

## A general overview of the superintendent's evaluation by the board

**M**ost superintendents dread their annual evaluations, primarily because they feel anxious and powerless regarding the results. They just hope for appreciation and credit for their hard work. That is a mistake.

A superintendent should be involved in the preparation, not only because he or she has a vested interest in the outcome, but because the superintendent's role includes supporting the work of the board and enhancing its effectiveness. Of course, a savvy superintendent always avoids any suggestion of encroaching on

the board's authority and particular care is advisable in this situation.

From a personal standpoint, it is essential that you clearly understand how they view your performance; you do not want to learn too late that you are not meeting their expectations. On the other hand, if they are pleased with your performance it is critical that their current perspective be recorded and filed; in the event there the political landscape shifts, having their commendations on file will be invaluable.

**it's essential to  
be proactive  
throughout the process**



### Requisites

Requirements vary widely and you should clearly understand if there are any that apply to you in state law, board policy, your contract, or any other applicable source. In these cases, you should insist that the requirements be followed.

In any event, you should insist on being evaluated at least annually. While the possibility that the board might overlook the responsibility or simply ignore it might be appealing, it would be a mistake to let it take a pass.

Just like any other employee, you have the right to require the board to comply with federal and state law, including anti-discrimination and confidentiality standards.

## Purpose

Ideally, the evaluation purpose(s) should be established at the beginning of each year and implemented at the end of the year; when you understand the evaluation criteria ahead of time you have the opportunity maximize your results. Conversely, learning the boards expectations too late can be devastating.

In any case, the board should collectively define the purpose of the evaluation before the process is begun. Do they intend to assess your work against set standards for your occupation, or are they going to review your progress toward meeting stated goals.

Be sure you and all the members of your board or committee clearly understand whether the results of the criteria are a factor in the determination of your compensation.

## Process and tools

Take an active role in identifying the evaluation document to be used and the basis for arriving at an assessment. A fair evaluation includes objective standards as well as subjective views. This, too, is ideally done at the beginning of the year.

## Clarity

To be sure you understand, it is smart to take the time to ask for specific examples for each conclusion, including commendations. It will make emphasize that their opinions are very important to you and it may bring out meaningful details. The more you know about their values and perspectives, the better.

## Records

You should keep copies of all performance evaluations, including informal assessments like email commendations and even notes with comments about your work with dates and times. These records can be extremely important insurance in cases of arbitrary termination, member changes on the board, etc. Interestingly enough, some courts have even ruled that favorable appraisals are implied employment contracts.