

Professional Practice

Newsletter of the WSD/WenEA Evaluation Team

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Improving Certificated Evaluation in the Wenatchee School District

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Wenatchee School District/Wenatchee Education Association Evaluation Team. The members of the team are eager to review how our current certificated performance evaluation system meets our needs, and to research best practices to recommend a more meaningful and valuable process. Our current evaluation system has been in place since 1987 and looks at one aspect of professional teaching - performance of a list of teaching behaviors associated with direct instruction. Certificated Staff make many other important contributions to their students, colleagues, schools and districts. Our system predates changes in the educational landscape such as the WASL (Washington Assessment of Student Learning) and AYP (adequate yearly progress under the No Child Left Behind legislation). After a one to two year study, the committee will make recommendations to our negotiations team for approval and/or modification. The goal is to pilot a new evaluation process in the 2005-2006 school year.

Have an idea? Complaint? Concern? Question?

Your input is vital to this process and we encourage you to contact team representatives at any time. There will also be formal opportunities to provide feedback and share ideas and concerns throughout the study as well. We will provide regular updates in this newsletter to keep you informed about information we are gathering, the discussions surrounding it, and where we are in the process of the study and pilot. We will also try to print answers to your questions.

Calendar of Evaluation Team Meetings

The Evaluation Team met at the District Office on October 21, and will continue to meet once each month on the following dates:

November 4	February 3	May 11
December 2	March 15	June 14
January 13	April 19	Summer TBD

"Problems cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them."

-Albert Einstein

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What the Law Says

Current Washington State law says teachers' responsibilities are to:

- follow prescribed curriculum
- enforce rules and regulations of the school district
- maintain and render records and reports
- direct and control studies of pupils
- evaluate each pupil's educational growth and development
- attend required meetings
- maintain order and discipline in their classrooms
- report problems with maintenance of a "healthful atmosphere"
- be at school 30 minutes before and after the school day unless a waiver has been approved

Current minimum evaluation criteria for certificated classroom teachers is:

- instructional skill
- classroom management
- professional preparation and scholarship
- effort toward improvement when needed
- handling of student discipline
- interest and enjoyment in teaching individual pupils
- knowledge of subject matter

Current minimum evaluation criteria for certificated support personnel is:

- knowledge and scholarship in special field and integration into total school milieu
- specialized skills
- management of special and technical environment
- self-awareness and professional growth
- involvement in providing assistance to pupils, parents and educational personnel

The law states that the purpose of evaluation is to identify satisfactory or outstanding performance, identify areas in need of improvement, and to assist in making identified improvements.

To read our state laws regarding evaluation, go to:
<http://slc.leg.wa.gov/>

Are You Well-groomed?

At its first meeting in October, Gayle Northcutt, provided the Evaluation Team with a brief history of evaluation in the Wenatchee School District. One of the first evaluation systems began in 1967 and evaluated teachers in many areas, including the following personal attributes:

- Dresses appropriately and is well groomed
- Uses voice effectively - - pleasant
- Demonstrates good physical health and vitality
- Demonstrates mental alertness
- Has a sense of humor and is cheerful
- Demonstrates poise and self-control
- Displays tolerance, open mindedness, flexibility and receptiveness to new ideas
- Accepts criticism and praise with grace
- Uses good English - - oral and written
- Shows interest in areas other than his own.

The initial evaluation system took into account activities both inside and outside the classroom, including professional development activities and membership in professional organizations. It also looked at involvement in "activities which lead to personal growth and satisfaction and contribute to a healthy, well-balanced person (participation in community affairs, non-professional reading, hobbies, attendance at cultural affairs, recreation, travel, etc.) Teachers were observed a minimum of five times in their first year of employment, four the second year, three the third year, and once every four years after that.

When the Washington State Legislature created a change in legal language regarding certificated staff evaluation, the District and Association modified our system to align with the new state regulations. Our district was chosen to pilot a new state evaluation model that included innovative approaches such as significant staff development and peer evaluation with release time for observation and mentoring of colleagues. This was part of the District's Instructional Model Program. A double levy failure in 1987 eliminated funding for many of these promising programs and our evaluation system has not substantially changed since that time.

Our contract language regarding evaluation is still used as a model by many other school districts.