

# Arkansas Leader Excellence and Development System Overview

## History

During the 87<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, the Arkansas State Legislature passed Act 222 of 2009, Arkansas Code Annotated 6-1-400 Et. Seq. that states:

***The purpose of the School Leadership Coordinating Council is to: Aid in the development of model evaluation tools for use in the evaluation of school administrators.***

Act 222 created the School Leadership Coordinating Council that established the formation of the Principal Evaluation Task Force to develop a model Principal Evaluation System for use with principals and assistant principals. The members of the Task Force were representative of many stakeholder groups throughout Arkansas: superintendents, principals, teachers, educational cooperatives, institutions of higher education, the school board association, and other education associations. The Task Force officially convened on September 21, 2010. To begin their work the Task Force established a vision and purpose.

## Vision

The Arkansas Principal Evaluation System enhances teaching and learning by expanding the knowledge and skills of educational leaders.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Arkansas Principal Evaluation System is to:

- Provide a cohesive process that includes clear expectations to guide principal preparation, induction, and continued professional development.
- Guide and sustain excellent leadership performance that ensures the improvement of teaching and learning.
- Assist higher education programs in developing the content and requirements of degree programs that prepare prospective principals.
- Provide a process that includes instruments to be used by reflective practitioners to promote their professional growth.

In order to support the implementation of the Arkansas Principal Evaluation System, the 88<sup>th</sup> General Assembly passed Act 1209 of 2011, Arkansas Code Annotated 6-17-2809 Et. Seq which states:

***The Department of Education shall provide technical assistance to school districts for developing and implementing instruments to evaluate administrators that weight an administrator evaluation on student performance and growth to the same extent as provided for teachers under the Teacher Excellence and Support System.***

## **Structure**

The Task Force established a framework for the Principal Evaluation System that is designed to align with The Interstate School Leaders' Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards. These standards were adopted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) and are used as the framework for leadership development throughout Arkansas. The Arkansas Principal Evaluation System is designed to incorporate the six major ISSLC standards comprised of thirty-one functions. Additional descriptors have been added to define levels of performance with credit given to *The Leadership and Learning Center* and the work of Dr. Connie Kamm.

## **Introduction to Levels of Performance**

The following categories represent the various performance levels in the Arkansas Principal Evaluation System: Exemplary, Proficient, Progressing, and Not Meeting Standards. The purpose of the levels of performance is to advance professional growth of principals to ensure improved student learning.

### **Exemplary**

Principals performing at the *exemplary* level have made a contribution to the profession both in and outside their school system. Exemplary performance not only meets the requirements for the proficient level but goes beyond and thus creates a model to which other principals can aspire. Principals at the exemplary level have assumed considerable responsibility for their own learning. They routinely share their ideas, mentor other principals, and see their role as agents of system-wide improvement.

### **Proficient**

The *proficient* principal's performance meets the organization's needs. Attaining the proficient level is challenging and may take years. A principal performing at the proficient level clearly understands the concepts underlying the function of each standard and implements those functions well. Proficiency is a rigorous level of achievement. Principals performing at this level are alert to practices that promote strong teaching and learning and serve as a resource to everyone in their building. In addition, they are continuously looking for ways to improve their leadership capabilities.

## **Progressing**

Principals with a *progressing* rating may reference the rubric to understand what they must do in order to become proficient. Although their current performance may be sporadic and only somewhat successful, they are motivated to take the actions necessary to become proficient. To help this person improve, additional reading, mentoring/coaching, and specific leadership trainings may be required. In addition, visitations to the schools of a proficient or exemplary leader may be included in the improvement process. Principals early in their careers are often at the progressing level, but improvement is likely to occur as they gain experience.

## **Not Meeting Standards**

Principals who have not demonstrated the necessary skills to be rated as *progressing* or *proficient* are designated as *not meeting-standards*. When performance is consistently at this level, effective organizations identify and document inadequate performance and prescribe intense intervention. If improvement is not made within a prescribed length of time, a recommendation for non-renewal of employment will result.

## Leadership Categories

Levels of leadership performance are divided into three categories: novice, inquiry and intensive.

**The Novice Category** is for individuals who are new to the district, the principalship, or have transitioned from assistant principal to principal. Principals working under an Alternative Licensure Completion Plan (ALCP) to become fully licensed remain in the novice category until the ALCP is completed.

**The Inquiry Category** is for principals who model life-long learning and consistently demonstrate progressing, proficient, and/or exemplary performance on standards and functions in the Arkansas Principal Evaluation Rubric.

**The Intensive Category** is for principals who receive a rating of *not-meeting-standards* on the Summative Evaluation Rubric (Form A) according to the following guidelines:

- The principal receives *not-meeting-standards* on two or more functions in Standard Two and/or
- The principal receives *not-meeting-standards* and/or *progressing* on the majority of functions in any of the standards

The evaluator may also place the principal in the intensive category if he or she receives a rating of *not-meeting-standards* on any one function critical to ethical behavior, student learning, or safety.

When a principal is placed in the intensive category, the superintendent and principal will develop a Principal Professional Intensive Growth Plan (Form C). If progress is made in year one, a principal may remain in the Intensive Category for one additional year; however, if there is limited or no progress in year one, recommendation for non-renewal of employment will occur.

## **Instructions for Principal Evaluation Process**

The Principal Evaluation Process includes the following steps:

### **Step1: Orientation**

At the beginning of the school year, the superintendent/designee conducts a group orientation with principals and provides a complete set of the Arkansas Principal Evaluation System materials outlining the evaluation process.

Orientation must be anchored on standards and functions in the Arkansas Principal Evaluation Rubric. The superintendent/designee focuses on the four levels of performance within the rubric – exemplary, proficient, progressing, and not meeting standards. In addition, the superintendent/designee explains the leadership categories: Novice, Inquiry, and Intensive.

The superintendent/designee may elect to schedule the conferences and visits for the year at this time.

- **Novice Category:** At the beginning of the year, the principal in the *Novice Category* meets with the superintendent/designee

monthly to review progress. After noted progress, future meetings can be scheduled at the discretion of the superintendent/designee.

- **Inquiry Category:** The principal in the *Inquiry Category* meets with the superintendent/designee at least twice a year to review progress.
- **Intensive Category:** The principal in the *Intensive Category* meets with the superintendent/designee at least monthly and possibly more often depending on the needs identified at previous meetings.

## **Step 2: Principal Evaluation Rubric (Form A) for Self-Assessment, Principal Staff Leadership Survey (Form E - optional), and Principal Evaluation Rubric (Form A) for Superintendent Initial Assessment**

The principal begins the evaluation process with the Principal Evaluation Rubric (Form A) for Self-Assessment. The principal may choose to gather input from the Principal Staff Leadership Survey (Form E). The information gathered from this survey is intended to provide information for the principal's self-reflection. The reflection process determines which standards and functions are the foci of the Principal Professional Growth Plan (Form B).

The superintendent completes the Principal Evaluation Rubric (Form A) for Superintendent Initial Assessment prior to the initial meeting (Step 3).

### **Step 3: Initial Meeting with Superintendent/Designee**

The principal meets with the district superintendent/designee to discuss ratings on the Principal Evaluation Rubric (Form A) for Self-Assessment. The superintendent/designee also discusses perceptions of the principal's performance as indicated on the Principal Evaluation Rubric (Form A) for Superintendent Initial Assessment. The superintendent/designee and the principal select the standards and functions on which the principal focuses in the Principal Professional Growth Plan (Form B). During this initial meeting, the superintendent/designee also determines the leadership category in which the principal will be placed.

### **Step 4: Principal Professional Growth Plan (Form B)**

The principal completes the Principal Professional Growth Plan (Form B or Form C for Intensive) based on the standards and functions determined during Step 3 in the initial meeting with the superintendent/designee. A review of the school's Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP) will provide data for the school's "problem of practice". In the Principal Professional Growth Plan (Form B or Form C for Intensive), the principal indicates the school's problem of practice and goal; the leadership strategies; results indicators (staff and students) and sources of data to be monitored. In addition, the principal determines the action steps needed to implement the strategies. A copy of the principal's completed Principal Professional Growth Plan (Form B or Form C for Intensive) is submitted to the superintendent/designee.

## **Step 5: Formative Assessment Conferences**

During the Formative Assessment Conferences, the principal meets with the superintendent/designee to revisit the Principal Evaluation Rubric and to discuss the principal's progress on the Professional Growth Plan (Form B or Form C for Intensive). The principal provides the data from the results indicators for teachers and students included in the Professional Growth Plan (Form B or Form C for Intensive). The superintendent/designee may ask for additional artifacts. The superintendent/designee also provides documentation from school visits, notes from principal observations, feedback received about the principal, and/or data informing results of the principal's implementation of selected leadership strategies. During this Formative Assessment Conference, the principal and the superintendent may revise the Professional Growth Plan (Form B or Form C for Intensive) to make necessary mid-course corrections based on the data from the results indicators.

The frequency of the Formative Assessment Conferences is based upon the following leadership categories.

- **Novice Category:** The superintendent/designee conducts a formative assessment conference with the principal minimally four times annually.
- **Inquiry Category:** The superintendent/designee conducts a formative assessment conference with the principal minimally twice annually. Even if it is not the year for the principal's Summative Evaluation, Formative Assessments and Conferences should be completed every year.

- **Intensive Category:** The superintendent/designee conducts monthly Formative Assessment conferences with the principal, which may result in a modification to the principal's Intensive Improvement Plan.

### **Step 6: Summative Evaluation**

The superintendent/designee completes the Principal Evaluation Rubric (Form A) for Summative Evaluation at the end of each year for principals who are in the Novice or Intensive Categories and minimally once every three years for principals in the Inquiry Category. Based on the performance levels of the rubric, the evidence of student learning and teacher growth, as well as the principal's progression on the Principal Professional Growth Plan (Form B or Form C for Intensive), the superintendent will make a recommendation concerning the principal's employment. The Principal Evaluation Rubric (Form A) for Summative Evaluation is placed yearly in the personnel file of principals in the Novice and Intensive Categories and minimally once every three years for principals in the Inquiry Category. The Principal Reflective Narrative (Form D) is completed by the principal and the superintendent and placed in the personnel file of every principal annually.