

# School Leader Evaluation Toolkit

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School boards are tasked with evaluating and supporting the school leader. Through the school leader evaluation process, the board identifies strengths to be cultivated and areas to be improved in the school leader. The school leader evaluation process provides an opportunity for school boards to have meaningful conversations with their school leader. This toolkit includes the statutory guidance, waiver flexibilities, and sample process and tools school boards can use to establish or update their school leader evaluation process.

## Overview and Requirements

The annual review of school leaders and teachers is required by Colorado state law and outlined in regulation (**C.R.S. 22-9-106** and **1 CCR 301-87**). School leader evaluation systems must be “fair, transparent, timely, rigorous and comprised of valid methods.” Key components of the law are provided below, including a summary of the (1) Principal Quality Standards, (2) required evaluation system components, (3) final evaluation report, and (4) evaluation objectives.

### Principal Quality Standards

School leader evaluation systems should address all of the [performance standards](#) established by 1 CCR 301-87 and outlined below:

- **Quality Standard I:** Principals demonstrate organizational leadership by strategically developing a vision and mission, leading change, enhancing the capacity of personnel, distributing resources, and aligning systems of communication for continuous school improvement.
- **Quality Standard II:** Principals demonstrate inclusive leadership practices that foster a positive school culture and promote safety and equity for all students, staff, and community.
- **Quality Standard III:** Principals demonstrate instructional leadership by: aligning curriculum, instruction and assessment; supporting professional learning; conducting observations; providing actionable feedback; and holding staff accountable for student outcomes.
- **Quality Standard IV:** Principals demonstrate professionalism through ethical conduct, reflection, and external leadership.

The standards should be made available in writing to all licensed personnel and discussed by the person being evaluated and the evaluator prior to and throughout the evaluation process.

### System Components

The evaluation system must include:

- The title or position of the evaluator;
- The personnel to be evaluated;
- The frequency and duration of the evaluations, which must be on a regular basis and of such frequency and duration as to ensure the collection of a sufficient amount of data from which reliable conclusions may be drawn;
- The purpose of the evaluation;
- The standards set for effective performance and the criteria used to determine whether an individual’s performance meets such standards; and
- The evaluation methods used, which must include direct observations and a process of systematic data-gathering.

### Final Report

School leader performance evaluations must be conducted one time per academic year. The final evaluation report must:

- Be in writing;

- Contain a written improvement plan that specifies recommendations for improvements and additional education and training;
- Be specific as to the strengths and weaknesses of the individual being evaluated;
- Identify when a direct observation was made;
- Identify data sources;
- Be discussed and signed by the evaluator and the person being evaluated, each of whom receive a copy of the report;
- Be reviewed by a supervisor of the evaluator, whose signature must also appear on the report; and
- Include input from the teachers employed in the school\*.

*\*School leader evaluation reports may also include input from the students enrolled in the school and their parents, so long as the information collected remains anonymous and confidential.*

The law provides that at least 50 percent of the school leader’s evaluation must be determined by the academic growth of the students enrolled in the school. The evaluation system must also include specific ratings (e.g. ineffective, partially effective, effective and highly effective).

### Evaluation Objectives

Schools with an approved evaluation waiver must operate in compliance with the replacement plan submitted by the school and approved by the State Board of Education (see “Charter School Waivers” below).

With or without a waiver, charter school leader evaluations should:

- serve as the basis for improvement of instruction;
- enhance the implementation of programs of curriculum;
- serve as a measurement of the professional growth and development of licensed personnel;
- evaluate the level of performance based on the effectiveness of licensed personnel; and
- provide a basis for making decisions in the areas of hiring, compensation, promotion, assignment, professional development, dismissal, and nonrenewal of contract.

## Charter School Waivers

Colorado law allows schools/districts to request waivers from certain areas of state statute and rule. The purpose is to allow autonomy in areas that will enhance educational opportunity and quality while still meeting the intent of law and rule. Charter schools can implement their educational mission to its full potential when they are granted certain waivers.

There are two different types of waivers: automatic and non-automatic. Automatic waivers are automatically granted to a charter school upon the establishment or renewal of a charter contract. Unless specified, all other waivers from state statute and rule are considered non-automatic waiver requests and must be reviewed and approved by the CSI Board and the State Board of Education. When seeking flexibility on state requirements for school leader and teacher evaluations, charter schools typically request non-automatic waivers from **C.R.S. 22-9-106** and **C.R.S. 22-2-112(1)(q)(l)**:

### [C.R.S. 22-9-106](#)

**Statute Title:** Local Boards of Education Duties - Performance Evaluation System

**Explanation:** Waives the school from having to use the state performance evaluation system in evaluating teachers and administrators.

**Note:** The replacement plan for this waiver must specify how the school will meet the intent of the law, including a clear statement that (1) there is an evaluation system in place; (2) all staff have been trained in that system; and (3) there are clear quality standards for those being evaluated and the evaluator. Schools should plan to submit a copy of their evaluation framework/rubrics when submitting this waiver request to the State Board of Education. If seeking this waiver, the school should also be sure to apply for waiver from 22-2-112(1)(q)(l).

### [C.R.S. 22-2-112 \(1\)\(q\)\(1\)](#)

**Statute Title:** Commissioner - Duties

**Explanation:** Waives the school from reporting its teacher evaluation results to the state. This waiver is an extension of **C.R.S. 22-9-106** that grants the school the ability to administer its own performance evaluations. The replacement plan for this waiver must address that, although the school does not have to report its evaluation results, it will use the results to inform hiring and professional development.

**Note:** This is an important waiver to request if the school is also seeking waiver from **C.R.S. 22-9-106** because the evaluation results will not align to the state reporting system for schools using a different evaluation system. Waiver from reporting teacher evaluation results does not waive the school from reporting the other requirements of the Teacher Student Data Link. This waives a school from having to report “effectiveness” of teachers per the state’s ESSA plan, but the school must still report in-field/out-of-field and years of experience. To be in-field, a teacher must have one of the following in the subject area which s/he is assigned to teach: (1) endorsement on a CO teaching license; (2) Degree – B.A. or higher; (3) 36 semester credit hours; or (4) passing score on a State Board of Education content exam (e.g., Praxis). For more information, please see

[Educator Qualifications Under ESSA](#). CDE will publicly report the rate at which low-income and minority students are being taught by out-of-field teachers.

### CSI Review and Approval Process

Waivers are typically drafted and submitted to CSI during the contracting process for new schools and subsequently during contract renewal. Should a school seek to request a new waiver during the term of the contract, the school can submit a [Charter Modification Request](#).

CSI's Legal and Policy Associate (LPA) will review the waiver requests and send them to CDE's Schools of Choice Unit for a preliminary review. Upon receiving feedback from CDE, the school should finalize the requests and obtain approval from the school governing board. CSI's LPA will then submit the school board-approved waiver requests to the CSI Board for review. The requests will then be submitted to the State Board of Education for final approval. Approved waivers are valid through the term of the charter contract.

CSI Schools also submit their evaluation rubrics/frameworks to CSI for review in "Year 0" and subsequently during contract renewal when requesting a non-automatic waiver for **C.R.S. 22-9-106**.

### Sample Waiver Request

Sample rationale and replacement plan language for **C.R.S. 22-9-106** and **C.R.S. 22-2-112(1)(q)(l)** are provided below. Schools typically submit one request for both statutes. This language is based on waivers previously approved by the State Board of Education. Schools are welcome to review and add or adjust language to fit individual needs.

<b>Non-Automatic Waivers: Statute Description and Rationale and Replacement Plan</b>
<b>C.R.S. § 22-9-106 Local Board of Education-Duties-Performance Evaluation System; C.R.S. § 22-2-112(1)(q)(l) Commissioner-Duties</b>
<b>Rationale:</b> The school and its Principal or designee must have the ability to perform the evaluation of all personnel. Should any other designated administrator not have Principal Licensure, this should not preclude him or her from administering the evaluations under the direction of the Principal. The Board of Directors must also have the ability to perform the evaluation for the school leader. Additionally, the school should not be required to report its teacher evaluation ratings as a part of the commissioner's report as required by C.R.S. § 22-2-112(1)(q)(l), but will still report on in-field/out-of-field.
<b>Replacement Plan:</b> Instead, the school will use its own evaluation system as agreed to in the charter contract with the Charter School Institute ("CSI"). The school's evaluation system will continue to meet the intent of the law as outlined in statute. Staff will be trained in this evaluation system. The methods used for the school's evaluation system will include quality standards that are clear and relevant to the administrators' and teachers' roles and responsibilities, be based on research-based practices guiding the science of reading, have the goal of improving student academic growth, and meet the intent of the quality standards established in C.R.S. §§ 22-9-101 et seq. The school will not be required to report its teacher evaluation data through applicable state collections; however, teacher performance ratings data will be reviewed by the school and used to inform hiring practices and professional development. Core course level participation will continue to be reported pursuant to C.R.S. § 22-11-503.5, as this is a non-waivable statute.
<b>Duration of Waivers:</b> The waiver will extend for the duration of the contract.
<b>Financial Impact:</b> The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the CSI or the school.

**How the Impact of the Waivers Will be Evaluated:** Since teacher performance has a critical impact on the performance of the entire school, the impact of this waiver will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to the school, as set forth in the charter contract.

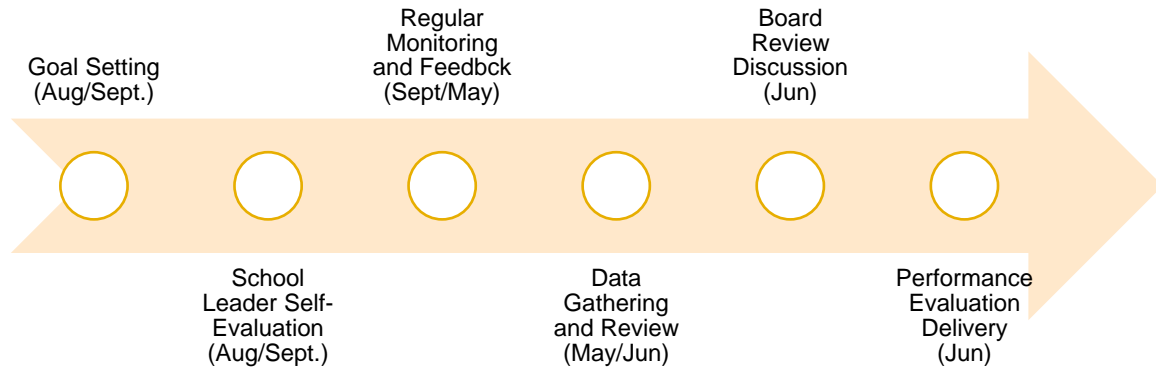
**Expected Outcome:** If granted, the waiver will enable the school to implement its program and evaluate its teachers in accordance with its Performance Appraisal System, which is designed to produce greater accountability and be consistent with the school's goals and objectives. This will benefit staff members as well as students and the community.

For additional examples of non-automatic waiver requests submitted, schools can search the State Board of Education [BoardDocs page](#) (search "22-9-106 Waiver" and/or "22-2-112(1)(q)(1) Waiver"). For more information about charter school waivers, see [CSI's Waiver Guide](#).



## Evaluation Process

Regardless of whether a waiver is held, school boards must conduct school leader evaluations. As detailed in this [Head of School Evaluation Toolkit](#), effective evaluation processes should include: goal setting, school leader self-evaluation, regular monitoring and feedback, data gathering and review, board review discussion and performance evaluation delivery.<sup>1</sup>



The evaluation process, and questions to consider during each stage, are provided below. The information provided can be used guide the formation of a successful school leader evaluation but should not be seen as “required” components of that system.

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<sup>1</sup> Head of School Evaluation Toolkit (Washington, D.C. EdFuel and Education Board Partners, 2019) <http://www.edfuel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/edfuel-headofschoolevaluationtoolkit-062519-2.pdf> (accessed August 26, 2020).

## 1. Goal Setting

During this stage, the board chair and school leader agree to three to five goals and associated competencies for the year. The full board reviews and approves the goals.

When in this stage, consider asking:

- Is the school leader's job description an accurate reflection of what he/she does? Should it be updated to reflect any changes at the school?
- What are the school leader's top three to five goals for the year? Do the goals prioritize improving academic outcomes and ensuring the financial and operational health of the school?
- Do the goals align with the board's strategic priorities (if established)? Do the goals align with the school's mission and vision?
- What competencies or skills are required to achieve these goals? Should the full set of competencies be included in the evaluation, or should the board select a subset of competencies with the school leader each year?
- What are the school leader's professional development goals for the year? Do they align with the board's strategic priorities and/or the school's mission and vision?
- What will the school leader be evaluated on? What does excellence look like? What data (qualitative and quantitative) will the board use to evaluate performance?
- What tool should be used to evaluate the school leader? Does this tool include assessment of meeting both goals and competencies?

The board should select one member to lead the school leader evaluation process. To ensure that more than one member is involved in the performance evaluation, monitoring progress and providing feedback, the designated member should not be the board chair. (Some boards assign a subcommittee of board members to complete the process with input from the full board.)

### **A Note for School Leaders**

If your board has not initiated goal setting by the end of September, take the lead to develop your goals. Good leaders know what their board's primary goals are and can anticipate what they will need to do to make those a reality. Take the initiative to draft your goals, share them with the board, and get to work. Most boards will appreciate your direction in helping them to realize what you need to do. This is a great opportunity for you to demonstrate your leadership, and you and your board will benefit from these efforts.

## 2. School Leader Self-Evaluation

During this stage, the board will share the self-evaluation tool with the school leader and provide an overall timeline for the evaluation process. The school leader should complete the same evaluation questions as the board. The school leader will complete the self-evaluation and send it to the designated board member for review.

When in this stage, consider asking:

- Does the school leader have the information he/she needs to complete the self-evaluation?
- Has the school leader been given enough time to reflect on his/her performance and thoughtfully complete the self-evaluation?
- Has the self-evaluation deadline and evaluation process been clearly communicated with the school leader?

## 3. Regular Monitoring and Feedback

The board should always be on the lookout for information that will help inform the school leader evaluation. The board member selected to lead the evaluation process should keep notes about school leader performance, and at regular, planned intervals the board should provide concrete, direct feedback to the school leader on his/her performance, progress towards goals, and management of ongoing school operations. The school leader should present a formal mid-year report to the board on progress towards established goals.

When in this stage, consider asking:

- How can the board get important insights throughout the year?
- What data is already being collected that the board can access?
- When can the board anticipate receiving information that will inform the evaluation (for example, when are student test scores are released and how difficult it is to administer surveys in the summer)?
- Will the school leader be surprised about the end-of-year feedback, or is there a process for regular check-ins and progress monitoring?

### Publicly Available Data Sources

#### [School UIP and CARS Report:](#)

*The UIP includes school-developed Unified Improvement Plan identifying major improvement strategies. The CARS Report provides detailed information about a school's academic, financial, and operational performance over the past five years.*

#### [CDE School Dashboard:](#)

*Includes school-level data on enrollment, demographics, achievement, growth, postsecondary, and accountability information over time.*

#### 4. Data Gathering and Review

During this stage, the designated board member reviews key information related to school leader performance, including academic data, financial data and overall operational performance. 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, attaching key data.

When in this stage, consider asking:

- What academic data does the board have access to that can be used to determine school leader performance (e.g. the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP), CDE's School Performance Framework (SPF), school culture, discipline, enrollment, graduation, etc.)?
- What financial data does the board have access to that can be used to determine school leader performance (e.g. monthly financial statements, balance sheet, annual audit, etc.)?
- What information does the board have access to that can be used to determine the overall operational health of the school and school leader performance (e.g. CSI Annual Review of School (CARS) report, staff retention/attrition data, staff and direct report input, parent and stakeholder input, board member input, etc.)?
- What information should the board review to assess for equity (e.g. Do families of color re-enroll at different rates than white families? Are there gaps in academic performance, discipline incidents, referral to special education or gifted programs etc., between students of different races, genders, socio-economic background?, etc.)
- What information is the board receiving from parents and staff via satisfaction surveys that should be considered?

#### Considering Teacher Feedback

The [Teacher Perception Survey](#) developed by the Colorado Education Initiative along with sixteen partner districts is comprised of questions that measure the elements of Colorado's [Principal Quality Standards](#) that are most observable by teachers. Additional resources, such as a [Planning Guide](#) and [sample communications](#) are provided.

#### 5. Board Review Discussion

During this stage, the designated board member will send the draft performance evaluation and the school leader's self-evaluation to the full board, confidentially, at least one week in advance of the board meeting at which it will be discussed. The board members will discuss the evaluation and share feedback with the designated board member during an executive session at the full board meeting. The designated board member will incorporate changes based on the feedback and send the evaluation to the school leader.

When in this stage, consider asking:

- Has the school leader appropriately and honestly reflected on his/her goals, competencies, successes and challenges?
- Does the draft performance evaluation identify successes/challenges not identified in the school leader's self-evaluation?
- What unforeseen challenges did the school/school leader face that prevented him/her from meeting established goals?
- What should the school leader prioritize in the coming academic year?

## 6. Performance Evaluation Delivery

During this stage, the school leader, board chair and designated board member meet to review each section of the evaluation and draft next steps. If necessary, they should agree on a performance improvement plan and assess against this plan in the coming weeks and months. Together, they should discuss three to five potential goals for the upcoming year. The completed evaluation should be sent to the full board and placed in the school leader's personnel file.

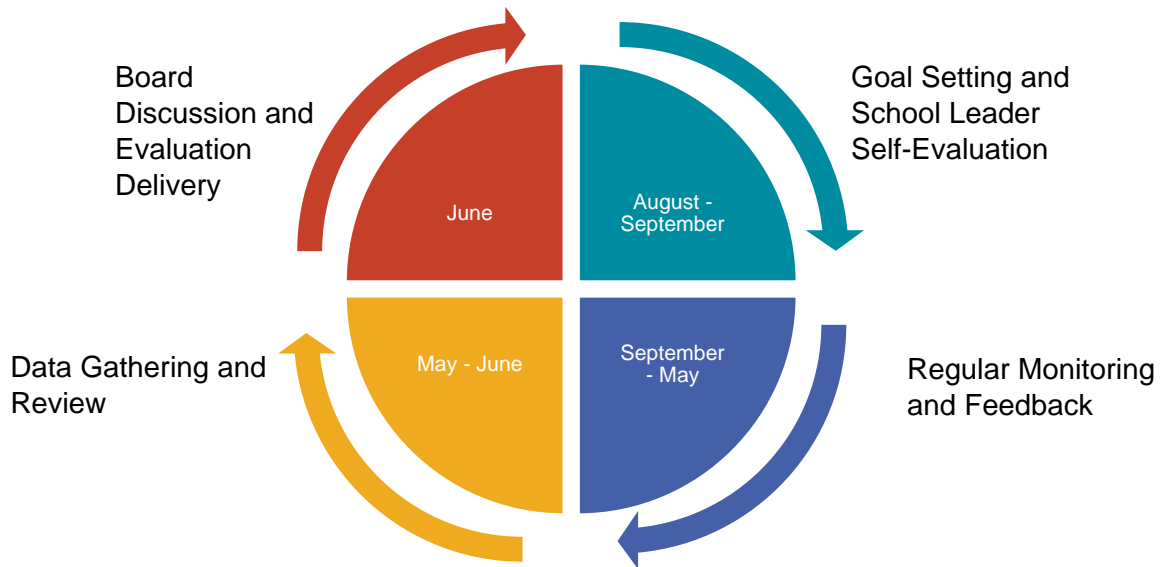
When in this stage, consider asking:

- What are the key findings of the evaluation (both positive and constructive)?
- What questions remain outstanding or issues unresolved?

### Sample Timeline

School leader evaluations should be an ongoing process, not a once a year activity. The timeline below suggests how the evaluation process might unfold in a typical school year. If preferable, it can be modified to follow a calendar year.

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Suggested Timing</b>
Goal Setting	August-September
School Leader Self-Evaluation	August-September
Regular Monitoring and Feedback	September-May
Data Gathering and Review	May-June
Board Review Discussion	June
Performance Evaluation Delivery	June



### Selecting an Evaluation Tool

Boards can select from an already available evaluation tool and template or craft their own. The best tool is one that is both manageable and succinct. Generally, an effective Head of School evaluation covers the following four areas<sup>2</sup>:

1. **Goals**  
What was the school leader’s progress in reaching key goals for the year?
2. **Competencies**  
How did the school leader demonstrate the skills essential to the position?
3. **Overall Performance Assessment**  
How did the school leader do overall? What does the path forward look like?
4. **Feedback**  
How well did the school leader work with the board (in the board evaluation)? How well the board worked with the school leader (in the school leader self-evaluation).

<sup>2</sup> Head of School Evaluation Toolkit (Washington, D.C. EdFuel and Education Board Partners, 2019) <http://www.edfuel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/edfuel-headofschoolevaluationtoolkit-062519-2.pdf> (accessed August 26, 2020).

The school leader and the board should use the same instrument for the self-evaluation and the board evaluation. This allows for consistency in questions answered.

#### Sample Evaluation Tools

- The [Head of School Evaluation Toolkit](#) from Education Board Partners includes an evaluation template, links to competency resources, sample questions and resources and more.
- The [Evaluation Platform](#) developed by BoardonTrack is easy to use and customizable.
- The [State Model Evaluation System for Principals/Assistance Principals](#) developed by CDE includes school leader quality standards, an evaluation rubric, training support and materials and more.