department at Human Resources.
- Collaborate with Payroll and Human Resources in the bonus distribution process.
- Collect assessment and/or feedback from sites/teachers regarding their successes/suggestions/comments on the Achievement of Tenure process.
- Organize and assist in the Achievement of Tenure training.

( *Teachers at Multiple Sites on A of T – see Section E of this article.* )

Guided PDP

When a teacher needs assistance in order to meet their PDP goals or the Standards of Effective Instruction and the PDP Team or others have been unsuccessful in providing that assistance, a Guided PDP may be needed. A guided PDP is used when concerns arise that require additional professional support beyond a PDP but are not at the level of a PSP.

In order to determine this, the teacher, PDP Team, other staff members or principal may call the District Professional Development Facilitator and/or the lead District PAR mentor to request an assessment.

If, following a thorough assessment (observations of the teacher; interviews and meetings with the principal, team members, the teacher and others as determined appropriate; analysis of other pertinent data), it is determined that a Guided PDP is needed, the District PDP Facilitator or the District PAR mentor will lead the process for implementing it. The teacher is provided 6 - 8 weeks of Guided PDP services to establish progress toward goals and objectives, unless the PDP team determines a longer period of time is necessary. If, after this time period, sufficient progress has not been established, and barriers to growth have been considered, the team may request a PAR mentor assessment for PSP services. Below is the outline of responsibilities of those involved in a Guided PDP:

**Teacher’s Responsibilities:**

- contact the Site PDP Coordinator or the District PDP Facilitator or the District PAR mentor if a Guided PDP assessment may be needed
- decide the composition of the PDP Team with support from the District PDP Facilitator or the District PAR mentor
- discuss goal issues and concerns with PDP team
- meet with PDP team, principal, and District PDP Facilitator or the District PAR mentor to plan the Guided PDP
- coordinate date and time with team members to conduct a pre-conference meeting prior to observation
- coordinate date and time with team members to conduct a post-conference meeting after observation
- write the Guided PDP plan with guidance from the team and PDP Facilitator or the District PAR mentor that includes the agreed upon goals and strategies
- maintain documentation of conversations, observations and meetings
- use PDP Team members, as needed
- use PDP Site Coordinator or District PDP Facilitator or the District PAR mentor, as needed
- implement the Guided PDP plan strategies as agreed upon
- make copies of plans and progress reports and distribute to the team and the District PDP Facilitator or the District PAR mentor
- write the Guided PDP Progress Reports following team meetings

**Team member(s) Responsibilities:**

- be the first source of support and guidance
- discuss issues and concerns directly with teacher to determine next steps
- participate in Guided PDP meetings and planning
• contact the Site PDP Coordinator or the District PDP Facilitator or the District PAR Mentor if a Guided PDP may be needed
• pre-conference with teacher regarding observation
• observe teacher at least once for a minimum of 30 consecutive minutes
• post-conference with teacher regarding observation
• assist the teacher to develop focused and appropriate goals and strategies as needed
• provide assistance toward goal achievement at the needed frequency and duration
• maintain documentation of conversations, observations and meetings
• may suggest additional site staff as resources to the Team or to become Team Members
• will consult with the PDP District Facilitator or the District PAR Mentor to review the teacher’s needs and the PDP services, or for further recommendations

**PDP Site Coordinator Responsibilities:**

• notify PDP District Facilitator that teacher may need Guided PDP plan
• maintain a positive, supportive, encouraging and professional attitude with the Guided PDP team and teacher
• coach the teacher as needed
• advocate the alignment and integration of PDP into site work
• maintain documentation of conversations, observations and meetings
• provide support to Guided PDP Team as needed
• contact the PDP District Facilitator for assistance as needed

**Site Administrator(s) Responsibilities:**

• contact the Site PDP Coordinator or the District PDP Facilitator or the District PAR Mentor if a Guided PDP may be needed
• participate in the Guided PDP meetings and planning
• pre-conference with teacher regarding observation
• observe teacher at least once for a minimum of 30 consecutive minutes
• post-conference with teacher regarding observation
• maintain documentation of conversations, observations and meetings
• provide assistance toward goal achievement at the needed frequency and duration

**Professional Development Process (PDP) District Facilitator or the District PAR Mentor Responsibilities:**

• conduct an assessment to determine if a guided PDP is needed which includes but is not limited to observations, interviews and meetings with the teacher, the principal(s), the PDP team and others, as appropriate.
• make the determination after consultation with the teacher, PDP team and principal whether a Guided PDP is warranted and what the next steps will be.
• assist in the development of the guided PDP plan along with the teacher, team and principal
• conduct the Guided PDP team meetings
• ensure integrity of PDP and Guided PDP
• advocate the alignment and integration of the Guided PDP into site work
• provide support to teacher, if needed
• provide support to the team, if needed
• meet with administrator(s), the Guided PDP team and the teacher, as needed
• maintain documentation of conversations, observations and meetings attended
• continue support for teacher during site and/or position changes
• conduct initial and subsequent meetings as appropriate
Teacher Transfer on a Guided PDP:

When a teacher in the Guided PDP process transfers to another site, the receiving principal, District PDP Facilitator or PAR mentor, and the teacher will review the circumstances for the plan. Given the new job description and site, the mentor will determine whether continued support appears appropriate. If continued support appears appropriate, the mentor will complete an assessment of needs for success in the new assignment, and work with the teacher to revise the Guided PDP Plan and develop a new team. Otherwise, the teacher will return to the PDP process.

(Teachers at Multiple Sites on a Guided PDP – see Section E of this article.)

Section G. Professional Support Process (PSP):

The Professional Support Process (PSP) is a confidential process that provides support for employees who are experiencing challenges that require expanded collegial assistance after efforts have been made to support the teacher at the site through a Guided PDP. The teacher or any member of the PDP team/Guided PDP Team may request a teacher be assessed for PSP after a discussion with the teacher and the team. This is done by contacting the PAR Program Office and speaking with the lead mentor. During an intake process, the mentor will establish efforts to support at the site to determine whether an assessment for PSP is appropriate. PSP is initiated when a PAR mentor, after meeting with the teacher's Guided PDP team, determines the need to assure additional support for the teachers (as defined by MS §179.A.03, Subd. 19) to achieve the necessary goals and objectives.

Professional ethics, respect, and the Government Data Practices Act will govern information and the team process. Members of PSP teams agree to keep confidentiality, be active members of the team, and participate in making a decision at the end of the process (see Article V, Section F. for a description of the process for teachers new to the District.)

The teacher may enter the Professional Support Process for a variety of reasons. This process may be appropriate and beneficial to a teacher who:

- is performing effectively in most areas of job responsibility, but may need some targeted assistance in one or more specific areas.
- has a history of effective job performance, but is currently experiencing circumstances that, for a variety of possible reasons, challenge job performance.
- needs more comprehensive collegial involvement.
- is working in a new or different position and is experiencing a challenging and difficult transition.
- is experiencing difficulty meeting the professional responsibilities of the Job Description, Code of Ethics, the Standards of Effective Instruction, and overall performance requirements.

The Professional Support Process will extend for up to nine months. If the PSP team believes that a shorter timeline is appropriate, the PAR Mentor may make an earlier referral to the PAR Professional Review Committee on behalf of the team. During the Professional Support Process, extensive support is provided to the teacher through a variety of strategies. This support may include peer coaching, mentoring, scheduled and unscheduled observations, study groups, videotaping, modeling, discussion groups, demonstration teaching, professional portfolio, action research, journaling, collaboration, teaming and/or any other strategies that prove to be helpful.

At least four team meetings should occur during the PSP timeline: (a) an initial planning meeting and (b) a minimum of three progress report team meetings. It is recommended that additional support meetings occur as needed. Sufficient time should elapse between meetings in order to provide adequate support for growth and change. Decisions regarding next steps will be made at a progress report team meeting.

When the teacher successfully accomplishes the goal(s) outlined in the PSP and no other concerns exist, the teacher returns to the PDP or Guided PDP. It may also be that the teacher has successfully reached the PSP goal, but another area of concern may exist. If needed, PSP may continue with additional and/or revised goals, strategies, and timelines.

When the teacher does not meet the PSP goal(s), the PSP team determines the next steps. If an extension of the timeline with additional support and adjusted strategies will be of benefit, this should be planned. If, however, the teacher has been unable or unwilling to improve and is not meeting the job description responsibilities, Code of Ethics, or the Standards of Effective Instruction, the next course of action must be determined. With a change of sites, the PSP continues in the new site, with possible revisions of the PSP Plan.

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The Professional Support Process will include the following steps:

Step 1: A PSP team is developed by the PAR mentor with input from the teacher and site administrator, according to the specific growth needs of the teacher entering service.

Development of the PSP team: The PSP team meets with the teacher to agree upon the implementation of a support plan for the teacher. The teacher’s team consists of the following core participants:

a) the principal/site administrator,

b) one or more member(s) of the PDP team, or other building colleagues, as appropriate,

c) and the District PAR mentor.

This core team through consensus or majority may include other teachers and/or resource people.

Step 2: Development of a Professional Support Plan: The PSP team writes a support plan that includes a goal(s) for the teacher that focuses on the area(s) in need of improvement. Reasonable strategies, resources, and timelines are established within the plan. These may be modified based on identified needs.

Step 3: Implementation of the Professional Support Plan: The PSP team implements the plan. A variety of options are utilized during the PSP implementation to assist the teacher. Some of these options may be: peer coaching, mentoring, scheduled and unscheduled observations, study groups, videotaping, modeling of lessons by the mentor or another staff member, discussion groups, demonstration teaching, professional portfolio, action research, journaling, co-planning and teaming, feedback from students and/or parents, and/or any other strategies that prove to be helpful.

Step 4: PSP Progress Determination: According to the timeline specified in the PSP plan, the PSP team has regular Progress Report meetings to assess and discuss the possible growth and improvement occurring or to determine the lack of improvement. At the end of the pre-determined timeline, the PSP team decides, based on the extent of growth/achievement toward PSP goals, whether the teacher has made sufficient progress to:

a) return to the Professional Development Process

b) return to a Guided PDP,

c] continue with Professional Support (PSP), or,

d) be referred to the PAR Panel for status determination by a PAR Professional Review Committee.

Career Options discussions can occur anytime during the process.

In circumstances or instances in which there may be issues or patterns which are ethically or behaviorally unprofessional, or legal concerns that may not be appropriate for referral to the PSP process, the principal will consult with the Director of Labor Relations to determine the appropriate course of action.

Teacher Transfers on PSP. When a teacher in the Professional Support Process wishes to transfer to another site, the teacher discusses this with the PAR Mentor. If a transfer occurs, the receiving principal/site administrator, the District mentor, and the teacher will have a discussion regarding the appropriateness of the PSP plan for the subsequent school year. Given the new job description and site, the mentor will determine whether continued support appears appropriate. If support in the new assignment appears appropriate, the mentor will complete an assessment of needs for success, work with the teacher and the administrator to revise the PSP plan, and develop a PSP team with input from the teacher and the administrator. Otherwise, the teacher will return to the PDP process.

PAR Professional Review Committee for PSP. In the event that the Achievement of Tenure or PSP Team does not reach consensus on the decision to continue to provide support for the teacher through A of T, or PSP, the recommendation(s) are referred to the PAR Professional Review Committee. This Committee will be comprised of: two teachers on the PAR Panel, one principal on the PAR Panel, one Labor Relations administrator, and a District PAR mentor not involved with the teacher’s A of T or PSP Team. A Minnesota Bureau of Mediation Services representative will facilitate this Committee. The Committee will determine the status of the teacher through consensus, if possible, or a majority vote, if necessary.

(Teachers at Multiple Sites on a PSP – see Section E of this article)
District Student and Family Feedback Surveys: Giving the District Student and Family Feedback Surveys is an annual expectation for all educators. These surveys were developed with support from the City-wide Student Government, Professional Development Services, Research Evaluation, and Assessment Department, Planning and Policy and the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers. The family survey focuses on home support, family involvement, family-teacher communications and student progress. Student surveys provide direct feedback to teachers on instruction, classroom environment and management, and relationships.

As part of the Professional Development Process to improve instruction, it is an expectation that all educators will use and compile the results of the completed District Student and Family Feedback Surveys for discussion and reflection with their PDP team. Educators working on Achievement of Tenure must be sure to complete and save at least one set of Student and Family Feedback Surveys each of the first three years as part of the tenure expectations.

To enhance the feedback process, individuals may add a few of their own questions to the surveys as appropriate to their needs. In addition to using the Student and Family Feedback Surveys, individuals may use their own informal surveys to gather information from students and/or parents as appropriate.

Family and Student Feedback Survey templates are available through the District Professional Development Services Department or online through the MPS website (mpls.k12.mn.us) and can be downloaded as needed. The Family Feedback Surveys may be provided at parent/family conferences.

The Family Feedback Surveys are available online and may be downloaded as needed. Check the Minneapolis Website for surveys in other languages. Sites may download and reproduce the surveys in the numbers consistent with their population.

Professional Development Services will assist sites in obtaining large scale copying, if needed. Schools/teachers may also make copies on-site, if they prefer.

The timeline for implementation of the Student/Family Feedback Surveys is:

October: Receive printed surveys or copy at site as needed

November: Administer surveys to students. Sites should also inform parents of the online Parent Feedback Survey and/or use them at Parent –Teacher Conferences.

December: Individuals collate feedback from the surveys and analyze results.

January/February: Share results with PDP Team at the Winter Progress Report Meeting.

March: May Continue to solicit feedback from students and parents. Administer follow-up survey as determined by PDP Team to compare results between Fall and Spring.

Section H. Career Options/Outplacement Service: Career Options/Outplacement is a career counseling service that may be provided by the District that is available to teachers who are seeking options to their current employment status either within or outside of the District. Services include: career counseling and assessment, interest inventories, resume writing, portfolio development, interview preparation, transition or separation counseling, and access to a metro-wide employment database.

In addition to these services, Career Options in collaboration with the District and Minneapolis Federation of Teachers may sponsor workshops throughout the year that will focus on strategies for building collegial support in the workplace, for creating a balance between professional and personal life, and for burnout prevention. Teachers may also access OPTUM for support.

Section I. PAR (Professional Assistance and Review) Process: PAR is a collaborative effort of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers and the Minneapolis Public Schools that provides support throughout the Professional Career Continuum. PAR will strengthen the profession by attracting, developing and retaining diverse, competent and confident urban educators. The goal is to support the development of education professionals, and to enhance the art and science of teaching by promoting research-based “best practice” among practitioners. Importance is placed on the induction and retention of teachers and the professionalism and career development of all staff. The Professional Career Continuum is outlined in Section P.

The PAR Panel: The PAR process is governed by a joint labor/management panel comprised of an equal number of voting members representing administrators and teachers. Panel members are appointed by the President of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers and the Superintendent. The role of the panel is governance of the PAR processes (A of T, PDP, Guided PDP, and PSP.) The panel is responsible for the
process of selecting, inducting, assigning, assessing and supporting PAR mentors, including the Lead Mentor. The panel will administer the selection, induction, and training of teachers in the Teacher Emeritus program and certify Teacher Emeriti. The panel is responsible for assessing District sites needs for mentor support. Sites will be involved in the selection of building mentors. The District will maintain a staff complement to implement, support and coordinate PAR programs and services. The panel is responsible for program design, implementation, evaluation and budgeted expenditures. The Panel is coordinated by the PAR Lead Mentor and the District Employee Relations Representative.

The PAR Panel will:

- provide governance for the Achievement of Tenure process for probationary teachers and the PDP and PSP for tenured teachers;
- maintain a website to communicate PAR matters to District staff;
- facilitate the transition of knowledge gained through teacher training or other professional experiences to research-based best practices in the school setting; provide opportunities for new and experienced teachers to achieve satisfaction and success while contributing to the improvement of the teaching profession;
- demonstrate a commitment to professional growth throughout the Professional Career Continuum through job embedded staff development, the Professional Development Process and continuous learning to improve instruction;
- create opportunities for professional growth and advancement throughout the Professional Career Continuum;
- provide and support continuous training, professional development and leadership experiences using the National Staff Development Council Standards for Staff Development Standards (NSDC);
- support teachers throughout the professional development continuum, including the Achievement of Tenure Process and Professional Development Processes;
- support Professional Practice Schools, teacher residency sites, Education Magnet, Professional Development Centers (PDC) and five induction models in Section E;
- identification and coordination of a cadre of Demonstration Teachers within the District. Demonstration Teachers are teachers who use exemplary practices in their classrooms and who are willing to model and discuss those practices for colleagues;
- support teachers seeking National Board Certification;
- work with the Teacher Development Council to support the pre-service programs of teacher preparation and induction;
- assess and evaluate its services to insure efficiency, effectiveness, and overall success as it impacts teaching and learning.
- provide regular professional development, training and collaborative support to District, PSP, TAP and Site Mentors
- provide survey data, observations, coaching, and other feedback to all mentors as a part of their own PDP process to enhance their effectiveness
- provide recognition of exemplary service of teacher leaders (or teachers in leadership roles)

PAR Mentors PAR Mentors are selected teachers in Minneapolis Public Schools who have agreed to serve for up to five years as peer mentors and then return to their previous location if a vacancy exists, or go to bidding. They receive specialized training to support their role. They are advisors, role models, and highly skilled teachers with successful teaching experience in the Minneapolis Public Schools. PAR mentors are committed to setting an example, sharing ideas with others, offering support and encouragement and assisting teachers in acquiring the Standards of Effective Instruction competencies through the Professional Development Process. In order for mentors to be effective, caseloads should range from 14-24 for A of T Mentors and 9-13 for tenured teacher mentors.

PAR Mentor Services May be Provided to:

- first time teachers;
- contract teachers who have had experience in the Minneapolis Public Schools in another job classification and are moving into a new position;
- first year contract teachers who have teaching experience outside the District;
• probationary teachers who are in need of continued support;
• teachers who request service,
• teachers who are served at the request of the teacher’s Professional Development Team
• any licensed staff in the bargaining unit

**PAR Mentor Responsibilities:**
• assist teachers in goal setting, pre and post conferencing, and classroom observation;
• model, co-teach, and demonstrate in order to provide guided practice;
• support teachers to ensure that classroom instruction meets the MPS Standards of Effective Instruction supports the goals of the Strategic Plan, the Minnesota State Standards, and goals of the School Improvement Process;
• orient teachers to the resources of the District, the profession and the community;
• provide research-based support to teachers in areas such as instructional strategies and materials, classroom climate and organization, cultural competency, and professional development;
• assess teachers’ professional skills using the professional standards identified in the Minneapolis Standards of Effective Instruction
• as appropriate, work with tenured and/or realigned teachers per administrators’ or teachers’ requests to provide assistance and support, in addition to working with probationary teachers;
• work with administrators, peer coaches, and colleagues as team members and facilitators in the Achievement of Tenure Process, including acting as a team member in the decision-making process for continuation of employment.
• support the annual New Teacher Orientation, “Teacher-To-New Teacher Guide Online”, facilitation of New Teacher Professional Development, New Teacher Networks, Reserve Teacher Training, Professional Development Centers, other staff development sessions, and interactive online mentoring support.
Plattsburgh City School District: Peer Assistance and Review

Origins

Plattsburgh City School District suffered from difficult labor-management relations and troublesome contract negotiations during the 1960s and early 1970s. A professional study of the district referred to the six buildings in the district as “six distinct islands with no cohesive direction.” Tensions in Plattsburgh came to a head in 1975 with a three-day teacher strike. Roderick Sherman, president of the teachers’ union, had developed a good relationship with then Superintendent Carozza, and both agreed to be respectful towards one another during the strike. After it ended, Sherman reported to Carozza that he had never seen such unity among teachers and suggested they use that unity to build a better school district. Carozza agreed, and the two decided that labor-management relationships would be more collaborative and productive going forward.

The teachers’ union became deeply involved with members of the community and began actively seeking out school board members who would be willing to improve relationships between the union, board, and administration. The union also made an effort to become more involved in other aspects of district operations and began working alongside the superintendent and the school board on key efforts. One such effort involved finding solutions together to reverse declining enrollment and become more involved in the hiring of building administrators.

Later, with a new superintendent, Arthur Momot, the union and district brought in consensus building trainers from New York State United Teachers. This training resulted in a shared decision-making (SDM) agreement that is still used today in all six of the district schools. This agreement established the structure for building school improvement planning teams and a district wide improvement committee. Although New York State now requires SDM protocols in every school, Plattsburgh implemented its version before the state requirement.

Process

Current Superintendent James Short said that early collaboration established the spirit that runs through the district today. This collaboration has played out, for example, in the district’s hiring committees that incorporate a wide range of stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and administrators. “All stakeholders have a fair and equal voice at the table,” Short said. An atmosphere of shared decision-making runs through each school building, and the district has gone to great lengths to ensure careful selection of new building administrators to continue the
collaborative climate. This atmosphere was largely responsible for the development of the district’s Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program.

Although the district considered implementing PAR in the early 1980s, serious attention was not given to it until recently. District stakeholders attended a QuEST conference and learned about other districts operating successful PAR programs. Returning home, the stakeholders wondered if the time was right to attempt a program of their own. Leadership from the administration, the school board, and the teachers union recognized the possible benefits of such a program and decided to proceed. Sherman and Short reported that they initiated informal “water-cooler” conversations with stakeholders and slowly built momentum around PAR. Momentum for this initiative grew dramatically when the district received an innovation grant from the American Federation of Teachers.

With the groundwork of collaboration already set and funding to develop a model, the district assembled a diverse PAR design team (including teachers, administrators, a teacher center representative, and a representative from SUNY Plattsburgh’s Department of Teacher Education) that would meet for two–, or three – day periods every three months for over a year. The design team acted as a liaison, informing other local stakeholders of developments, demystifying PAR, and seeking advice and input. The design team collaboratively developed a preliminary PAR agreement that is now being finalized.

**Recommendations**

Short suggested that those wishing to promote collaboration must have more than just a passing interest in working with the other side. The willingness to collaborate must be genuine and encompass the big picture. Short also lauded training in consensus building; he recently re-initiated the training in the district to ensure that institutional memory be preserved as key staff members leave. Sherman emphasized how teachers are professionals and experts in their fields; it made good economic sense, he said, to foster an atmosphere that allowed that expertise to be shared and used to the greatest potential.
Peer Assistance and Review Program

The Plattsburgh City School District Superintendent and Board of Education, and
The Plattsburgh Teachers’ Association (NYSUT)
The Plattsburgh Administrative Council (SAANYS)
The North Country Teacher Resource Center (NCTRC)
SUNY Plattsburgh Teacher Education Program- Dr. David Hill

This Peer Assistance and Review program has been developed with the assistance of the
AFT-NYSUT Innovation Fund grant. We will continue to remain in the consortium to
further develop and refine parts of the program.

The PAR-Plus program is heavily dependent on the work of two groups that are part of
the AFT IF grant. First the PARTS group (Peer Assistance and Review Teaching
Standards) has and will continue to identify, draft, review and revise teaching standards.
The second group is the CTES group (Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation System) which
will develop a comprehensive teacher evaluation system based on the standards. In
addition to teaching standards this evaluation system will include some portion of the
evaluation that will focus on student growth. (See recently proposed legislation).

Subject to Education Law, Commissioner’s Regulations and collective bargaining
agreements the PAR-Plus program will be operated by a PAR Panel as described in this
document.

Purposes

PAR’s primary purpose is to provide an effective mentoring and evaluation process for
all new teachers and, over time, for experienced teachers who are experiencing serious
difficulties in their teaching. However, PAR also can advance a broad range of additional
purposes. The model developed by our Plattsburgh team is designed with the following
current and long term purposes in mind:

- To foster collaboration among professional educators in order to improve
teaching and learning;

- To ensure quality instruction that will maximize achievement for all
students;

- To professionalize teaching by ensuring sound tenure decisions;
• To increase professional assistance for teachers at all levels throughout their career;

• To improve induction support for new teachers and thus increase retention; and

• To identify experienced teachers who do not meet district standards and provide them with peer assistance and a review.

• To provide a path to continued employment for teachers on PAR who succeed in meeting the district’s instructional standards as well as a path to possible non-renewal or dismissal for teachers who do not meet those standards.

Together, these purposes will enhance students’ learning experiences, elevate their achievement, improve teachers’ professional success and satisfaction, and augment respect for the public schools.

**Teachers Served by PAR**

The Innovation Initiative PAR model is designed to serve two, and in some cases three, sub-groups of teachers:

1. **New teachers or Novice Program- current pilot**

   All beginning teachers will be served by the PAR Novice program. The support provided by PAR is essential for those starting their career, especially those who are entering the classroom after completing a fast-track alternative preparation program. Even when new teachers have taught in another district, they can benefit from the support of a PAR CT to help them learn about the local community, students and curriculum. Ideally, the district will have sufficient funds to support all newly appointed teachers.

2. **Experienced teachers who are evaluated as ‘ineffective’ or ‘developing’. (recommended for implementation when resources are available and the Novice program is fully developed)**

   Experienced teachers who are not meeting the district’s standards, despite years of teaching, may be referred to the PAR Intervention program by their evaluator. With the recent adoption of 3012C, a district may consider using this process with teachers who are designated as “developing” or “ineffective” as an option in their TIP program with approval of the PAR Panel. Through PAR, teachers on Intervention receive intense support from a CT, who conducts formal evaluations and conveys assessment about the teachers’ progress to the PAR Panel. The Panel then decides whether the teacher has been successful in meeting the district’s
standards. If the Panel decides that the teacher has not made sufficient progress, it reports that assessment to the Superintendent, who may recommend that the teacher be dismissed.

3. Experienced teachers who request help (resource dependent)

At certain times during their career, experienced teachers who have otherwise been successful may experience serious trouble and need the concerted help of a highly effective teacher. For example, they may have changed teaching assignments, begun to work with a new population of students, or encountered personal difficulties that make their work especially challenging. These teachers may have the opportunity to receive confidential help through the district’s Voluntary PAR program.

**PAR PANEL**

**General**
The PAR Panel will be composed of nine (9) professional staff members of the school district. Five members of the Plattsburgh Teachers’ Association will be selected by the union president through a process approved by the union. Four administrators will be selected by the Superintendent of Schools. It will be Panel’s responsibility to administer the PAR Plus program. The term for a teacher member of the PAR Panel is five (5) years and for an administrator member is four (4) years phased in over time according to the chart below.

**PAR Member Rotation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Term Expires*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>June 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a member does not serve a full term the stakeholder group will appoint a successor to complete the term of that position.

*This pattern continues on a 5-year sequence for teachers and a 4-year sequence for administrators

The PAR Panel will:
• select two co-chairs, one from each of the above named groups.
• select and supervise consulting teachers.
• determine performance assessments for novice teachers and recommend their dismissal or reappointment (2/3 vote needed).
• provide training for consulting teachers using such providers as, NCTRC, SUNY Plattsburgh, NYSUT Learning Trust, and other members of the statewide consortium.
• make recommendations for contractual/program changes to the superintendent, principals’ union and the teachers’ union.
• maintain records and general data regarding the program’s effectiveness.

**CONSULTING TEACHERS**

**General**

The consulting teacher is selected by the PAR Panel for the specific purpose of mentoring teachers new to the district, the novice program, write frequent evaluations of their performance and share those evaluations with the PAR Panel. The consulting teacher should work very closely with the new teacher’s immediate supervisor yet keep the actual evaluations confidential. That working relationship must be centered on helping the teacher succeed.

The Consulting Teacher (CT):

• must have at least 5 years experience within our district.
• will go through a selection process that includes submitting a resume; seeking recommendations from administrator and union members; submitting a written response; sitting for an interview; and allowing unannounced classroom visits by the PAR panel.
• will receive training in coaching adults, leadership, district initiatives and writing evaluations and other such training as determined necessary by the PAR Panel.
• will be supervised by the PAR Panel.
• will be given appropriate release time to work with interns (10 mentors to one fulltime CT is the general ratio thus part time CT loads and release time must be prorated accordingly).
• if assigned fulltime then he/she will return to the classroom after 3 years of that assignment and may again reapply after spending a year in the classroom.

Responsibilities of the CT:

In order to be effective, CTs will have to carefully manage their time so that all teachers are well-served. This may mean dedicating more time to certain teachers as the year proceeds. CTs must also keep detailed records about their teachers’
performance, their growth over time, and the specific recommendations and assistance they have been offered. Specifically the CT will:

- provide a minimum of 15 observations/visitations per year for each intern;
- assist in new teacher orientation;
- establish rapport with interns and administrators;
- model lessons and/or guided observations of other teachers for the intern;
- provide professional development for interns in conjunction with the Professional Improvement Committee (PIC);
- maintain confidentiality;
- report regularly to the PAR Panel;
- recommend continuation or termination for novice teachers;
- provide performance assessments for veteran teachers on intervention (if we initiate such a program);
- provide peer training for new consulting teachers;
- maintain regular contact with administrators, Panel members and teachers being served by PAR.
- making announced and unannounced visits to observe them teaching,
- offering suggestions for improvement in post-observation conferences
- develop a growth plan,
- recommend instructional materials and resources
- help to trouble-shoot problems within the teacher’s school,
- co-plan lessons
- conduct model lessons,
- arrange for teachers to observe other effective teachers,
- offer ongoing assessments of their progress, and
- complete a formal, summative evaluation of their work.

Selection: The selection process for CTs will be open, well-organized, fair, and rigorous. Applicants must have at least 5 years of successful teaching experience in the district. Local districts may decide to require more.

Openings for CTs will be widely advertised and described in information sessions. Teachers and administrators will encourage very effective, well-respected teachers to apply. The PAR Panel will select CTs after carefully considering evidence from the following sources:

- The applicant's resume
- Written recommendations from the teacher's building administrator and a union member
- A writing sample completed at a designated time and location
- An interview with the full Panel or a sub-committee responsible for selection
- Unannounced classroom observations
**Compensation:** CTs assume responsibilities beyond those routinely expected of a classroom teacher. In addition, they often spend time well after the regular school day, responding to teachers’ questions and maintaining written records. In addition, they may be expected to participate in activities during the summer, such as sponsoring orientation for new teachers or attending training sessions. Therefore, in addition to being released from part or all of their teaching assignment, they may receive additional compensation as a fixed stipend or a percentage of their salary. Whether and how CTs are compensated for additional responsibility and time still needs to be negotiated between the Plattsburgh City School District and the Teachers’ Association.

**Training:** CTs selected through a rigorous process will have demonstrated that they are experts in classroom teaching, but they will need additional skills if they are to be effective in their new role. Therefore, the PAR Panel will arrange for CTs to receive training from qualified consultants, experienced CTs, or members of the PAR Panel in the following:

- **Adult Development and Cognitive Coaching:** This will involve understanding adult learning and how to promote reflection and growth among teachers.

- **Leadership and Teamwork:** The CT’s role is new to the district and, therefore, will require those holding it to exercise leadership collaboratively with district administrators and other teacher leaders. CTs will need to understand how the district works and how to get things done effectively. They will need to develop strong working relationships with the principals of schools where teachers in their caseload work. CTs within the district will also need to learn how to function effectively as a team, learning from one another and explaining their work to others.

- **Curriculum implementation:** CTs will necessarily serve as experts on the local district’s curriculum in the subjects and grade levels taught by the PAR teachers in their caseload. They will, therefore, require ongoing training in the curriculum and its revisions.

- **Conducting and writing standards-based evaluations:** CTs must become skilled observers and assessors of classroom practice. This will involve understanding the evaluation instrument and how to use it fairly and effectively. CTs will need to offer the teachers they work with specific recommendations for improvement and expect them to improve at a reasonable pace. CTs also will need to become adept at writing clear, detailed reports.
**Supervision:** Consulting teachers will be supervised by the PAR Panel. The Panel may provide informal feedback for the CTs after reviewing their written and oral reports of teachers in their caseload. Supervision may be provided by a PAR Pair, composed of a teacher and administrator from the Panel, who meet regularly with individuals or sub-groups of CTs to answer questions and discuss challenges they may encounter. Just as teachers deserve informed and thoughtful feedback, so too do CTs.

**NOVICE PROGRAM**

The novice program will be required for each employee new to the district. We will test some aspects of this program in the 2010-11 school year. During the novice teacher’s first year, the CT will have full responsibility to formally evaluate the teacher’s instructional practice. Building administrators may conduct informal observations. Throughout this process the consulting teachers and the building administrators shall be fully informed and collaborative.

PAR will provide all novice teachers a minimum of 15 classroom visits or observations throughout the year. In addition, novices will be able to contact their CT by phone or email when questions or challenges arise. New teachers will not only receive expert advice as beginners, they also will be informed about how well they are progressing and whether the CT has serious concerns about their performance. In the spring, they will be informed of the Panel’s formal assessment of their performance and any recommendation regarding their future employment.

Normally, novice teachers who do not meet the district’s standards during the first year will not be reappointed. However, in certain cases where the teacher has had insufficient pre-service preparation and the CT identifies unusual promise, the Panel may recommend the teacher for continued employment and a second year in PAR.

**INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

The primary purpose of the intervention program is to assist teachers so that they can successfully meet the teaching standards. This would be provided as an option when a teacher is required to create a teacher improvement plan (TIP) with his/her administrator. The PAR-Plus program may be considered as an option. Any teacher receiving a TIP that requests services from the PAR-Plus program must seek approval from the PAR Panel prior to implementation. The program if approved shall begin no later than 10 days after the start of the next school year. At the end of the year the PAR panel will refer its findings to the Superintendent of Schools. Generally a tenured teacher on a TIP may only seek assistance for one year. If resources exist, upon approval of both the PAR Panel and the Superintendent, a second year of intervention may be provided.
The intervention program will begin after the novice program has shown success and there is promise that it would be of assistance to veteran teachers. The program will also need to be collectively bargained between the Plattsburgh City School District and the Plattsburgh Teachers’ Association.

**Consulting Teachers In-Waiting**

We will interview, select and train as many Consulting Teachers as resources and interest makes possible. Such consulting teachers who are not assigned a mentor shall be considered Consulting Teachers In-Waiting (CTIW). All training and updates that are afforded CTs shall be made available to CTIWs. CTIWs shall be available to work with other teachers who are not within the PAR Program on a voluntary basis. CTIWs may be used to assist CT who are working with an intern upon approval of the PAR Panel (this is a confidentiality issue) CTIWs may also assist the Professional Improvement Committee in delivering staff development to the general staff.
NEW SCHOOL BASED PLANNING &
SHARED DECISION MAKING PLAN

Plattsburgh
City School District
49 BROAD STREET
PLATTSBURGH, NY 12901-3396
518-957-6000 (Office)
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www.plattscsd.org

Recertified: January 28, 2010
Shared Decision Making Agreement (Comm. Reg. 100.11)  
Plattsburgh City School District

The beliefs which are the foundation of the process for shared decision making in Plattsburgh:

The Plattsburgh City School District, its Board of Education, Administrators, instructional and support staff, students, and parents as school community members and stakeholders in the shared decision making process believe that when offered the opportunity and provided a safe and stimulating environment, every student can learn.

In keeping with this belief, all students can:
1. Develop and enhance self-esteem;
2. Develop and master communication, critical thinking, and problem solving skills;
3. Acquire the skills and knowledge needed for employment and responsible citizenship in the 21st century; and
4. Develop and maintain independent and cooperative decision making and learning skills.

In order to foster these beliefs, we endorse the concept of shared decision making as a means by which all the stakeholders may participate in the educational process. This plan will comply with State and Federal regulations for the involvement of teachers, parents, administrators, and school board members.

The goals of shared decision making shall be to ensure:
1. That all stakeholders have an equal share in decision making;
2. That all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the shared decision making plan and that they know the appropriate person(s), group or committee to contact for sharing needs and concerns;
3. That all stakeholders have a sense of ownership and a commitment to the shared decision making process and support decisions through consensus;
4. That through the process of shared decision making, the ongoing restructuring of our educational system will provide the best possible environment for students, helping them to become world-ready citizens;
5. That a communication system is in place for all stakeholder groups;
6. That there is community awareness of and involvement in the shared decision making process;
7. That there is funding to provide necessary training for all stakeholders involved in shared decision making;
8. That an ongoing process of annual assessment and review is in place;
9. That there is an annual celebration of success.
District-Wide Educational Improvement Council

1. The roles and responsibilities assigned to the District-Wide Educational Improvement Council are to:
   1.1 Facilitate the development of the written plan for shared decision making in the District;
   1.2 Facilitate the ongoing implementation of shared decision making by all stakeholder groups and committees;
   1.3 Identify and communicate with all stakeholder groups and ensure their participation (e.g., distribution of minutes to SIP Teams);
   1.4 Ensure District and building outcomes/goals are developed, implemented, evaluated, and are not in conflict;
   1.5 Continually assess shared decision making in the District and revise the plan as needed;
   1.6 Formally review this plan biennially, pursuant to Section 100.11 of the Commissioner’s Regulations;
   1.7 Meet to pursue educational issues to ensure ongoing improvement at the Plattsburgh City School District; and
   1.8 Ensure that meetings of the District Council are subject to the Open Meetings Law.

2. Composition of the District-Wide Educational Improvement Council
   2.1 Parents – 5 (one from each building selected by the recognized parent organization)
   2.2 Teachers – 5 (one from each building)
   2.3 Plattsburgh Teachers’ Association President – 1
   2.4 Administration – 3 (1 PHS, 1 SMS, 1 Elementary)
   2.5 Administrator-at-large – 1 (Administrative Council)
   2.6 Superintendent – 1

3. Method of selection and eligibility of members to the District-Wide Educational Improvement Council
   3.1 Each stakeholder group will select its representative(s) through its own democratic process unless required to serve by virtue of position.
   3.2 For the purposes of this plan, “parent” shall be defined as:
      A. A parent/guardian of a student in the Plattsburgh City School District, and
      B. A person who is not a permanent employee or spouse of a permanent employee of the school district, and
      C. A person who is not an employee of a collective bargaining organization representing employees of the District.

4. Term of office for District-Wide Educational Improvement Council members
   4.1 The Council’s term shall run from the date activated and/or re-activated by the Board of Education until the plan is amended, if deemed necessary, or recertified by the Board of Education.
   4.2 Any representative may serve more than one term on the Council.
   4.3 Terms of office will commence upon the Board of Education’s resolution preceding February 1st of each year in which the biennial review is to take place.
5. Authority of the District-Wide Educational Improvement Council

5.1 Ideas or plans developed by the Council which require a change and/or deviation from Board Policy shall first be referred to the Board of Education for consideration.

5.2 Ideas or plans which require a change and/or deviation from Commissioner’s Regulations, negotiated contracts, and other regulations or statutes, shall also be forwarded to the Board of Education and other appropriate bodies for consideration and resolution.

5.3 The individual authorities of each stakeholder group collectively become the authority of the Council through their representative.

5.4 The Council has complete authority to expend and direct any and all resources that have been allocated to the Council.

6. Resources required for the council to function

Consideration will be given to the allocation of resources to meet specific needs related to:

6.1 Training,
6.2 Materials and/or equipment,
6.3 Clerical services,
6.4 Attendance at meetings,
6.5 Refreshments,
6.6 Collection and dissemination of information,
6.7 Visitations and conferences, and
6.8 Space for meeting purposes and storage of materials.

7. Method used for making council decisions

Decisions will be by consensus with clearly defined ground rules which are established upon activation and/or re-activation.

School Improvement Planning (SIP) Teams

1. Roles and responsibilities assigned to the School Improvement Planning (SIP) Teams

SIP Teams may deal with any issues that affect the educational process.

SIP Teams will:

1.1 Identify stakeholders and ensure their representation, participation, and the consideration of all views;
1.2 Facilitate shared decision making at the building level which may include, but is not limited to, establishing subcommittees, providing for staff development, seeking outside assistance, and analyzing resources;
1.3 Ensure that building level goals/outcomes are developed, implemented, and continually evaluated and are not in conflict with District goals;
1.4 Ensure that methods and standards for evaluating progress toward achieving student outcomes are established;
1.5 Refer matters beyond their authority to the Board of Education;
1.6 For informational purposes, share minutes of their meetings with other SIP Teams, the District-Wide Educational Improvement Council if activated, and when deemed necessary, with the Board; and

1.7 The meetings of the SIP Teams are subject to the Open Meetings Law and must be published in same manner as other public meetings (Section 104 of Open Meetings Law).

2. Composition of the individual SIP Teams
The number of representatives of each stakeholder group may vary as determined by the building SIP Teams.  *(Possible composition of the SIP Teams.)*

2.1 Plattsburgh High School
   1 support staff
   2 students
   2 parents
   6 teachers
   2 administrators (principal and assistant principal)

2.2 Stafford Middle School
   1 support staff
   1 student
   2 parents (President of FSO to act as alternate)
   5 teachers
   2 administrators (principal and assistant principal)

2.3 Bailey Avenue Elementary School
   1 support staff
   1 parent (and alternate)
   1 administrator
   4 teachers (K, 1, 2 and special areas)

2.4 Momot Elementary School
   1 support staff
   1 parent (and alternate)
   1 administrator
   5 teachers (Pre K-1, 2-3, 4-5, special areas [2])

2.5 Oak Street Elementary School
   1 support staff
   1 parent (and alternate)
   1 administrator
   4 teachers (3, 4, 5, and special areas)

3. Method of selection of members to the SIP Teams
Each stakeholder group will select its own representative(s) through a democratic process.
4. Term of office for SIP Team members
   4.1 All representatives serve two or three year terms. Specific length of terms and method of rotation will be decided by each SIP Team.
   4.2 Terms of office will commence July 1st.
   4.3 Any representative may serve more than one term.
   4.4 Building administrators are permanent members of the team.

5. Authority of the SIP Teams
   5.1 The individual authorities of each stakeholder group collectively become the authority of the SIP Team through their representative.
   5.2 Any proposal impacting another building or conflicting with Board Policy, Commissioner's Regulations, negotiated contracts or other regulations or statutes will be directed to the Board of Education for consideration and approval prior to implementation.
   5.3 The team shall have complete authority to expend and direct any and all resources that have been allocated to it.

6. Resources required for the SIP Teams to function
   Consideration will be given to the allocation of resources to meet specific needs related to:
   6.1 Training,
   6.2 Materials and/or equipment,
   6.3 Clerical services,
   6.4 Attendance at meetings,
   6.5 Refreshments,
   6.6 Collection and dissemination of information,
   6.7 Visitations and conferences, and
   6.8 Space for meeting purposes and storage of materials.

7. Method used for making SIP Team decisions
   Decisions will be by consensus with clearly defined ground rules which are established annually and reviewed continually.
Disputes and Modifications

1. Disputes over the interpretation of this document and any other aspects of this process may be resolved by one or more of the following methods
   1.1 Refer the dispute to a subcommittee which includes the disputing parties. The subcommittee will make a recommendation for consideration and resolution.
   1.2 Review the original mission for shared decision making.
   1.3 SIP Teams and other stakeholder groups may seek the assistance of the District Administration.
   1.4 Other methods and/or resources deemed appropriate, which may include but are not limited to any of the above, may be employed.

2. Manner in which this document may be altered or amended
   2.1 Proposed amendments may be presented to the District-Wide Educational Improvement Council by any stakeholder group or SIP Team and/or the Board.
   2.2 District-Wide Educational Improvement Council and/or the Board will prepare a response to each proposal. The proposal and response will be communicated to each stakeholder group and SIP Team.
   2.3 SIP Teams and stakeholder groups will review the information provided and give reactions to the District-Wide Educational Improvement Council and/or the Board.
   2.4 If it is determined that this document should be altered and/or amended by SIP Team, the proposal shall be made with the consensus of the District-Wide Educational Improvement Council, and shall be submitted to the Board for review.
Poway Unified School District: Peer Assistance and Review & Teacher Learning Cooperative

Origins
Poway’s Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program is called the Poway Professional Assistance Program (PPAP). The program was initiated in 1986 after Don Raczka, a Poway teacher who would later become President of the Poway Federation of Teachers, visited Toledo, Ohio, to learn about its PAR program. Raczka made the trip as a member of the California Teachers Union Reform Network (CalTURN) and studied their PAR program in detail. Raczka observed the program in action and talked with numerous district stakeholders about PAR’s benefits. Raczka believed that teacher evaluation and assistance in Poway could be vastly improved and that Toledo’s PAR model was worth studying.

Process
After returning from Toledo, Raczka wrote a proposal for Poway Unified that was modeled after Toledo’s PAR program. Poway’s initial PAR program was informal and established on a voluntary basis with principals willing to participate. Because the initial experiments were successful, the district and union developed an agreement in 1989 that expanded the PAR to all district schools.

Both Superintendent John Collins and current Poway Federation of Teachers President Candy Smiley credit the structure of the PPAP Joint Governance Board (established in the PAR agreement) for the years of success the PPAP program has had in the district. As evidence of this success, the union and the district have been able to freely select the individuals they want on the joint governance board without objections from one another. This selection process for the governance board has sometimes been contentious in other districts.

The trust established through the development of the PPAP has fostered collaboration in other areas of negotiations. In 1998, the union leadership and the district agreed to participate in training on the Interest-Based Problem Solving (IBPS) model for contract negotiations. Using IBPS further contributed to trust and collaboration.

In 2003, management and union representatives agreed that they would attempt to improve the quality of professional development offered in the district. This effort eventually led to the Teaching and Learning Cooperative (TLC), a teacher-driven professional development program.
The district and union set the broad parameters of professional development topics, and teachers selected the professional development offerings in which they would participate. A subsequent agreement led to the formation of another joint governance board, the Professional Development Advisory Board (PDAB). PDAB now evaluates proposed professional development courses and determines whether they conform to the parameters established by the district. As with PPAP, the union and district nominate PDAB members with little objection from either side.

Smiley said that a critical factor in the success of the two joint governance boards has been the independence that both enjoy in carrying out their business. The members of both boards have garnered wide respect among union members and district management.

**Recommendations**

For Collins and Smiley, in any collaborative effort the parties must talk at length about the specifics of PAR, what they want it to accomplish and how it will work. “There needs to be a time when union and district leadership sit down,” Collins said, “and ask if this is something they really want.” For Smiley “equal footing” must be built into any agreements so that both sides feel they have a degree of control over the program. Trust agreements, or un-codified MOUs, were advantageous because they allowed both sides to alter agreements, or even terminate them, if doing so was warranted.

Both Collins and Smiley suggested that consistent and effective communication was critical to successful labor-management relations. In addition to the joint governance boards for PPAP and PDAB, Poway has well defined subcommittees that study and make recommendations on a wide variety of other matters including personnel and curriculum. Collins and Smiley communicated frequently with each other, sometimes formally, but often informally around the office or over lunch. Both are new to their positions this year, and they have made an effort to send regular, joint communiqués informing district stakeholders of the key issues they are currently working on. To further enhance communication throughout the district, Smiley recently brought in former union president Raczka to conduct a three-day course in IBPS for district stakeholders.
Memorandum Of Understanding
Between the
Poway Unified School District and the Poway Federation Of Teachers
Agreement on
Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) and Poway Teacher Intervention Program (PTIP)
2000/2001 School Year (Updated 2010-11)

The Poway Federation of Teachers and the Poway Unified School District agree to a PAR/PTIP program. The outline of the program is given below.

1. The Joint Committee as defined in the law will be the PPAP Governance Board. The PPAP Governance Board will have responsibility for governing the entire program, including budgetary responsibilities and making recommendations to the Superintendent.

2. The PPAP Governance Board will oversee a PAR/PTIP program.

3. The parties have established a system to manage assistance provided to permanent teachers employed by the District who have been identified as having classroom performance which places them in serious professional jeopardy.

4. A permanent teacher’s overall unsatisfactory evaluation from the site evaluator will initiate a recommendation to the teacher and the PPAP Governance Board. The PPAP Governance Board will make a recommendation from the listed options: voluntary inclusion into PTIP to include the assistance of a teacher consultant with the site evaluator, if such a program is currently being offered; to continue working solely with the site evaluator on the required supervision schedule; be placed in the mandatory PTIP program; or if prior Level I PTIP intervention had been used in the teacher’s career, inclusion in Level II PTIP. The evaluation process will be on-going with the next evaluation due no later than the end of the subsequent school semester.

5. When a permanent teacher receives an overall unsatisfactory evaluation from the site evaluator after having been in the PTIP program once before, the PPAP Governing Board will determine the teacher’s placement in the Mandatory PTIP process. The length of time the teacher is placed in the mandatory assistance program will be determined by the PPAP Governing Board on a case-by-case basis but will not be less than one semester.

6. The PPAP Governing Board shall review peer reports prepared by consulting teachers and site principals. If after sustained assistance, teachers in the PTIP program are not able to demonstrate satisfactory improvement, the PPAP Governing Board will make a recommendation to the Board. At that time, The School District’s Board of Education will make the determination concerning the teacher’s continued employment in the District.

7. Supporting document, “Permanent Teacher Intervention Program (PTIP) Flow Chart” is attached to this MOU.

8. The agreement may be changed by mutual consent. The agreement expires June 30, 2013 unless extended by mutual agreement.

For the Federation
[Signature]
03.15.11

For the District
[Signature]
03.21.11

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Poway Professional Assistance Program
Permanent Teacher Intervention Program (PTIP)
Flow Chart

Level I Assistance

Teacher receives rating of “Overall Unsatisfactory” evaluation from site administrator

PPAP Governance Board makes recommendation for:
- Voluntary inclusion into PTIP (if the program is currently offered)
- Continue working solely with the site administrator on the required supervision schedule
- Be placed in the mandatory PTIP Level I program; or if prior Level I PTIP intervention had been used in the teacher’s career, inclusion in Level II PTIP

Teacher consultant, if assigned, and site administrator develop a “Plan for Improvement” for PPAP Governance Board approval

PPAP Governance Board reviews:
- Reports prepared by teacher consultant, if assigned
- Site administrators observations

Site administrator completes formal evaluation

“Overall Satisfactory”, and mandatory assistance

Level II Assistance

PPAP Governance Board assigns teacher consultant

Teacher consultant and site administrator develop “Plan for Improvement” for PPAP Governance Board approval

Possible 90-Day Notice

Formal evaluation process completed by Evaluation Team composed of:
- Site administrator
- District-selected administrator
- Governance Board appointee

Teacher consultant provides assistance

Evaluation Team completes formal evaluation

“Overall Satisfactory”, end mandatory assistance

“Overall Unsatisfactory”

PPAP Governance Board ends Level II Assistance

PPAP Governance Board continues Level II Assistance

School District’s Board of Education makes determination concerning teacher’s continued employment in the District

Poway Federation of Teachers Executive Board determines level of representation

PAR - 66
Memorandum Of Understanding between the Poway Unified
School District and the Poway Federation Of Teachers

TEACHING AND LEARNING COOPERATIVE

I. The parties agree to implement a voluntary program of professional development, the Teaching and Learning Cooperative, TLC. The purpose of this voluntary professional development program, which is aligned with the CA guidelines of "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB), is to improve student learning by providing a program for continuous professional learning.

2. A Governing Board of 4 PFT and 3 District members, selected by each party and compensated on the Teacher Leadership Salary Schedule III, will oversee the Teaching and Learning Cooperative. This Board will be named by June 15, 2004. The Governing Board will use the consensus model for decision-making with 5 votes needed for consensus. The responsibilities of the Governing Board include:

   - Selecting professional development opportunities that are aligned with District goals and content standards, job-embedded and closely related to professional responsibilities.

   - Designing and overseeing the successful implementation of a high quality professional development program that is aligned with NCLB and encourages teachers to engage in continuous professional growth activities.

   - Ensuring that the professional growth activities are responsive to participant needs and focused on student and adult learning.

   - Regularly reviewing the program to ensure continued quality

3. Teachers will be compensated for continuing to grow professionally through a salary schedule system that parallels and supports the NCLB California guidelines (40 hrs/10 points)

   - In the PUSD Teaching and Learning Cooperative, this is approximately the equivalent of 2 hrs/week of professional development including classroom implementation, for one semester. (10 points)

   - Once teachers have attained 40 TLC Points, as verified by the Governing Board, teachers currently on Columns C, D or E of the Certificated Salary Schedule will advance to TLC Columns C', D' or E', respectively, for a period of two years, beginning by July I of the school year. These columns are a 1.5% increase over the corresponding C, D or E column.

   - To remain on these TLC Columns, teachers must continue to attain 40 Quality Teaching Points every 2 years.

   - TLC Quality Teaching Points will be applied to the Salary Schedule for the succeeding school year. Records verifying earned Points must be submitted by October 1st.
4. The Governing Board will recommend stipends for facilitators/trainers to the Federation and the District.

5. The District and the Federation will form a joint committee to finalize recommendations for the initial procedures to be used the Teaching and Learning Cooperative by June 15, 2004, and forward those recommendations to the small IBPS group. It is recognized that the offerings may be limited in scope and quantity as the program is developed.

6. Either party may cancel this agreement after June 30, 2008. If the program does not continue at that time, teachers will be compensated by a stipend to be calculated on a proportional basis to 40 TLC Points (e.g. a teacher with 10 TLC Points will receive a stipend equivalent to .375% of annual salary).
POWAY PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

AGREEMENT

This Agreement is entered into between the POWAY FEDERATION OF TEACHERS ("PFT") and the POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT ("DISTRICT").

RECITALS

1. The parties hereto desire to establish a system, the purpose of which is to assist probationary teachers employed by the DISTRICT in the development of proficiency in performance of their duties.

2. The DISTRICT and PFT have established a program (hereinafter "Professional Assistance Program"), on a trial basis, in which the DISTRICT will employ teacher/consultants whose primary responsibility is to evaluate first year probationary teachers by observing probationary teachers in the performance of their teaching duties, preparing written reports of such observations, and providing guidance and assisting probationary teachers in the performance of their duties and making recommendations for continuing as a District employee. Determination of the qualifications for and specific job duties of the teacher/consultant position and the specific guidelines and procedures of the Professional Assistance Program shall be subject to mutual agreement between the DISTRICT and PFT.

3. Recognizing the trial nature of the Professional Assistance Program, the DISTRICT and PFT agree to continue the Professional Assistance Program by mutual consent only, with each party having the right at any time, to terminate the Program by giving written notice to the other. Should the Professional Assistance Program terminate for any reason, neither the DISTRICT nor PFT may assert any aspect of the creation or operation of the Program as a past practice having any impact whatsoever on the parties' duty to bargain in good faith over matters relating to the Program.

4. The parties agree that individuals employed by the DISTRICT in the teacher/consultant position shall continue to be part of the bargaining unit of which PFT has been certified as the exclusive representative and neither party will assert before any federal, state or local administrative agency, arbitrator, or court of law, that individuals employed as teacher/consultants are outside of the bargaining unit of which PFT is certified as the exclusive representative based upon such employment status.

NOW THEREFORE, it is agreed as follows:

1. Recitals. The foregoing Recitals are incorporated herein by reference as if set forth in full.

2. Entire Agreement. It is understood and agreed that this Agreement contains the entire agreement between the parties and that the terms of the Agreement are contractual and not mere recital.

3. Authority. The persons so signing this Agreement hereby warrant they have authority to execute this instrument and have, prior to signing, fully read and understood this Agreement.
AGREEMENT
PERMANENT TEACHERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM

This agreement is entered into between the Poway Federation of Teachers (PFT) and the Poway Unified School District (DISTRICT).

1. The parties desire to establish a system, the purpose of which is to manage assistance provided to permanent teachers employed by the District who have been identified as having classroom performance which places them in serious professional jeopardy.

2. The DISTRICT and the PFT have established a program (hereinafter the "Permanent Teacher Intervention Program" or "PTIP"), on a trial basis, in which the services of a teacher/consultant from the Poway Professional Assistance Program will assist participating permanent teachers in achieving a satisfactory level of performance and in furthering pupil achievement and the instructional objectives of the DISTRICT.

3. Recognizing the trial nature of the PTIP, the DISTRICT and the PFT agree to continue the PTIP by mutual consent only, with each party having the right at any time to terminate the PTIP by giving written notice to the other party. Should the PTIP terminate for any reason, neither the DISTRICT nor the PFT may assert any aspect of the creation or operation of the PTIP as past practice or having any impact on the parties' duty to bargain over matters relating to the PTIP.

Dated: April 6, 1991, Poway Federation of Teachers
By: [Signature] Title: President

By: [Signature] Title: [Signature]
Q&A

What is the Permanent Teacher Intervention Program (PTIP)?
The Permanent Teacher Intervention Program (PTIP), part of the Poway Professional Assistance Program (PPAP), is a cooperative effort between the Poway Federation of Teachers and the Poway Unified School District. PTIP is designed to assist permanent teachers who have been identified as being in serious professional jeopardy. The term "serious professional jeopardy" means that the teacher's classroom performance evaluation has been rated overall unsatisfactory. The goal of PTIP is to provide assistance and support to improve the teacher's performance. The PTIP teacher receives assistance with instructional techniques and strategies, curricular objectives, students' progress toward achievement standards, classroom management, establishment and maintenance of a suitable learning environment, and professional goal setting.

There is also a voluntary aspect of the PTIP program. Any teacher, no matter what their experience, may request support and assistance. The goal is to create a confidential support system for teachers that will foster collegial dialogue to improve teaching and learning.

How does a teacher receive Level I Assistance from PTIP?
A permanent teacher who receives an overall unsatisfactory evaluation by his/her site administrator receives the assistance of a consultant from the Poway Professional Assistance Program (PPAP) and is placed in PTIP Level I Assistance. The teacher consultant provides assistance to improve the teacher's performance in areas found not to meet standards. The consultant collaborates with the teacher and the evaluator to develop a Plan for Improvement and then assists with the implementation of the plan. In addition, the consultant periodically reports to the PPAP Governance Board about the PTIP teacher's progress.

How does a teacher qualify for Level II Assistance of PTIP?
Upon receiving a second overall unsatisfactory evaluation, the PPAP Governance Board may place the PTIP teacher in Level II Assistance. The PPAP Governance Board makes its decision only after considering all the prior efforts and resources used to improve the teacher's performance.

How is the program governed?
The PPAP Governance Board, consisting of three union and two district representatives, oversees the operations of PTIP. The Board's responsibilities include reviewing observations and evaluations, recommending support and assistance, approving the PTIP teacher's Plan for Improvement, guiding the teacher consultant's assistance and determining the length of time the teacher remains in PTIP. The Board meets periodically on an as needed basis.

How is the evaluation conducted in the Level II phase of PTIP?
The evaluation of the teacher placed in Level II Assistance is conducted by an Evaluation Team composed of the site evaluator, a District administrator and a third person chosen by the PPAP Governance Board. The consultant continues to meet with the evaluators to coordinate assistance and support efforts. The consultant also continues to report to the Governance Board on the teacher's progress. Classroom observations conducted by the Evaluation Team may be completed individually or collaboratively but the final written evaluation is a collaborative effort which is signed by all three members. The length of time the teacher is placed in Level II Assistance will be determined by the PPAP Governance Board on a case-by-case basis but will not be less than one semester.

What is the dismissal process?
An independent review of the assistance and evaluation process will be conducted by a qualified expert chosen by the PPAP Governance Board. A written report of this review will be submitted to the Board to determine if the Intervention Plan meets the contractual and statutory rights of the teacher. A copy of the review will also be sent to the Superintendent and the Poway Federation president. The PPAP Governance Board will make no recommendation on the final disposition of the case following the independent review.
IN BRIEF

Teacher Consultant
- Released full time to work with first and second year teachers.
- Teaching experts skilled at developing teacher growth and reflection.
- Member of bargaining unit.
- Receives a stipend and 2 days at the daily rate.
- Returns to the classroom after three years.

Program Highlights
- Minimum of once-a-week contact with new teacher consultant.
- Individual staff development in the new teacher’s classroom.
- Materials assistance, curriculum help, lesson planning..."Whatever it takes."

Peer Evaluation
- Three formal written observations per evaluation period (twice a year).
- Minimum of 20 hours of contact time for same evaluation period.
- Responsible for one year of formal evaluation.
- Consultant must keep triad of principal-consultant-teacher viable.
- Consultant reports findings to Governance Review Board every six weeks.

Peer Board of Review
- Governed by a five member panel of three Union representatives, appointed by the Poway Federation of Teachers, and two District employees, appointed by the Superintendent.
- Four votes a majority.
- Reviews each case and each consultant’s work.
- Makes recommendations to renew or not renew contracts to the Superintendent.

Results of Year 1 Program since 1987
- Over 50 percent of the total teaching staff has gone through program.
- Small percentage of teachers not renewed for a second year.
- Unanimous support of all parties.
- Principals report seeing dramatic differences in second year probationary teachers that have been through the program.

"In the Poway Unified School District in the past 12 years, teachers new to the profession have had the benefit of teacher consultants. The teacher consultants have the time and energy to focus on observing, assisting, and evaluating new teachers. The quality of their evaluation is consistently top quality. Based on my experience since the inception of the program, I have seen teachers in their second year look like they have been teaching for seven or eight years. This is because the consultants are able to provide the time necessary to help the teachers refine their teaching skills. Their classroom routines are organized right from the start, instructions are clear and concise, and transitions from subject to subject are smooth."

Susan Van Zant, Meadowbrook Middle School Principal, 1999
San Juan Unified School District: Peer Assistance and Review

Perspective From:
Tom Alves, Executive Director of San Juan Teachers Association

Origins

Labor-management relations in the San Juan Unified School District were largely adversarial following the 1975 establishment of collective bargaining rights in California. Relationships slowly began to change over the summer of 1987, with new faces brought into key leadership positions: Tom Alves was elected president of the San Juan Teachers’ Association and George Jeffers became the new Superintendent. Alves recalls that Jeffers, from New York, believed in collective bargaining and working with unions to solve problems through creative solutions. Although the labor-management relationship began to change at the leadership level, Alves says the culture of the district’s middle management and union membership was still rooted in traditional adversarial mentalities.

Alves recalls that two years of “hardball” contract negotiations almost ended with a strike in fall 1989. Prior to the near-strike, both parties stood across from each other and acknowledged that there must be a better way of conducting business. This led the union to bring in trainers from the Harvard Negotiation Project (HNP) to train stakeholders from both sides in interest-based negotiations. Alves said, “this training was extremely successful, stuck with the district, and became the foundation for all future collaboration.

Process

The union spent considerable time during the 1990s discussing the potential benefits of peer assistance and review (PAR) for San Juan Unified. The union had to convince its own membership, along with district management, that PAR was worth pursuing. Alves notes, “With any labor-management partnership there is a degree of management conceding power, and a willingness of union and practitioners to accept new responsibility.” Union leadership was persistent and continued to discuss PAR with district stakeholders throughout much of the decade.

In 1999, California passed a law reallocating funding for districts interested in implementing PAR programs. The district and union leadership formed a joint committee of administrators and teachers to shape the framework for a San Juan PAR program. This committee studied existing PAR models from around the nation to develop an outline for the San Juan model. The committee struggled with the challenge of creating a PAR program that was fair and legitimate for union members while not going too far out of the district’s comfort zone. Alves recalls several points of contention during the process, but two stand out: (1) The size and composition of the PAR panel that would have complete authority over the program, and (2) the jurisdiction
of consulting teachers over beginning teachers. Alves said it took many meetings over a 12- to 18-month period to agree on the language that both sides would eventually adopt.\(^1\)

Alves believed the training from the HNP was instrumental in guiding the negotiations on PAR and led to an acceptable program for both sides. Although the initial training occurred in 1990, the union and district leaders continued to attend the HNP’s training in Boston and brought trainers to Sacramento on another occasion to ensure that new union and district stakeholders were trained in interest-based negotiating. The collaborative spirit around San Juan PAR has continued – Alves pointed out that the union and district have been working together to manage the ongoing fiscal crisis. Maintaining an adequate level of PAR funding has been difficult, but both parties are committed to PAR and have found creative ways to maintain the program through flexible categorical funding.

**Recommendations**

Alves suggested that the work of collaboration involves transforming the union. The union cannot expect the district to change if it is not willing to change itself. The first order of business is to develop a critical mass of union leadership and then a critical mass of union membership around the idea of becoming a progressive union—one that advocates for teaching and learning issues as well as the bread and butter issues. Alves believes union must advocate strongly for wages and benefits and, at the same time, convince the district that they are truly working to empower practitioners and improve student learning.

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\(^1\) This timeframe includes the period of time it took for the overall collective bargaining agreement (containing initial provisions for PAR) to be negotiated, plus the time it took for the PAR agreement to be negotiated.
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONTRACT

Between

San Juan Unified School District
P.O. Box 477 • 3738 Walnut Avenue
Carmichael, California 95609-0477

and

San Juan Teachers Association
5820 Landis Avenue, Suite #1
Carmichael, California 95608

July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2009
SAN JUAN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
SAN JUAN TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONTRACT
July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2009

SAN JUAN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Richard Launey, President
Lucinda Luttgen, Vice President
Larry Masuoka, Clerk
Greg Paulo, Member
Larry Miles, Member

ADMINISTRATION
Dr. Pat Jaurequi, Superintendent
Jess Serna, Director, Labor Relations

SAN JUAN TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS
Steven Duditch, President
Christina Williams, Vice President
Bill Simmons, Secretary-Treasurer

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Tom Alves

ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Sandra Galindo
Article 3. EVALUATION

3.01 District Evaluators

The evaluation of members of the bargaining unit shall be the responsibility of management. Members of the bargaining unit shall not be required to participate in evaluation or observation of other members nor shall members in Option A be required to assess their own performance. Any official District forms used for evaluation shall be mutually agreed upon by the District and the Association. An annual evaluation shall occur for each member. An annual evaluation shall occur for each temporary and probationary member, and at least every two (2) years for permanent members.

3.02 Plans to Achieve Student Progress/Professional Growth—Option A

Each member shall, within the program appropriate to his/her students and consistent with the resources available, formulate plans to achieve student progress and the manner in which attainment of this progress will be measure. These specific plans shall be consistent with District goals and program objectives developed for a member's area of responsibility.

3.02.1 Option A applies to all teachers except those under Option B.

The evaluator shall schedule the Professional Evaluation Conference and meet with the member to complete Part I of the Professional Evaluation Report, in accordance with the following timelines:

a. A member returning to the same site/program as the previous school year—five (5) weeks following the beginning of the instructional program.

b. A member assigned to a new site/program different from the previous school year and newly hired members—six (6) weeks following the beginning of his/her instructional program.

c. A member transferred after the instructional program has begun—four (4) weeks after beginning of his/her new assignment.

d. These timelines (a, b and c) may be extended by the evaluator, as dictated by program need, but in no case shall the objectives be submitted later than seven (7) weeks after the member's instructional assignment has begun.

3.02.2 A disagreement which arises over any aspect of the member's Plans to Achieve Student Progress shall be mediated:

a. By a mutually acceptable site or District administrator, not later than two (2) weeks after receiving the dispute.

b. or lacking mutually acceptable administration, by the Superintendent/designee, not later than three (3) weeks after receiving the dispute.

In either case, the decision shall be final.
3.02.3 Observation—Option A

Formal Observation: An administrator shall complete a formal observation using Part II of the Professional Evaluation Report as follows:

a. Each temporary member’s class at least once during his/her current specified period of employment.

b. Each probationary member’s class/assignment at least once a year.

c. Each permanent member who has taught fewer than five (5) years in the District or who has been on an improvement plan within the past three (3) years, at least once a year. All other permanent members, at least every two (2) years.

d. A member who has taught five (5) years or more in the District and who has received all “Meets or Exceeds Standards” on his/her evaluation for the past three (3) years, but who chooses to use Option A, shall be formally observed at the principal’s discretion. In such event, all other guidelines in this section shall remain in effect.

e. Each formal observation must be at least forty (40) minutes long and the evaluator must complete the Classroom Observation Form. The initial formal observation must occur no later than February 15.

f. At least two (2) working days prior to the initial formal observation, the evaluator shall schedule a pre-observation conference with the member. The conference and/or the two (2) day notice may be waived by the member in writing.

g. The member shall be given a copy of the written observation report within ten (10) work days of the formal observation, an opportunity to discuss the observation with the evaluator, and an opportunity to attach to the observation report any comments that the member may wish to prepare.

h. If a member receives an objectionable written observation report, he/she shall be entitled to not less than one (1) additional observation and conference other than those provided elsewhere in this section. Within five (5) work days of receiving the initial written observation report, the member may request, in writing, the additional observation and conference. The evaluator shall make a reasonable effort to conduct the additional observation and conference within ten (10) work days after receiving said request from the member.

i. Each member shall sign the Classroom Observation Form. However, such signature does not constitute agreement with the judgment of the evaluator.

j. A reasonable number of additional classroom observations, formal or informal, with or without notice, may be conducted for any reasonable period of time at the discretion of the evaluator. When such additional observations are reduced to writing, a conference shall follow and the member shall have the right to attach a written response.
k. As appropriate, the member’s evaluator shall make specific recommendations as to how to correct any deficiencies noted in the Classroom Observation Form.

l. The evaluator shall complete Part II of the Professional Evaluation Report.

Informal Observation:

a. Informal observations are defined as drop-ins, visits, or pass-throughs. These are usually short visits, but have no time restrictions. Informal observations may occur in Option A and Option B.

b. The administrator may leave a note, or a memo on school stationery. If a suggestion or recommendation for improvement is reduced to writing, the member shall be given the opportunity for a conference with the evaluator, unless waived by the member in writing.

3.02.4 Pilot Program for Option A

The District and the Association agree to implement a pilot program for 1999-2000 which modifies the current Part II observation form in the following ways:

a. An “Approaching Standards” column will be added to the form. The purpose of this addition is to distinguish between a serious deficiency and a slight deficiency. It should not be used to distinguish between someone who meets the standard and those who exceed the standard.

b. Added to the “Comment” section will be the words, “all responses checked *Needs Improvement and Support to Meet Standards* to be completed during or after the Post Observation conference.”

The Pilot Program shall be implemented across the District in the first full year following the ratification of the contract.

Inservicing of these changes will be determined jointly by the District and the Association.

3.02.5 The Classroom Observation Form used in the Option A process shall not be used for Option B.

3.03 Plans to Achieve Student Progress/Professional Growth—Option B

3.03.1 Description: The program is an individual exploration of alternatives to the traditional process of evaluation. The program is based on the premise that professional educators are capable of setting meaningful goals which will serve as a focus for their professional growth for that year. That individual’s professional growth becomes the focus for the evaluation for that year.

Participants are permanent members with a minimum of four (4) years of successful experience in the San Juan Unified School District.

Members must have demonstrated competence by receiving all “Meets or Exceeds” in the member performance areas of the Summary Evaluation during the previous four (4) years.
Members participating in the program are still responsible for meeting the current District standards of performance (see page 6, Part III of the Summary Evaluation instrument). Participation in this program is voluntary.

3.03.2 Participants in Option B will adhere to the provisions of Exhibit “J” as modified, (e.g., change date of final evaluation to May 1, name for “Plans to Achieve Student Progress/Professional Growth—Option B”), including time lines and other provisions.

3.03.3 Administrators may conduct informal observations as provided in Exhibit “J”.

3.03.4 Removal from Option B: A teacher may be removed from Option B upon admittance to PAR program or if the member does little or not work toward the agreed upon Option B goals. If a member on Option B fails to meet one standard and is not admitted to PAR, the administrator and teacher shall create an improvement plan for that single standard to be incorporated into the Option B goals for the following year.

3.03.5 Return to Option B: A member may return to Option B after completing two (2) successive years of “Meets or Exceeds Standards” on the Option A Summary Evaluation.

3.04 Evaluations

3.04.1 The Summary Evaluation Form, or the computer generated form, shall be used for the evaluation of each member on Option A at least once each school year. The Professional Growth Plan Final Form, or the computer-generated form, will be used for the evaluation of each member on Option B at least once each school year.

3.04.2 A member’s evaluation shall be based on the member’s performance of instructional and non-instructional duties, and the member’s professional conduct within the scope of his/her assignment.

3.04.3 Any information used on evaluation forms, other than that obtained through observation by the evaluator, shall be identified as to source.

3.04.4 A member shall not be held accountable for any aspect of the education program or factors over which he/she has no authority or control.

3.04.5 If a member is evaluated in an area outside of his/her teaching credential, the evaluation form shall so state.

3.04.6 As appropriate, the member’s evaluator shall make specific recommendations as to how to correct any deficiencies noted in the Summary Evaluation Form.

3.04.7 No later than April 1, the evaluator shall meet with the member to complete and discuss Part III of the Professional Evaluation Report.

3.04.8 Each member may prepare and attach any comments he/she feels appropriate.
3.04.9 The substance of employee evaluations for competency is not arbitrable. Commentary alleging a disciplinable offense as defined in this agreement, if included in such evaluations shall be considered the same as a written warning.

3.04.10 Alternate Year Procedures

During the alternate year, when no formal evaluation is being conducted, the member is not responsible for writing goals or meeting with the administrator at the beginning and end of year related to such goals. However, the alternate year status does not prohibit the evaluator from conducting informal observations. In such cases, it is the evaluator’s responsibility to communicate throughout the year with the member regarding any concerns related to their performance.

When an administrator determines that a consecutive year evaluation will be conducted, it is the responsibility of the administrator to notify the member(s) prior to the end of the previous school year. Such notification shall include purpose and rationale to support consecutive year evaluations.

3.05 Personnel Files

3.05.1 A member’s personnel file shall be treated as confidential.

3.05.2 Materials in personnel files of members which may serve as a basis for affecting the status of their employment are to be made available for the inspection of the person involved.

3.05.3 Such material is not to include ratings, reports, or records which were obtained prior to the employment of the person involved.

3.05.4 Each member shall have the right to inspect such materials, and copy such materials upon request, provided that the inspection is made at a time when such person is not actually required to render services to the employing district.

3.05.5 Material of a negative or derogatory nature shall not be placed in a personnel file unless and until the member is given notice and an opportunity to review it and attach his/her comments thereto. Such review shall occur, upon the member’s request, during the member’s work day, without salary reduction. Upon request by the member, the Personnel Director shall review the appropriateness of the material.

3.05.6 Upon written authorization by the member, a representative of the Association shall be permitted to examine and obtain copies of the materials in such member’s file.

3.05.7 Any person who drafts, receives, or places materials in a member’s file shall sign and date the material.

3.05.8 A member shall have the right to request the Personnel Director to place appropriate material of a positive nature in his/her personnel file.

3.05.9 Derogatory materials in a personnel file that are at least four (4) years old shall, upon an employee’s written request, be removed from the personnel file and placed in a separate sealed file. Neither the Professional Evaluation Report nor the Summary Evaluation Form may be removed from the personnel file under this section.
3.06 Public Charges

3.06.1 Any anonymous or unsubstantiated public complaint shall not be used in a member’s evaluation or included in a member’s personnel file. If the administration decides that a complaint received about a member is not serious enough to warrant a meeting with the member, subsequent evaluations shall contain no reference to the complaint.

3.06.2 If the administrator believes a complaint is serious enough to bring to the attention of the member, the member may request the administrator to schedule a meeting of the member, the complainant, and the administrator. If, in the judgment of the administrator, such a meeting would be counter-productive, the meeting may not be scheduled. The reasons for that judgment shall be given the member upon request. If no meeting is held, or if a meeting is held without the opportunity for the member to be present, subsequent evaluations shall contain no reference to the complaint.

3.07 Controversial Materials

3.07.1 When complaints are received from citizens relative to the use of allegedly controversial instructional material which, in the judgment of the site/program administrator, are serious enough to adversely affect a member’s evaluation, the complaints shall be handled as follows:

a. Complaints shall be referred to the site/program administrator who shall review the complaint.

b. The site/program administrator shall review the complaint with the member in question and shall attempt to resolve the issue at that level.

c. If a resolution is not reached at this level, the complainant shall be requested to state his/her case in writing and shall be informed that the statement shall include the name of the member, date, place and full description of the episode or material in question and, in the case of printed material, the name of the author, title, publisher and objections by page and items or, in the case of other material, specific information in order to locate the objectionable phrase or aspect and any other specific information which might be pertinent. Upon receipt of the above, the site/program administrator shall review the complaint with the member in question and shall subsequently hold a conference with the complainant and the member in an attempt to resolve the issue at that level.

d. If the issue is not resolved at the initial level, the matter shall be referred to the Superintendent/designee for resolution.

3.08 The Peer Assistance and Review Program (PAR)

3.08.1 Description of the program:

a. Effective July 1, 2000, the California Peer Assistance and Review Program for teachers shall become fully operational. The California Peer Assistance and Review Program shall establish a teacher peer assistance and review process as a critical resource mechanism that allows Consulting Teachers to assist Participating Teachers in gaining knowledge in subject matter and/or teaching strategies.
b. Effective upon ratification of this agreement, the Peer Assistance and Review Panel will be responsible for administering the District’s BTSA program to provide peer assistance including method of delivering services, training and type of support and making recommendations to the school board on program design.

c. Effective July 1, 2000, Article 15 of the contract describing the California Mentor Program shall be deleted.

d. The parties agree to review the impact of SB 2042 (induction program for new teachers) and create options for collaborative design and implementation.

e. The parties agree to jointly provide on-going support and awareness level training for PAR.

3.08.2 Definition of terms:

a. Peer Assistance: Both new and experienced teachers benefit from professional support provided by other classroom teachers. For the purpose of this article, peer assistance describes activities planned and implemented by the Consulting Teacher in collaboration with the Participating Teacher and the supervising administrator. The activities shall be designed to strengthen the Participating Teacher’s skill and expertise accordance with the California Standards for the Teaching Profession in the following areas: mastery of content, instructional skills and techniques, alignment to District approved goals and objectives, classroom management, planning and designing lessons for all children, assessment of student progress toward established standards, appropriate learning environment.

b. Peer Review: For the purpose of this article, peer review describes a process by which the Consulting Teacher shall monitor, guide and support the progress of his/her assigned Referred Participating Teacher toward a satisfactory level of classroom performance. The review process shall include the following:

i. Collaboration between the Consulting Teacher, the Referred Participating Teacher, and the principal in developing a mutually agreed upon plan for the Referred Participating Teacher. Any dispute that may result shall be resolved by the PAR panel.

ii. Written reports to the Referred Participating Teacher which shall be shared with the Peer Assistance and Review Panel and the supervising administrator.

iii. A cooperative relationship between the Consulting Teacher and the principal with respect to the process and content of Peer Assistance and Review.

iv. A Summary Evaluation prepared by the consulting teacher shall be provided to the Referred Participating Teacher, the Peer Assistance and Review Panel, and the supervising administrator. A copy of the Summary Evaluation shall be placed in the
personnel file of the Referred Participating Teacher and the Summary Evaluation shall be reflected in the final recommendation of the Referred Participating Teacher.

c. Peer Assistance and Review Panel: The Peer Assistance and Review Panel shall be comprised of seven (7) members, the majority of who shall be teachers.

d. Referred Participating Teacher: A Referred Participating Teacher is a teacher who has achieved permanent status and who, as a result of an evaluation in which two or more ratings of unsatisfactory have been earned, demonstrate a need for assistance as outlined in the performance areas of section A and B of the Summary Evaluation. A permanent teacher with one unsatisfactory rating may be referred to PAR Panel for intervention. The PAR Panel shall have authority to accept or reject such referrals. A Referred Participating Teacher shall participate in both the peer assistance and peer review components of this program.

e. Volunteer Participating Teacher: A Volunteer Participating Teacher is a teacher who has achieved permanent status or an experienced teacher new to the District who seeks to improve his/her teaching performance and requests the Peer Assistance and Review Panel to assign a consulting Teacher to provide peer assistance. A Volunteer Participating Teacher shall be involved only in the peer assistance component of this program.

f. Beginning Participating Teacher: Newly employed classroom teachers possessing a preliminary credential with fewer than two years of fully credentialed teaching experience will participate in the District PAR program. In addition, classroom teachers who possess a pre-intern certificate, an intern credential, or an emergency permit may also participate in the District PAR program. Beginning Participating Teachers shall only be involved in the peer assistance component of this program. Within six (6) weeks of ratification of this successor agreement, a joint committee will explore the possibility of the Consulting Teacher assisting and reviewing the Beginning Participating Teacher.

g. Consulting Teacher: A Consulting Teacher is a permanent teacher selected by the Peer Assistance and Review Panel to provide support to a Participating Teacher and/or to assume additional responsibilities determined as appropriate by the Peer Assistance and Review Panel. The Consulting teacher shall be released on a full-time basis. The responsibilities may include:

   i. Assistance and guidance to Beginning Participating Teachers.
   
   ii. Formative and summative evaluation of Referred Participating teachers.

3.08.3 Peer Assistance and Review Panel

a. The PAR Panel shall consist of seven (7) members, the majority of whom shall be certificated classroom teachers who are chosen to serve by the Association. The District shall choose the administrators of the Joint Panel. Consensus is the preferred decision making model. However,
when consensus cannot be reached, a simple majority is needed for all decisions related exclusively to the Peer Assistance and Review Program and five (5) votes shall be required for all other decisions.

b. The PAR Panel will establish its own standing rules and meeting schedule. To meet, five (5) members of the PAR Panel must be present. Teachers who are members of the PAR Panel shall be released from their regular duties to attend PAR Panel meetings.

c. The PAR Panel shall be responsible for the following:

i. Reviewing peer review reports prepared by Consulting Teachers and making recommendations regarding permanent teachers to the District governing board.

ii. Annually recommending, in consultation with the Superintendent and/or his/her designee, a budget for the PAR/BTSA Program that shall be subject to final review and approval by the Superintendent and school board.

iii. Annually evaluating the impact of the program in order to continually improve the program using evaluation criteria developed at the inception of the program. Establishing its own procedures, including the method for selection of a Chair or Co-Chairs.

iv. Providing the necessary annual training for the Joint panel members.

v. Selecting and evaluating the Consulting Teachers who are not performing effectively.

vi. Selecting trainers and/or training providers.

vii. Providing ongoing training for Consulting Teachers.

viii. Distributing, at the beginning of each school year, a copy of the description and guidelines governing the program to all bargaining unit members, administrators and school board.

ix. Making all decisions about eligibility for the program consistent with this agreement.

x. Determining the number of Consulting Teachers in any school year based upon participation in the PAR program, the budget available and other relevant considerations.

xi. Approving assignment of additional staff to provide instructional and curricular support to Participating Teachers.

d. Bargaining unit members of the PAR Panel shall be paid their per diem rate for up to ten (10) extra days per year if required for the program. Bargaining unit members shall receive an annual stipend (see Exhibit “D-8”).
e. All proceedings and materials related to evaluations, reports and other personnel matters shall be strictly confidential. Therefore, PAR Panel members, Consulting Teachers, and principals may disclose such information only as necessary to administer this article.

f. A PAR Panel member shall neither participate in discussion or vote on any matter in which he/she has a professional or personal conflict of interest with regard to a program participant.

g. The District shall indemnify and hold harmless members of the PAR Panel from any lawsuit or claim arising out of the performance of their duties under this program.

3.09 Participating Teachers

3.09.1 Referred Participating Teacher

a. A Referred Participating Teacher is a teacher with permanent status who has been referred to receive assistance to improve his or her instructional skills, classroom management, knowledge of subject, and/or related aspects of his or her teaching performance as a result of an unsatisfactory Summary Evaluation.

b. The Referred Participating Teacher shall have the right to submit a written response within twenty (20) days of receipt of the Summary Evaluation and have it attached to the final report. The Referred Participating Teacher shall also have the right to request a meeting with the PAR Panel and to be represented at this meeting by the Association representative of his or her choice.

c. The Referred Participating Teacher has the right to be represented throughout these procedures by the Association representative of his or her choice.

3.09.2 Volunteer Participating Teacher

a. A Volunteer Participating Teacher is a teacher with permanent status who volunteers to participate in the PAR Program. A Volunteer Participating Teacher may terminate his/her participation in the PAR Program at any time.

b. All communication and documentation between the consulting Teacher and a Volunteer Participating Teacher shall be confidential and, without the written consent of the Volunteer Participating Teacher, shall not be shared with others including the site principal, the evaluator, or the PAR Panel.

c. Any such documentation produced while the teacher is a Volunteer Participating Teacher shall be the property of the Volunteer Participating Teacher and shall not be placed in the personnel file.

3.09.3 Beginning Participating Teacher

a. A Beginning Participating Teacher shall receive assistance from a Consulting Teacher as part of the Beginning Teacher Program. The
Consulting Teacher shall not participate in an evaluation of the Beginning Participating Teacher. Beginning teachers shall participate in the program for two (2) years.

b. Short-term (less than 75%) contract teachers shall be provided assistance as determined by the PAR Panel and the availability of resources. The PAR Panel shall have the authority to reject or accept such candidates.

3.09.4 Consulting Teachers

a. A Consulting Teacher is a teacher who provides assistance to a Participating Teacher pursuant to the Peer Assistance and Review Program. The following shall constitute minimum qualifications for the Consulting Teacher:

i. A credentialed classroom teacher with permanent status.

ii. Five (5) years of recent experience in classroom instruction.

iii. Demonstrate exemplary teaching ability, as indicated by, among other thing, effective interpersonal communication skills, subject matter knowledge and mastery of a range of teaching strategies necessary to meet the needs of pupils indifferent context.

iv. Submit two (2) references from individuals with specific knowledge of his or her expertise as follows:

a). Reference from a building principal or immediate supervisor.

b). A reference from another classroom teacher.

b. All applications and references shall be treated with confidentiality.

c. Consulting Teachers shall be selected by the PAR Panel in accordance with section 3.08 of this agreement.

d. The term of the Consulting Teacher shall be three (3) years, and a teacher may not serve in the position for more than one (1) consecutive term. For the year of selection, terms will be staggered at three (3), four (4) and five (5) years as determined by lottery. The Lead Consulting Teacher may serve up to a 5-year term. In order to preserve the integrity and fulfill the intent of this Peer Assistance and Review Program, applicants must agree not to enter an administrative training program during his or her term no be appointed to an administrative position during such a term nor be appointed to any such a position for one school year following their term.

e. Consulting Teachers shall provide support on a full-time basis for the purpose of observing Participating Teachers and meeting with them to plan and provide support and assistance. In addition, the PAR Panel may authorize additional support appropriate to meet the needs of the Participating Teacher.
f. Functions and other PAR responsibilities as defined by subdivisions g and m of 3540.1 of the Government Code and Education Code, Article 4.5, section 44503(b) performed pursuant to this Article by bargaining unit members shall not constitute either management or supervisory functions. The Consulting Teacher shall retain all rights of bargaining unit members. In addition to the regular salary, a Consulting Teacher shall have a work year that includes an additional five (5) days. Up to an additional five (5) days may be assigned at per diem rate based on program needs. The Consulting Teacher shall receive an annual stipend (see Exhibit “D-8”). This stipend may be prorated if the service is less than one (1) year. Stipends are contingent on continued state funding of the PAR Program.

g. Upon completion of his/her service as a full-time released Consulting Teacher, a teacher has a right to return to his/her original site.

h. The District shall indemnify and hold harmless individual Consulting Teachers from any lawsuit or claim arising out of the performance of their duties under this program.

i. Consulting Teachers shall assist Participating Teachers by demonstrating, observing, coaching, conferencing, referring or providing other activities that, in their professional judgment, will assist the Referred Participating Teacher.

j. The Consulting Teacher shall meet with the Referred Participating Teacher and the principal to discuss the performance goals, develop the improvement plan and develop a process for determining successful completion of the PAR program.

k. The Consulting Teacher shall conduct multiple observations of the Referred Participating Teacher during classroom instruction, including periodic pre-observation and post-observation conferences.

l. The Consulting Teacher shall monitor the progress of the Referred Participating Teacher as it relates to the California Standards for the Teaching Profession, and shall provide periodic written reports to the Referred Participating Teacher and principal for discussion and review. A copy of each of the Consulting Teacher’s reports shall be submitted to and discussed with the Referred Participating Teacher to receive his or her signature before it is submitted to the PAR Panel. The Referred Participating Teacher’s signing of the report does not necessarily mean agreement, but rather that he or she has received a copy of the report. The Consulting Teacher shall submit the summary Evaluation to the PAR Panel.

m. The Consulting Teacher shall complete the referred teacher summary evaluation form (y-1) and the form shall be signed by the Consulting Teacher, the principal. Should the principal be in disagreement with the summary evaluation written by the Consulting Teacher, the principal shall prepare a separate summary evaluation (y-2) using the Referred Teacher Summary Evaluation Form for Administrators. This form shall be signed by the principal, the Referred Teacher, and the Consulting Teacher.
3.09.5 Referred Teacher Intervention Program.

a. The primary purpose of this program is to provide assistance and remediation to those teachers who have received unsatisfactory evaluations.

b. Assistance and remedial efforts shall be preceded by a conference in the spring of the year the teacher receives the unsatisfactory evaluation. The conference shall involve the teacher being referred, the evaluator who evaluated the teacher, and the Consulting Teacher or the Coordinator of the PAR Program. The teacher may request SJTA representation at the conference.

c. During the period of assistance, the referred teacher's performance relative to the PAR Program guidelines shall be the joint responsibility of the PAR Panel and Consulting Teacher, in collaboration with the principal.

d. Communication and consultation with the principal shall be ongoing. The Consulting Teacher shall share all written evaluation reports during a conference with the Referred Participating Teacher at least every six (6) weeks. Copies of the written reports will be provided to the principal and the PAR Panel.

e. If at any time during the period of assistance, the PAR Panel determines that the Referred Participating Teacher is unwilling or unable to meet the standards of performance, the PAR Panel may recommend to the Superintendent/designee an issuance of a notice of unsatisfactory performance per Education Code Section 44938.

f. At the conclusion of the year of remediation, the PAR Panel shall determine that:

i. The Referred Teacher is now proficient according to California Standards for the Teaching Profession, or

ii. The intervention may be extended to a second year if the PAR Panel believes progress is being made and the teacher has a reasonable opportunity to meet the standards with an additional year of support, or

iii. Further assistance and remediation will not be successful with reasons in support of this conclusion. The School Board may at such time initiate dismissal proceeding.

g. The deliberation of the PAR Panel shall be closed and confidential. All decisions shall be based upon the information provided by the Consulting Teacher, the principal, the Referred Teacher and/or the SJTA representative.

h. The results of the Referred Participating Teacher's participation in the PAR Program shall be made available for placement in his or her personnel file and shall be used in the evaluation of the Referred Participating Teacher.
3.09.6 Referred Participating Teacher Due Process Rights

a. The Referred Participating Teacher shall be entitled to review all reports generated by the Consulting Teacher prior to their submission to the PAR Panel. The member shall be given the opportunity to attach his/her comments to any report submitted to the PAR Panel. The member shall receive copies of such reports at least five (5) working days prior to any such meeting.

b. The Referred Participating Teacher shall have the right to be represented by SJTA in any meeting of the PAR Panel that the Referred Participating Teacher is entitled to attend and shall be given a reasonable opportunity to present his/her view concerning any report being made.

c. Disagreements regarding the procedures in preparing the annual evaluation, which is used as the basis for a referral, shall be subject to an expedited grievance procedure, which shall be concluded prior to the beginning of the next school year. Consistent with 3.04.9 of the Collective Bargaining Contract, the substance of the employee’s evaluation for competency is not arbitrable.

d. Upon the teacher’s written request, all materials at least four (4) years old that are related to the Referred Participating Teacher Intervention Program, shall be removed from the personnel file and placed in a separate, sealed file, consistent with 3.05.9 of the Collective Bargaining Contract.

The PAR Panel in no way diminishes the legal rights of District or bargaining unit members.
Syracuse City School District: Peer Assistance and Review

Perspective from:
Kate McKenna, former President of Syracuse Teachers Association

Origins

In 1999, the state of New York mandated that all school districts review their teacher evaluation systems. Syracuse City School District continued its practice of employing labor-management teams to tackle teacher evaluation and constructed a team of diverse stakeholders to review its evaluation system. The team included higher education representatives, parents, teachers, students, and administrators. Kate McKenna, former president of the Syracuse Teachers Association (STA), partnered with former Assistant Superintendent of Personnel, Pat Hall, and conducted meetings for one year on teacher evaluation. Their central goal was to establish a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program in the district.

Process

Although the Superintendent at the time, Dr. Jones, was in favor of PAR, other fractious contractual issues existed between the union and the district. McKenna recalls inviting the Superintendent to lunch to work through a grievance filed by the union. She said, “It’s hard to sit across from somebody and eat without talking.” The two worked out an informal agreement and shook hands after eating.

In 2001, an extremely difficult contract negotiation led union members to picket in front of the Superintendent’s home. This incident appeared in the local newspaper and increased tensions between the union and district. Eventually, representatives from the Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration (PARCC) at Syracuse University offered to assist parties in the district. The third party facilitation conducted by PARCC put the union and district on a path towards “interest-based” negotiations. As McKenna saw it, “It was like having a marriage counselor…the Superintendent and the union President have a long-term relationship that cannot end in divorce…you always have to go back to the other person the next day.”

The external facilitation led to improvements in district relations between the union and Superintendent. McKenna recalls that each teacher contract she negotiated became easier and better over her 11 year tenure. The first contract she negotiated during her tenure had been very challenging and resulted in “standard head-to-head issues over money.” The second contract, with some external facilitation from others, was developed in a different atmosphere, with productive conversations with management at and away from the bargaining table. The conversations away from the table helped each side understand the aims of the other and provided space to explore new options. The third contract negotiation was developed entirely...
with the guidance of a third-party facilitator, with the union and district splitting facilitation costs.

Improved district relationships proved extremely valuable when an eleventh hour grievance from the principals’ union in 2005 “shocked” the PAR workgroup and threatened to derail the Syracuse PAR program. But the prior external facilitation had improved labor-management relationships and gave district stakeholders the tools and skills to work through the grievance. The result was a consensus among management, the teachers’ union, and the principals’ union and a memorandum of understanding that preserved the district’s PAR program.

**Recommendations**

McKenna recommended that districts wishing to improve labor-management collaboration consider several items: training in “interest–based problem solving,” external facilitation, budget transparency, ensuring systems are in place to solve disagreements, and modeling an attitude of cooperation at the highest levels. McKenna said that the Superintendent is a key figure who sets the tone for district administrators, as does the union President for his or her constituencies. The administration and the union must work as a team, she said, to provide a context for the collaboration and to ensure that all stakeholders are fully informed of key decisions. This process of direct communication must go beyond mailing newsletters and posting online messages. Stakeholders must have access to current and accurate information.
Syracuse City School District

Peer Assistance and Review Program (PAR)

Daniel G. Lowengard
Superintendent of Schools

Revised July 25, 2008
The Syracuse Plan began in 2005 and was the vision and passion of the Syracuse Teachers Association (STA) President, Katherine A. McKenna. The Syracuse Plan is a cooperative union/management program of teacher evaluation for first-year teachers in Syracuse, New York. The Syracuse Plan is a teacher performance tool based on peer assistance, coaching, and evaluation. The foundation of this program is a belief in teacher quality as the key to student success. To that end, STA and the administrative staff of the Syracuse City School District (SCSD) will work collaboratively to plan and implement a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program in our District. The PAR program identifies outstanding, experienced teachers called “consultant teachers” to support, guide, and evaluate newly hired teachers called “interns” in the SCSD.

The PAR Panel is the governing body of the Syracuse PAR Program. The Panel consists of five appointed union representatives named by the STA President and four management representatives appointed by the Superintendent of Schools with the agreement of the SAAS President. The union and management will work to achieve consensus regarding panel members; however, STA and the SCSD retain the right to appoint their respective members. The chair of the PAR Panel will rotate annually between the President of the Syracuse Teachers Association and the Superintendent’s Designee from the Personnel Department.

The PAR Panel interviews and recommends to the Superintendent teachers to be hired as consultant teachers. The panel also:

1. manages the budget;
2. plans and identifies applicable professional development;
3. assigns 12-15 interns to each consultant;
4. sends a letter to the administrator and intern informing each of the assigned PAR consultants;
5. accepts or rejects the evaluation recommendations of the consultant teachers;
6. makes employment recommendations regarding interns to the Superintendent;
7. monitors and evaluates consultant teachers’ performance;
8. notifies the divisional director when a PAR consultant is to return to a classroom assignment;
9. oversees implementation of the Tenured Teacher Intervention Program; and
10. takes responsibility for all other aspects of the program.

The evaluation process is one of continuous mutual goal-setting, based on detailed observations and follow-up conferences. The consultant teacher and first-year teacher will establish goals for ongoing improvement based on specific evaluation criteria. The criteria are those contained in the Model for Practitioner Evaluation as adopted by the Board of Education. Consultant teachers will submit periodic reports to the PAR Panel regarding the performance and status of each intern they are supporting.

Communication between the consultant teacher and the building administrator is expected and encouraged and shall include the following:

**Formal**

1. The exchange conference will be held with the principal or designated building administrator, the consultant teacher, and the intern.
2. Discussion will be held between the building administrator and the consultant teacher prior to the first PAR report.
3. Discussion will be held between the building administrator and the consultant teacher prior to the final PAR report.

**Informal**

Ongoing, periodic conversations, particularly when interventions are needed, will be part of the communication between each consultant teacher and administrator.

Administrators will not conduct formal evaluations of interns in the PAR program. Administrators retain the right to evaluate in areas of non-pedagogical performance regarding the interns’ compliance with school and district regulations (e.g., attendance, adherence to school policies, discipline procedures) using the Principal Summary Form. In the event that concerns are identified, these concerns will be communicated to the intern and the consultant using the on-going communication process described above. This information will be included in the evaluation presented to the PAR Panel.

Consultant teachers will follow the timeline established in the *Model for Practitioner Evaluation*. They will complete and present their evaluations of interns’ progress to the PAR Panel according to the calendar approved by the Panel annually. The Panel must achieve a vote of 6 or more to overturn the recommendation of the consultant. The Panel will then forward a final recommendation regarding the interns’ employment status to the Superintendent and the building principal.

The building principal is always welcome to attend the PAR Panel presentations. In the event that a building principal has a concern regarding the final recommendation of an intern, s/he will present her/his concerns to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will then forward a recommendation to the Board of Education for action.

During the subsequent years of the probationary appointment, it is the responsibility of administrators to evaluate and make recommendations regarding the status of the teacher using the same standards and criteria as those contained in the *Model for Practitioner Evaluation*.

The Personnel Department will continue the role of monitoring the evaluation process, i.e. collecting and recording the number of exchange conferences completed, collecting and recording the number of evaluations completed, and forwarding the tenure endorsements to the Superintendent. Copies of all evaluations will continue to be filed in accordance with current practices.

**Compensation:**

Consultant teachers will receive an additional 10% of base salary during the course of the school year to be paid in 20 installments between September 1st and June 30th. The consultant teacher will work a flexible schedule to include time during the summer months for planning, staff development, or orientation without further compensation.

All PAR Panel members will be paid a stipend of $2,000 per school year to be paid quarterly.
PAR PROCEDURES

Eligibility
Must be a first-year practitioner to be assigned a PAR consultant teacher.

Interns will be prioritized in the following manner:
1. Transitional “B” certificated teachers
2. Two-year tenure track teachers
3. Teachers in high needs area
4. Other practitioners suggested by the Superintendent or designee

Evaluation

Personnel Evaluation Report Form
The building principal will complete this form including naming the PAR consultant teacher as the person responsible for evaluation.

Principal Summary Form
Principals will use this form to indicate the intern's compliance with school and district regulations.

Although the form is reviewed with the consultant teacher and then made part of the overall evaluation, principals will review and discuss this information with interns. The principal must discuss problems with the consultant teacher so that improved performance in the areas referred to above can be reinforced with the intern.

The consultant teachers will document all interventions and the response to these interventions in evaluations.

The formal written evaluations will be given to the designated building administrator as they are submitted to personnel.

The STA, SAAS, and the SCSD have the responsibility to conduct an annual review and evaluation of the program. The program can be modified with the consent of the parties.

Qualifications for Consultant Teachers
Prospective consultant teachers will submit an application to the Director of Personnel. The minimum qualifications are:
1. NYS Permanent Teaching Certificate
2. Five years of current classroom teaching service
3. Tenure in the SCSD
4. Demonstrated ability to work with adult learners

Applicants should:
1. Be prepared to provide an impromptu writing sample.
2. Agree to an unannounced observation of classroom teaching.
3. Be prepared and available to participate in required professional development.
4. Provide recommendations from one building administrator.
5. Provide recommendations from three (3) teachers familiar with the candidate’s performance, one must be from an STA Building Representative in the current assignment.
Selection
After a preliminary paper screening by the PAR Panel, selected applicants will be interviewed. A member of the PAR Panel will conduct an unannounced observation of identified candidates’ teaching performance.

The PAR Panel will then select the consultant teachers using an interview process. Candidates will be recommended to the Superintendent for appointment.

Every year consultant teachers and consultants-in-waiting will be hired and/or identified to meet the number of interns employed by the District. The Superintendent will determine the number of consultant teachers and recommend that support in the annual school budget.

Conditions of Assignment
Consultant teachers will be expected to work a flexible schedule during the school year and the summer to accommodate additional responsibilities. They will also participate in all training identified by the PAR Panel.

Consultant teachers may serve a maximum of three (3) years and must return to the classroom after completing that term. A consultant teacher may not move directly to administration or another TSA position in the SCSD from this position.

Return to Home School
Consultant teachers shall notify the PAR Panel in writing if they desire to return to a classroom position at the end of each school year (years 1 and 2). It is assumed that the consultant teachers will return to their last school of record unless they express a desire to be considered for a teaching position in another school. In the latter case, the consultant teachers will follow district Request for Transfer procedures.

It is understood that consultant teachers will return to a classroom position at the end of the three-year term. If this causes an excess of teachers in any given building, District procedures will be followed.

Location
The STA will house the program as an in-kind service. It is intended that suitable District office space will be located to accommodate the program as it expands.

Veteran Teachers
The PAR program will be expanded to provide support for veteran teachers in the following manner:

1. Veteran teachers may request the support of a PAR consultant when they are experiencing temporary difficulties and/or are placed on an Assistance Plan.
2. Veteran teachers who do not successfully discharge the terms of an initial Assistance Plan or who are moved to a Corrective Action plan may be placed with a PAR consultant for support by the administrator.
3. Consultant teachers will help to develop the Assistance or Corrective Action Plans with the teacher and the administrator in charge of evaluation.
4. The consultant teacher will work with teachers to provide support in the areas identified and will not evaluate tenured teachers.
5. The consultant teacher will report his/her findings regarding progress with the identified elements of the Assistance or Corrective Action plans to the PAR Panel. This information cannot be used in a 3020A process other than noting participation.
Memorandum of Understanding
Between the Syracuse City School District
Syracuse Association of Administrators and Supervisors (SAAS) and
Syracuse Teachers Association (STA)

Whereas the District entered into a contract with STA requiring a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program; and

Whereas the District is desirous of having an effective PAR Program done in collaboration with SAAS, STA, and the District; and

Whereas the program is designed to enhance the current evaluation system for first year practitioners, not as a mentoring program, nor as a dual evaluation program; and

Whereas the District recognizes the critical role the administrators play in the evaluation process; now, therefore, be it

Resolved That the PAR Program will run as designed in the Syracuse Plan and in this Memorandum of Understanding until June 2012; and, be it further

Resolved That the PAR program process for the 2008-2009 through the 2011-2012 school year will be determined by the PAR Panel, which consists of representatives of STA, SAAS, and the District; and, be it further

Resolved That the terms for panel members, other than those designated for co-chairs, are for three years but may be renewed once; and, be it further

Resolved That first year practitioners (interns) are the only practitioners to be evaluated in the 2008-2009 through the 2011-2012 school years; and be it further

Resolved That the administrators in these buildings may continue to observe, but not be responsible to conduct the formal evaluations of these interns, and will participate in continued discussions with the PAR consultant teachers; and, be it further

Resolved That the content and design of the Principal Summary Form has been mutually agreed upon (see attached); and, be it further

Resolved That the principals, if there is a disagreement on the final employment recommendation regarding the interns, will present their concerns to the Superintendent; and, be it further
Resolved That the STA, SAAS, and the District have the joint responsibility to conduct an annual review and evaluation of the program; and, be it further

Resolved That should issues emerge in the annual program review and evaluation, the parties agree to amend the program as needed; and, be it further

Resolved That the District understands that this program does not alter the contract language which specifies the responsibility of supervision conducted by the administrative unit; now, therefore, be it

Resolved That the agreement is for the 2008-2012 school years only, and SAAS has waived any claim or time to assert a claim under its collective bargaining agreement with the District concerning the PAR program for only this period.

________________________________________________________________________
James D. Cannon
Syracuse Association of Administrators and Supervisors (SAAS)

________________________________________________________________________
Katherine A. McKenna
Syracuse Teachers Association (STA)

________________________________________________________________________
Daniel G. Lowengard
Superintendent of Schools

Date: _______________________
Peer Assistance and Review Program

**PRINCIPAL SUMMARY FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intern Name</th>
<th>Grade or Subject</th>
<th>School</th>
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<tbody>
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Check one: Period of Sept-Nov ☐ Period of Dec-Mar ☐ May ☐

**Satisfactory:** Performance shows expected and desired professional qualities and growth.

*Unsatisfactory:* Performance shows serious weaknesses and deficiencies.

*Unsatisfactory must have a written supportive statement.*

I. **ABSENCE:** Illness _____ Professional _____ Personal _____ Late Arrival _____

Date began in this assignment:

II. **Adherence to:**
   a. written district policy
   b. building policy and procedures
   c. district and building discipline procedures

III. **Punctuality with reports, records, etc.**

IV. **Cooperation and communication with parents**

V. **Cooperation and collaboration with other school personnel**

**Evidence for items I to V or other documented information:**

Signatures indicate that the principal and the intern have reviewed and discussed this report.

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Principal’s Signature Date

Intern’s Signature Date

Consultant Teacher’s Signature Date
PAR Panel Members

Kevin Ahern – 3 years
Jaime Alicea - Co-chair
Mary Lou Balcom – 3 years
Patty Clark – 3 years
Kate McKenna – Co-chair
Linda Mulvey – 2 years
Brian Nolan – 1 year
Stephanie Pelcher – 3 years
Jolene Todd – 2 years

Consultant Teachers

Patricia Baker (third year 2008-09)
Joan Brown (third year 2009-10)
Sara Montgomery-Lee (third year 2008-09)
Nicholas Stamoulacatos (third year 2010-11)

In-waiting

Kevin Mixon
Joan Reilley
Areli Shermerhorn
Richard Kharas
The Syracuse City School District hereby advises students, parents, employees, and the general public that it offers employment and educational opportunities, including vocational education opportunities, without regard to age, gender, race, color religion, marital status, sexual preference, national origin or disability.