

Philosophy Statement

The philosophy of supervision/evaluation of the Saranac Lake Central School District is two-fold: staff supervision (designed to promote professional competencies) and staff evaluation (designed to assess professional competencies).

This philosophy is based upon the following beliefs and assumptions:

1. Instructional improvement occurs as a process, not as an event
2. Individuals are motivated when they are involved in determining personal goals and objectives to guide their professional practices.
3. Individual performance can improve when standards for achievement are communicated and understood.
4. Individuals value and benefit from regular feedback regarding progress toward the achievement of goals.

Every organization has the responsibility to provide the best learning opportunities possible for its employees in order to assist them in reaching their potentials. The goal is always to improve services to children, thereby increasing the quality of education received by students. An effective development process is one which involves a continuing, formative program of planned observation and conferencing sessions to strengthen present skills and to promote the incorporation of new skills. This process provides both teacher and supervisor the opportunities necessary to discuss teaching practices, reinforce present competencies, and introduce new skills/competencies. This cooperative effort creates a non-threatening atmosphere resulting in the best possible learning/teaching environment for all.

In addition, every organization has a responsibility to assess the performance of its employees. Effective assessment can occur when the district provides programs and opportunities for the employee to continue to learn and improve. Evaluation is an annual assessment of an individual's

efforts to maintain or improve upon the competencies of his/her profession and the expectations of the district.

Supervision and evaluation are separated by an unwavering commitment to their respective aims: supervision is an on-going teaching/learning process for the enhancement of professional practices; evaluation is the judgmental appraisal of the individual's comprehensive work results.

USING and UNDERSTANDING THE TEACHER OBSERVATION RECORD

The Teacher Observation Record is a classroom observation feedback to be used by supervisors when providing teachers feedback on the events in a single observed lesson. The process uses three (3) domains (Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, and Instruction), a listing of sub-categories within each domain, and a rubric description for assessing each category.

The rubrics are used to provide teachers and supervisors with narrative descriptions of assessed performance of the teacher within each category. Teachers and supervisors are encouraged to carefully reflect on these rubric descriptions because they will be used to "match" measures of quality with the teachers' observed teaching. In most instances, the sub-categories are described using three (3) rubrics. However, a few of the categories use a 4 or 2 point rubric. All of the sub-categories contain the opportunity for the supervisor to mark "insufficient information" or "not applicable". These options are available because some lessons observed are not well-suited for the presence of each sub-category listed. These categories, when checked, should not be interpreted as negative indicators of a teacher's behaviors.

Following each domain, a space on the form has been provided for the supervisor to make comments as needed. Comments are required by the supervisor whenever the "top" or "bottom" rubrics are marked. Comments are also required whenever the "insufficient information" box is marked. These comments should provide a brief but specific reason as to why these particular rubrics were selected.

Please remember that each Teacher Observation Record is based upon one observed teaching episode and has not been designed to encourage sweeping generalizations. Within the context of that lesson, it is possible that the supervisor and teacher will not always agree on the supervisor's feedback. This should form a basis for a productive discussion in the conference that follows.

The Teacher Observation Record also allows the opportunity for both the teacher and supervisor to provide general closing narrative comments on the appraisal just completed. If the teacher wishes to react to the appraisal of the observed lesson, he/she can use this space to do so. The supervisor is expected to use this space to provide an overall summary of the observation, regardless of whether or not comments have been provided at any other part of the record. Consistent with Article XIII, A. 8 & 9 of the teacher contract, the signatures of both the teacher and the supervisor are required before the Observation Record is placed in the personnel file.