

INTENSIVE PLAN OF ASSISTANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Background

An evaluation may reveal that a teacher's performance is below system expectations. When this happens we have a professional obligation, and an ethical and humanitarian obligation, to initiate reasonable efforts to assist the teacher to improve his or her performance to a satisfactory level. A well-designed and carefully implemented plan of assistance will reflect our interest in the welfare of students, our compassion for the teacher and our loyalty to both.

All written documentation regarding the Plan of Assistance must be the property of both the teacher and his/her employer.

A Plan of Assistance serves three basic purposes:

- To provide formal support to a teacher whose performance level is unacceptable in order to assist the teacher in meeting the expectations of the school system. In other words, an assistance plan should create a reasonable opportunity, as well as an expectation, that there will be sufficient improvement.
- To reinforce the essential attitude that the primary purpose for evaluating teacher performance is to enhance learning opportunities for students through the increased effectiveness and professional growth of teaching personnel.
- To utilize the Plan of Assistance as support for an administrative action, in particular if the teacher appeals the action to a higher authority.

Procedures

1. Step 1: Specify Performance Expectations

The teacher must be made aware of what the expectations are for his/her performance. These expectations must be consistent with those defined in the school system's procedures and reviewed with the teacher prior to the evaluation process. The expectations must be communicated in written form and also re-stated for the teacher's benefit at the beginning of the Plan of Assistance.

2. Step 2: Identify Problem Areas

When evaluation reports suggest that a teacher's performance is unsatisfactory relative to the requirements specified in Step 1 (i.e. the teacher does not meet the expectations of the school system), then it must be indicated to the teacher exactly what the problem areas are in relation to the performance expectations. The behavior that we expect the teacher to demonstrate at the conclusion of the assistance plan, and an indication of a reasonable timeline within which this satisfactory level of improved performance must be noted, will be made clear to the teacher.

3. Step 3: Establish Objectives for Improvement

Once the teacher has understood the performance expectations held for him/her, he/she must take primary responsibility for formulating objectives for improvement.

- 3.1 The objectives in the improvement plan must bear a direct relationship to the performance expectations held out to the teacher.
- 3.2 The number of objectives included in the improvement plan must be limited to those considered critical to the teacher's ability to reach a satisfactory level of performance.
- 3.3 The teacher may seek the assistance of colleagues as Assistance Team members in the formulation of objectives for improvement; where necessary, Assistance Team members will be granted release time from their regular duties.

4. Step 4: Develop Interventions

During this step the corrective activities, strategies or interventions that are intended to assist the teacher in reaching the objectives for improvement are to be articulated.

Possible types of interventions may include:

- 4.1 Help that the Assistance Team will provide (e.g. one-to-one workshop/ inservice activities, demonstration teaching, monitoring classroom performance, modifying conditions, conferencing, giving advice).
- 4.2 Help from other people (e.g. peer observation, demonstrations, visiting the classrooms of master teachers).
- 4.3 Special materials or opportunities (e.g. reference materials, inservice opportunities, instructional materials, etc.).

The interventions shall be directly related to the objectives, designed by the teacher, as s/he attempts to reach the necessary level of teacher performance.

5. Step 5: Determine a Time Schedule

A time schedule specifying when corrective activities and interventions will occur, and the date upon which the assistance plan will be terminated, must be made clear. The time frame must be consistent with what the teacher's evaluator has provided as a reasonable timeline for improved performance.

6. Step 6: Specify Monitoring Methods

The Plan of Assistance must take place as intended. It is therefore desirable to build in certain observation and check point activities and a schedule for these as a formal written part of the plan. The teacher may request peer coaching/observation feedback from members of the Assistance Team. This undertaking will require an unfailing commitment from each member of the Assistance Team and from the teacher involved.

7. Step 7: Evaluation

The original evaluator(s) must be involved in the final teacher evaluation, so as to provide as much consistency as possible. At the Director's discretion, an additional evaluator may be named to provide a further objective opinion. At the conclusion of the Plan of Assistance, a new summative evaluation of the teacher's performance level shall be undertaken, with a focus on an assessment of the degree to which the teacher has met the performance expectations described to him/her at the outset of the Plan of Assistance. This end-point evaluation shall focus only on data relevant to those areas where the teacher's performance was not first seen as having been at an acceptable level.

Legal Reference: Section 80, 85, 108, 109, 175, 231, Education Act