

Head of School Evaluation Toolkit

INTRO

One of the most important responsibilities of a charter school board is to evaluate the Head of School. For the purposes of this tool, we define the Head of School as the individual who reports directly to the Board of Directors (e.g., Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director, Head of School).

This evaluation is the board's most powerful opportunity to exercise effective oversight and hold the school accountable for academic, financial, and operational success. The Head of School is responsible for managing the school, setting ambitious goals, and meeting those goals. The board, in turn, is responsible for making sure the leader is doing so, offering them feedback to help them improve, providing professional support and development as needed, and recognizing excellent performance.

This is not easy. Boards often struggle to know how to conduct a professional, thorough, comprehensive evaluation that provides a clear and accurate picture of how well the leader is performing in their job. This toolkit is designed to help.

The relationship between the board and the Head of School is the backbone of a good school and an effective board. The annual evaluation process should be the foundation of that relationship. Evaluation should be embraced as a positive, productive process, and the Head of School should be encouraged, and required, to ensure that the board has accurate and full information throughout the year about the school's performance. The evaluation process allows the board to engage formally with the Head of School about their strengths, challenges, and development opportunities in ways that ensure the school has the leadership it needs to drive student success.

An effective Head of School evaluation process allows the board to:

- Develop clear performance measures and goals every year so the Head of School's work is aligned with and supports the school's strategic direction
- Assess the Head of School's ability to perform the core competencies of the position and to meet agreed-upon annual goals
- Identify proactively when the leader is not on track to meet their goals, and provide support, professional development, and timely feedback to help them improve
- Recognize and reward successes, which helps retain strong leaders
- Provide an opportunity for the Head of School to reflect on their performance
- Create a transparent and agreed upon structure for communicating with the Head of School about their performance regularly and routinely throughout the year

This toolkit offers:

- A clear and streamlined process for evaluating the Head of School
- A list of data sources boards should tap to ensure they have full information about Head of School performance
- Templates for the board's evaluation, the leader's self evaluation, and obtaining 360 feedback
- FAQs to help clarify the process
- Links to helpful resources

The toolkit is divided into three primary sections:

1. [The Evaluation Process](#)
2. [Head of School Evaluation Tools and Resources](#)
3. [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

The Evaluation Process

The evaluation process consists of five main steps:

1. Goal Setting
2. Head of School Self Evaluation
3. Data Gathering and Review
4. Board Review Discussion
5. Performance Evaluation Delivery

Each of these steps is explained in further detail below.

STEP 1: GOAL SETTING

- The board and Head of School agree upon a set of 3-5 powerful goals to guide the Head of School's work for the year.
- The board and Head of School agree upon a set of competencies on which the board will evaluate the leader (this toolkit provides a bank of competencies boards can use as a starting point).
- The board selects one member to lead the Head of School evaluation process.

STEP 2: HEAD OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The board shares the self-evaluation tool with the Head of School and provides an overall timeline for the evaluation process.
- The Head of School completes a self-evaluation (template provided in this toolkit) and sends it to the designated board member.

STEP 3: DATA GATHERING AND REVIEW

- The designated board member reviews relevant and accurate data related to Head of School performance, including:

- Data that provides a complete picture of the overall academic performance of the organization, as measured by indicators such as student assessment data.
 - Data that provides a clear picture of the overall financial performance of the organization, as measured by indicators such as monthly financial statements and the annual audit.
 - Data that provides comprehensive insight into the overall operational health of the organization, as measured by indicators such as the existence and quality of policies and procedures, staff attrition data, etc.
 - Parent and stakeholder feedback, as measured by survey results (survey template included in this toolkit).
 - Board member feedback, as measured by survey results (survey template included in this toolkit).
 - Staff and direct report feedback, as measured by survey results (survey template included in this toolkit).
 - The Head of School's self evaluation (template included in this toolkit).
- The designated board member drafts a performance evaluation based on a detailed review of this data and sends it to the full Board of Directors (this toolkit provides a template for the report).

STEP 4: BOARD OF DIRECTORS REVIEW DISCUSSION

- The designated board member sends the draft performance evaluation and the Head of School's self-evaluation to the full board, confidentially, at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting at which it will be discussed.
- During an executive session at a Board of Directors meeting, board members discuss the evaluation in depth and share feedback with the designated board member on modifications to the evaluation.
- The designated board member completes the review by incorporating appropriate changes and feedback from the full board and sends the evaluation to the Head of School.

STEP 5: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION DELIVERY

- The Head of School, the board chair, and the designated board member meet to review each section of the evaluation, highlighting key points, discussing questions, and summarizing conclusions.
- At the end of the meeting, the board chair and the designated board member summarize overarching conclusions and next steps.

- If there are specific areas where improvement or development work is necessary, the Head of School and the board chair agree on a performance improvement plan and assess progress against this plan in the coming weeks and months.
- Based on this evaluation, the board and Head of School agree upon a set of 3-5 powerful goals to guide the Head of School's work for the next year.
- The agreed-upon evaluation is sent to the full Board of Directors and placed in the leader's personnel file.

Cycle of Head of School Evaluation



Head of School Evaluation Tools and Resources

This section includes a set of sample tools and resources for use in Head of School evaluations:

1. [Sample Timeline](#)
2. [Sample Goals](#)
3. [Sample Evaluation Template](#)
4. [Competency Resources](#)
5. [Sample 360 Survey Questions & Resources](#)
6. [Sample Professional Development Plans](#)

I. Sample Timeline

The sample timeline below follows an academic year, but could be modified by the board and the Head of School to follow a calendar year if preferable.

PREPARATION (April-June)

April

Board determines which committee will be responsible for the Head of School's evaluation.

June

Prepare or revise the Head of School evaluation instrument.

- Committee drafts the instrument, ensuring competencies align with the Head of School's current job description and Head of School's input.
- If the evaluation instrument already exists, the committee and the Head of School agree to any changes to the tool for the coming year.

The Head of School drafts four to six SMART goals for improving academic performance, organizational performance, and fiscal wellbeing. These should include professional development goals.

The board chair and the Head of School agree to the SMART goals and share with the full board.

MONITORING (July-April)

September

Head of School presents progress against goals to the full board, and if necessary goals are adjusted.

December

Head of School meets with the appropriate group of board members (e.g. just the board chair, a select committee, or the full board, depending on board

preference) to present progress against goals and any other issues related to performance management and professional development, and if necessary goals are adjusted.

March

Head of School presents progress against goals to the full board, and if necessary goals are adjusted.

FORMAL EVALUATION (May-June)

May

Head of School completes self-assessment of goals and competencies and submits this to the committee chair.

Committee distributes competency assessment electronically to all board members.

All board members complete competency assessment.

Committee chair summarizes competency assessments.

Committee meets to discuss Head of School's performance.

The following materials inform the discussion:

- The summarized competency assessments
- The Head of School's self-assessment of goals and competencies
- Each evaluation committee member's perception of the Head of School's level of accomplishment on each of their SMART goals
- Parent and staff survey data, if appropriate

At the meeting, the committee agrees on:

- Summary assessment rating for each competency and direction for comments section
- Summary level of accomplishment for each SMART goal, evidence to support goal rating, and direction for comments sections
- Potential professional development opportunities for the Head of School

Committee fills out all sections of the evaluation form, except for the

professional development section.

June

Committee meets with the Head of School to discuss the evaluation.

- Changes to the evaluation are made based on the meeting.
- The professional development plan section is completed for the next fiscal year.

Committee distributes final evaluation to all board members.

Board meets in executive session to discuss the evaluation.

Board approves the evaluation.

II. Sample Goals

The following are example goals to provide a more concrete understanding of what the goals set by the board and Head of School should include. They are not meant to be comprehensive or fully representative of the goals a Head of School should have.

- In September and October, provide intensive after school tutoring to all 3rd grade students who did not score advanced or proficient on the PARCC Math test. Based on the results of an internally developed assessment administered by October 31, at least 85% of students will show a 15% improvement in their test scores.
- By June 30, increase individual giving revenue by 20% over the fiscal year and the number of individual donors by 10%.
- By January 5, ensure that the renovation of the middle school science lab is completed and that the temporary classrooms are dismantled, all while ensuring that the cost of the project remains within the board-approved budget.
- By March 31, present to the board the project plan for completing the renewal application, specifically highlighting the role of the Board in renewal.

III. Sample Evaluation Template

Overview

While conversations between a Head of School and the Board of Directors about overall performance and development should be frequent, this performance evaluation system ensures that a more formal, summary conversation takes place at least once a year. These conversations give the Board of Directors and the Head of School an opportunity to reflect on what the Head of School achieved compared to what was expected and how the Head of School is performing overall.

More specifically, our performance evaluation consists of four main sections:

I. Results (what you got done)

What was your progress in reaching key goals for the year?

II. Performance Factors (how you got it done)

How are you demonstrating our core values and utilizing skills essential to the position?

III. Assessment (overall, how well you did and next steps)

How did you do overall? What does the path forward look like?

IV. Board Feedback

This section solicits input on how well the board worked with the Head of School.

Ratings

The following scale is used for all ratings in the review:

Exceeds expectations – consistently delivers exceptional results, is a model for others to follow, rare.

Meets expectations – consistently meets expectations in all areas.

Partially meets expectations – meets expectations in some areas, but needs improvement in others.

Does not meet expectations – needs significant improvement quickly.

SAMPLE HEAD OF SCHOOL EVALUATION FORM

Head of School Name	
Board of Directors (list members)	
Review Period	
Date of Review	
Reviewed by	Self <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Directors <input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION I. GETTING RESULTS

Directions: Identify your overall goals and corresponding results.

Overall Goals	Result(s)	Rating E: <i>exceeds expectations</i> M: <i>meets expectations</i> P: <i>partially meets expectations</i> D: <i>Does not meet expectations</i>

Comments: To what extent did you/the Head of School achieve the goals for the position this past period? To what extent did you/the Head of School do everything possible to reach the goals?

SECTION II. DEMONSTRATING PERFORMANCE FACTORS

Directions: Reflect on your demonstration of the organizational core values and the competencies required in your role. For sample competencies, see EdFuel's [Blueprint for Success competency maps](#).

Core Values and Descriptions	To what degree did you/this person demonstrate each of the core values?
<INSERT CORE VALUE>	
Core Competencies and Descriptions	To what degree did you/this person demonstrate proficiency in the core competencies?
<INSERT COMPETENCY>	

SECTION III. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT, NEXT STEPS, AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Directions: Please complete the prompts below.

Overall performance rating:

Exceeds Expectations

Meets Expectations

Partially Meets Expectations

Does Not Meet Expectations

Qualitative Comments:

How are you/the Head of School performing overall?

What are the 1-3 most notable areas of strength?

What are the 1-3 areas for growth or improvement?

What are the next steps for growth or improvement?

What do you see as your/the Head of School's future in the organization? Where do you see yourself/the Head of School in the next 3-5 years (inside or outside of the organization)?

SECTION IV. BOARD OF DIRECTORS FEEDBACK

Directions: Head of Schools: please share feedback for the Board of Directors on their work with you this year.

What is the Board of Directors doing well in their support of your work?

How could the Board of Directors support your work more effectively?

IV. Competency Resources

One resource that boards can look to when working with the Head of School to select a set of relevant competencies for their role is EdFuel's [Blueprint for Success competency maps](#). Developed in collaboration with the Broad Center, NewSchools Venture Fund, Harvard's Graduate School of Education, the Bridgespan Group and 40+ sector leaders, the initiative includes seven functional competency maps (academics and instruction, advocacy, development, information and data, finance, operations, and talent) to show the knowledge, skills, and relationships necessary to manage school districts/networks.

EdFuel's [Blueprint for Success competency maps](#) outline the skills and behaviors necessary for success in 7 core areas: [Academics](#), [Data](#), [Development](#), [Finance](#), [Leadership](#), [Operations](#), and [Talent](#). All maps are open-source and available for download on EdFuel's website using the links above.



V. Sample 360 Survey Questions & Resources

360 feedback is a critical component of a Head of School evaluation. The board must solicit feedback from a variety of stakeholders, including staff members and parents, to ensure that they have a holistic understanding of the Head of School's performance, successes, and opportunities for growth. This process can feel nerve-wracking to a leader, and boards should work closely with their Head of School to ensure that the endeavor is framed from a growth and support perspective.

In addition, the process itself can be a difficult one to manage. We recommend that a board member with experience in management, evaluation and/or human resources lead the process to ensure it is efficient and handled with the appropriate level of professionalism, thought, and sensitivity.

If a board is seeking external support, many resources exist for collecting 360 feedback. EdFuel's [myBlueprint 360 tool](#), which captures and synthesizes feedback for an individual recipient from a group of responders. The recipient and each responder complete a feedback survey, tailored to competencies for the recipient's role. Competencies are selected from EdFuel's [open-source competency maps](#). Once collected, the feedback is synthesized and shared out in a final report.

Sample from a myBlueprint report:

Scale: 4 = Exemplary, 3 = Proficient, 2 = Developing, 1 = Not Demonstrated

Map: Academics

[Design And Development Of Academic Model > Academic Model Development And Continuous Improvement > Senior Manager/Director](#)

		self	360
Effectively develops program standards and supporting content aligned with federal, state, and college/ career requirements	3		3.5
Effectively assesses student performance data to drive continuous improvement of programs, with school leader input and considering differing student population needs	4		3.4
Strategically sources, pilots, and scales innovative models (e.g., blended learning) for specific area of focus	2		2.6
Consistently elevates areas of potential conflict between academic model and specific programmatic restrictions to academics team to adapt the model	3		2.4

VI. Sample Professional Development Plans

The following are resources to utilize when developing a professional development plan in collaboration with the Head of School:

[Creating a Strong Professional Development Plan: A “How To”](#)

[Sample Script: Co-Creating a Strong Professional Development Plan](#)

[A Guide To Job-Embedded Training](#)

[Sample 70-20-10 Plan](#)

Excerpt from EdFuel’s Guide to Job-Embedded Training

A Guide to Job-Embedded Training



High-Quality Job-Embedded Training. What does it take?

The Center for Creative Leadership pioneered the [70-20-10 approach](#) to professional development, which can triple the impact on employee performance. This approach focuses 70% of development on on-the-job training, 20% on coaching and mentoring, and 10% on formal training and self-study. In order for a professional development plan to impact employee performance, the job embedded training assignment has to be strong, aligned, and purposeful. Identifying and executing on this job embedded project can often be challenging for managers. Use the information below to guide you through the process.

As a Reminder: Effective professional development plan “must haves”:

DEFINE ROLE-SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES	CO-CREATION AND JOINT ACCOUNTABILITY	REVISIT REGULARLY AND BUILD HABIT
UTILIZE THE 70-20-10 MODEL	IDENTIFY MEASURES OF SUCCESS	CONNECT TO YEAR-END EVALUATION

Frequently Asked Questions

How often should the Head of School be evaluated?

A formal, written evaluation should be completed and approved by the full board **every year**.

Who is responsible for evaluating the Head of School?

Collectively, the entire board is responsible for evaluating the Head of School. A board member should be assigned the responsibility of coordinating the evaluation process. Options include the chair of a special Head of School Evaluation committee, the Governance Committee, or the Academic Performance Committee.

It is important that the designated board member not be the board chair. Having the board chair lead the evaluation puts too much power, and too much responsibility, in the hands of one board member, and limits the leader's opportunities to build a close relationship and have avenues for candid conversation with more board members.

I've never run a school. What if we don't know the Head of School or understand their job well enough to evaluate them?

If a board member attends all board meetings, participates on committees, and develops a personal relationship with the Head of School, he or she will be able to participate fully in the performance evaluation process. That being said, some board members often can provide more extensive feedback on certain competencies or goals than on others. Board members who joined the board less than three months prior to the formal evaluation may be excused from the evaluation process.

How much time should the board expect to spend on the Head of School's evaluation?

Each board member should anticipate spending a minimum of four hours each year on the Head of School's evaluation:

- One hour for a mid-year evaluation meeting to discuss year-to-date

progress on goals

- Two hours to complete an evaluation process, including reviewing data such as parent and staff surveys as well as student achievement data
- One and one-half hour for a year-end evaluation meeting in June
- Committee or task force members leading the process should anticipate spending an additional four hours spread throughout the year, with those additional hours dedicated toward developing or revising the evaluation tool, compiling and summarizing data, and meeting with the Head of School.

What should the board evaluate?

Head of Schools should be evaluated on their ability to perform the required core competencies of the role as described in the job description and completion of mutually established, agreed-upon SMART goals.

What information does the board need to evaluate the Head of School?

Sources of information the board may use to evaluate the leader include:

- Data that provides a complete picture of the overall academic performance of the organization, as measured by indicators such as student assessment data
- Data that provides a clear picture of the overall financial performance of the organization, as measured by indicators such as monthly financial statements and the annual audit
- Data that provides comprehensive insight into overall the operational health of the organization, as measured by indicators such as the existence and quality of policies and procedures, staff attrition data, etc.
- Parent and stakeholder feedback, as measured by survey results (survey template included in this toolkit)
- Board member feedback, as measured by survey results (survey template included in this toolkit)
- Staff and direct report feedback, as measured by survey results (survey template included in this toolkit)
- The Head of School's self evaluation (template included in this toolkit)

How do competencies relate to the Head of School's job description?

When developing the core competencies against which the Head of School will be evaluated, the board should refer to the Head of School's position description. Ultimately, the board wants to choose competencies that, if demonstrated consistently by the Head of School, would indicate that the Head of School is performing the primary responsibilities of their job.

What is a SMART goal?

A SMART goal is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-specific. CBP offers a [goal-setting tool](#).

How does a SMART goal differ from a Head of School's general responsibilities?

SMART goals should define special aims and targets within the scope of the Head of School's and board's responsibilities, but beyond everyday tasks.¹ For example, the Head of School is responsible for enrollment, and a job description might state that the Head of School is "responsible for ensuring that the school is fully enrolled." However, an elementary school that is opening a middle school next year might create a SMART goal around the number of applications:

To ensure that the sixth grade class of 45 students is fully enrolled: by January 31, collect signed agreements from 100% of the 25 fifth grade parents to determine those that will remain for sixth grade, and by February 15, collect at least 70 applications from new, prospective sixth grade students.

How many annual goals should we set for the Head of School?

A less-is-more approach is recommended for goal setting. In general, evaluating your Head of School against four to six SMART goals is sufficient for evaluating performance.

¹SMART goals should be grounded in the Head of School's and board's responsibilities, but should not just be a rehashing of the responsibilities. Another example: the board is responsible for passing the school budget, but doing so should not be a goal. Passing the annual budget is the board's fiduciary obligation. It is an expected outcome (end result) but it does not count as a goal—i.e., something new to work toward.

When should annual SMART goals be set?

Goals should be established at the conclusion of each year's evaluation process, as the launch of the next year's process.

If the board has missed the goal-setting deadline, set goals now for the duration of the year and then set new goals upon concluding this year's evaluation.

Should the Head of School's self-assessment be included in the evaluation process?

The Head of School should complete a self-assessment using the same tool the board will use to evaluate the Head of School. Boards should work to incorporate the Head of School's reflections in the evaluation, either through quoting or paraphrasing, to ensure their perspectives are brought into the process.

What needs to be in place prior to conducting a performance evaluation?

- An up-to-date job description for the Head of School
- A performance evaluation tool that the board and the Head of School mutually agree is appropriate for the school
- Pre-established goals and competencies against which the Head of School will be evaluated

Should parent and staff feedback be incorporated into the evaluation?

Yes. Board members need to understand what school staff and parents perceive with regard to Head of School performance. Boards should gather parent and staff feedback using structured, thoughtful, anonymous survey instruments. This feedback can inform and enrich the board's perspective on the leader's performance, with the understanding that executive leaders sometimes have to make decisions in the best interest of the school that upset some number of teachers and/or parents. A board member with experience in HR and performance evaluation can be extremely helpful in this regard.

How frequently should we discuss performance with our Head of School?

The committee or task force responsible for the leader evaluation should formally meet with the Head of School at least twice during the year, once for a mid-year check-in and once to conduct the formal review. In addition, the Head of School should provide regular—at least quarterly—updates to the full board on their progress towards goals.

How do we deliver constructive feedback to the Head of School?

Board members should be honest, transparent, and concrete in their feedback, keeping in mind it is the board's role to both hold the Head of School accountable *and* provide support for success. The board has to develop a strong relationship with the Head of School, be clear about performance expectations, include the Head of School's self-reflection in the evaluation process, and position the evaluation process as a performance management and professional development opportunity. Boards that take these key steps will find it easier to deliver constructive feedback that gives the leader the information and input she needs to grow, develop, and succeed.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The resources included in this toolkit are meant to provide a starting point for boards and should be adapted to best fit the needs of the Head of School and the organization. For more support, we suggest reaching out to any of the following organizations:

Organization	Mission	Website
Charter Board Partners	To help ensure that every charter school has an effective, strategic, diverse board that exercises strong oversight and works collaboratively with school leadership to ensure that all students achieve at high levels.	www.charterboards.org
EdFuel	To empower education organizations to effectively recruit and retain diverse and high-quality staff through comprehensive and equitable talent management systems.	www.edfuel.org
School Leader Lab	To grow and sustain high-quality schools by developing one of their greatest assets: leaders.	www.schoolleaderlab.org
TNTP	To end the injustice of educational inequality by providing excellent teachers to the students who need them most and by advancing policies and practices that ensure effective teaching in every classroom.	www.tntp.org