Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators in a Massachusetts Suburban School District Regarding the Implementation of a Standards-Based Teacher Evaluation System

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PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS IN A MASSACHUSETTS SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A STANDARDS-BASED TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM

BY

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ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS IN A
MASSACHUSETTS SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT REGARDING THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF
A STANDARDS-BASED TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM

Teacher evaluation systems have tremendous potential in helping teachers grow in their profession. A standards-based teacher evaluation system with a rubric and multiple sources of data has the potential to create a collaborative environment that focuses on the continuous improvement of each teacher in the district. This ultimately leads to an increase in the overall quality of each school, the school system, and, ultimately, student achievement. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the perceptions of teachers and building-level administrators in a Massachusetts suburban public school district regarding the effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system. This dissertation is based on a mixed method study which analyzes teacher and administrator perceptions in regards to improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth. This study also analyzes the positive and negative impacts of implementing a standards-based teacher evaluation system.

Findings were based on quantitative data gathered from 170 teachers and 14 administrators in the Massachusetts suburban school district through the use of the Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) questionnaire and qualitative data from 10 focus group sessions with teachers and administrators. The data was analyzed by level (elementary,
middle, and high school), status (professional status and non-professional status), and position (teacher and administrator). The quantitative and qualitative results indicated that elementary teachers perceived the district teacher evaluation system as having a stronger impact on improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning and elevated professional growth than middle and high school teachers. High school teachers and high school administrators perceived the district teacher evaluation system as having the least impact on improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning and elevated professional growth.

Conclusions for this study focused on recommendations for further research, practice, and policy. In addition, recommendations were made to improve the current standards based teacher evaluation system used in the district studied. These recommendations included differentiating the teacher evaluation system, reducing the amount of paperwork in the process, increasing the number of informal observations and walkthroughs, developing differentiated rubrics for different teaching positions, and using multiple sources of data.
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DEDICATION

Throughout my life, there have been several individuals who have taught me the values and beliefs that I have today as an educator and as a person. These individuals have shaped my life, taught me the values and beliefs that I practice today, challenged me to be the best person and educational leader that I can be, and encouraged me to always make decisions that are in the best interest of children. To these individuals, I dedicate this dissertation.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Teacher evaluation systems have tremendous potential in helping teachers grow in their profession. However, “the paradox of teacher evaluation is that it holds the potential to help nearly every teacher improve, yet in actual practice, it helps almost no one” (Stiggins & Duke, 1988, p. 1). Many states mandate teacher evaluation systems and local school districts comply by developing educational policy. The Federal No Child Left Behind Law of 2002 has stated that teachers need to be highly qualified, a term that is defined differently in each state. In Massachusetts, for example, a teacher is highly qualified when they have attained a passing score on communication, literacy, and content state teacher assessments, as well as, completed course requirements in content and pedagogy (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2007). These laws, policies, and guidelines have been implemented to satisfy requirements; however, the true objective of improving schools is rarely accomplished. Traditional evaluation systems are outdated, have limited evaluative criteria, and do not focus on complex student learning (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Traditional evaluations which are completed by a building administrator are of little value if that administrator is untrained in evaluations that do not focus on the quality of teacher instruction. These evaluations and rating systems are often called “drive-bys” due to the lack of emphasis on classroom instruction (Toch & Rothman, 2008). This lack of precision results in an artificial inflation of teacher evaluation ratings in some schools, leading to the Lake Wobegon Effect (Keillor, 1985)
where all teachers are above average (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). The absence of trust in this type of evaluation system leads to a school culture of compliance and does not encourage risk-taking to improve the school. As Danielson and McGreal (2000) state, 

...because teachers...do not expect to learn from the evaluation process, they have little incentive for admitting to difficulties that may only be held against them....the feeling that ‘nothing can be done’ saps energy from other projects within the school that require people to think in new ways. (p. 6)

There is, however, an alternative approach to the traditional teacher evaluation, which entails observing teachers and comparing their performances to collaboratively established standards. These standards are assessed with rubrics and give teachers and administrators the ability to collaboratively identify goals for improvement in teaching. A small number of school districts have used this type of tool to create and implement a comprehensive teacher evaluation system as an alternative to the drive-by evaluations (Toch & Rothman, 2008). This type of system establishes a common language of important concepts and understandings for professional conversation. Therefore, this study provides a quantitative and qualitative analysis of teacher and administrator perceptions regarding the implementation of a standards-based teacher evaluation system, a more formative process that focuses on the growth of all teachers, not just a few who are struggling.

The researcher chose to focus in this area, as opposed to a more traditional teacher accountability system because the information acquired during this study offers the potential to improve the current evaluation system in a small suburban school district in Massachusetts. This district implemented a standards-based evaluation system during the
2006-07 and 2007-08 school years. Unlike traditional teacher evaluations, standards-based systems are part of programs to improve teacher performance, not merely weed out incompetent teachers. These systems are “drive-in” rather than drive-by evaluations (Toch & Rothman, 2008). If the purpose of a standards-based evaluation system is to improve schools and student achievement, it must encourage individual teachers to become better teachers (Stiggins & Duke, 1988, p. 3). When all teachers are improving towards a set of collaborative standards, the school will collectively improve. Subsequently, if all schools in a school district are effectively implementing the evaluation process, the district will improve. In most districts, the teacher evaluation process is an untapped human resource that can be used to help a school focus on continuous improvement. When executed effectively, it could have tremendous benefit for the overall quality of each school, the school system and, ultimately, student achievement.

Statement of the Problem

Since 2003, the Massachusetts suburban school district being studied has involved teachers and administrators in the development and implementation of a standards-based teacher evaluation system, called the Teacher Assessment Process (TAP). A standards-based evaluation system has the following characteristics (Danielson & McGreal, 2000):

1. A comprehensive description (competency model) of teacher performance reflecting the current consensus on good teaching.

2. Explicit standards and multiple levels of performance (rather than simply pass/fail), defined by detailed behavioral rating scales (usually called rubrics), that
provide guidance to evaluators on how to rate teachers on what behaviors are expected of high performers.

3. More frequent observations of actual classroom practice and use of multiple lines of evidence, such as lesson plans and samples of student work, to provide a richer picture of teacher performance.

4. Trained evaluators.

From 2003-2006, the Teacher Assessment Process (TAP) for this Massachusetts suburban school district was piloted and revised, with full implementation commencing during the 2006-07 school year. The TAP standards were developed collaboratively by revising teacher evaluation rubrics proposed by Marshall (2006), who had developed the standards using research from Danielson (2007) and Saphier (1997), as well as existing standards from North Star Academy Charter School in Newark, New Jersey; Boston Public Schools; San Francisco Public Schools; and Aspire Charter Schools in California (Marshall, 2006, pp. 2-5).

When properly implemented, a standards-based teacher evaluation system has the potential to overcome many of the flaws of traditional teacher evaluation systems, and to stimulate positive teacher reactions to the system. At a time when research is increasingly pointing to working conditions as being more important than higher pay in keeping good teachers in the classroom, the teachers in the standards-based systems say the combination of extensive evaluations and coaching helps make their working conditions more professional (Toch & Rothman, 2008). For instance, in a study conducted on the Cincinnati Public School System, Heneman and Milanowski (2003) reported that many teachers described changes in their instructional practices in response
to the classroom observations and feedback they received from a standards-based evaluation system. In theory, standards that reflect current descriptions of quality instruction provide teachers with a target for performance that are perceived as meaningful and connected to what they are doing. Well-defined standards provide clear definitions for both teachers and evaluators, reducing the subjective nature of the traditional narrative evaluation. Increased frequency in observations and multiple sources of data increase accuracy of the evaluation and make the results more credible to teachers, thereby building a trust level between teachers and administrators. These results suggest that these evaluation systems have the potential to improve schools and, consequently, student learning.

Therefore, the problem being studied is how the perceptions of teachers and administrators differ when a standards-based teacher evaluation system that focuses more on teacher growth and less on employment decisions is being implemented in a suburban school district.

Purpose of the Study

Colby (2001) identified that teacher evaluation is tightly connected to district priorities and school functions such as school improvement, professional development, and student learning. Subsequently, the purpose of this study is to analyze the perceptions of teachers and building-level administrators in a Massachusetts suburban public school district, regarding the effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system that was designed from 2003-2006, and implemented during the 2006-08 school years. This study analyzes teacher and administrator perceptions in regards to improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and
elevated teacher professional growth. The study also analyzes the positive and negative impacts of implementing a standards-based teacher evaluation system. This Teacher Assessment Process (TAP) was a collaboratively designed, standards-based evaluation system developed by the teachers and administrators of this Massachusetts suburban school district.

Research and Guiding Questions

Therefore, the following research question is examined in this study: What are the perceptions of school administrators and teachers regarding the effectiveness of a collaboratively designed, standards-based, teacher evaluation system that was implemented in a Massachusetts suburban school district during the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years? To determine the perceptions of the administrators and teachers, the following guiding questions are addressed:

1. How do school administrators and teachers differ in their perceptions on the overall effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system in the following areas: improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth?

2. How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

3. How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

4. How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?
5. How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by professional and non-professional status teachers?

6. How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?

7. How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?

The researcher employed a mixed method model consisting of quantitative and qualitative data collecting. The data collection tools employed in addressing the above questions include a written survey for teachers, a written survey for administrators, focus groups for teachers, and focus groups for administrators.

Significance of the Study

This research study is significant because of its contribution to the understanding of educational research and public education in relation to the impact of a collaboratively designed and assessed teacher evaluation system. Under educational research, this study supports and extends the awareness of the effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation on school improvement and teacher growth, particularly for smaller suburban school districts. Because only a small percentage of research studies use the mixed method approach of qualitative and quantitative methods to study teacher evaluation (Davis, 1999), this investigation is able to provide both quantitative and qualitative data towards the knowledge base. Moreover, this study helps fill a gap in the research base that tends to underutilize perceptions from administrators.
For individual schools and school districts, this study is significant because it provides information to help administrators understand how teacher evaluation systems can be used as a tool for school improvement. The data collected on the five keys to success in a teacher evaluation system (teacher, evaluator, procedures, feedback, and context) can help school districts identify their own strengths and weaknesses when implementing a growth oriented teacher evaluation system. The conclusions that emanate from this study will allow districts to improve current teacher evaluation systems, develop and evaluate new teacher evaluation systems, and strengthen the role teacher and administrative leaders play in improving or changing an evaluation system. In addition, this study begins to document perceived change that results from teacher involvement in the evaluation process. Finally, findings from this study will help school districts improve professional development, induction, and hiring programs to strengthen their requirement to make all teachers highly qualified as stated in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002.

Limitations of the Study

There are several possible limitations to this study. First, teachers who were willing to participate in the study were not necessarily representative of the entire district teaching staff. Because participation in the surveys and focus groups was voluntary, not every school and level in the district may have been equally represented. In addition, the data in this study was not disaggregated by individual school, other than the high school, because there is only one high school in this community. Moreover, the teachers and administrators know the researcher as a central office administrator; however, the researcher did not evaluate or observe any of the potential participants, or make any
personnel decisions on their employment status. As a result, an assistant researcher conducted the focus group sessions to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

In addition, data collection was affected by the events that happened to the participants involved in the survey on that day and during the time frame of the survey. For example, during the data collection segment of this study, the teachers' association in this school district was negotiating a new collective bargaining agreement with the school board. In addition, the study was limited to the chosen form of methodology, as the data chosen is that which is of interest to the researcher. Another limitation was the possible personal and professional biases of the respondents due to their own life experiences or training regarding teacher evaluation. Finally, because the research focused on their evaluation, teachers may have had a high level of anxiety concerning the evaluation of their teaching and may not have been completely honest in their responses or they may not be willing to share information.

Delimitations of the Study

The study will be conducted in one small suburban public school district in Massachusetts; therefore, the results from this study will be limited to information provided from educators and administrators that are employed in this school district. The results of the study may not be pertinent in school districts with a different size population and demographics. This study will not examine the perceptions of parents and students toward teacher evaluation. In addition, this study will not examine the use of teacher portfolios as part of the standards-based evaluation process. Finally, this study will not examine the linking of merit pay with a standards-based evaluation.
Definitions of Terms

The following key terms are defined for purposes of this study:

*Evaluation system:* The rules, procedures, assignments and other elements that an institution used to evaluate its personnel and accomplish the purposes of teacher evaluation (Gullickson, in press.).

*Formative evaluation:* A type of evaluation used for the purposes of enhancing the professional skills of teachers (Danielson & McGeal, 2000, p. 8).

*Non-Professional Status Teacher (Non-PTS):* A teacher in a Massachusetts public school who has taught in the same school district for less than three years. In many other states, this teacher is categorized as a non-tenured teacher (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2007).

*Perception:* The recognition and interpretation of sensory stimuli based chiefly on memory (American Heritage Dictionary, 2008). When discussing teacher evaluation, perceptions are influenced by employee satisfaction with the performance appraisal, attitudes of evaluation acceptance, motivation to improve, trust in supervisors, organizational commitment, and legal defensibility in evaluation decisions (Kimbball, 2002).

*Professional Status Teacher (PTS):* A certified teacher who teaches in a public school in Massachusetts and has taught in the same school district more than three years. In many other states, this teacher would be categorized as a tenured teacher (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2007).

*Professional growth:* The process of teachers engaging in professional learning and growing in professional knowledge. This concept, combined with the presumption of
competence leads to opportunities for the self-directed professional growth phase of the teacher evaluation process (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

*Professional learning community:* Schools where educators create an environment that fosters mutual cooperation, emotional support, and personal growth as they work together to achieve what they cannot accomplish alone (Dufour & Eaker, 1998).

*Summative Evaluation:* The evaluation process used for the purpose of making consequential decisions. Screening out unsuitable candidates, dismissing incompetent teachers, and providing legally defensible evidence are all examples of summative functions (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

*Standards-Based Evaluation:* A vision of teaching standards that are broad domains of researched-based teaching practices, comprehensive standards, and detailed criteria through rubrics. The standards are intended to be public, consensus-based, and provide detailed performance expectations (Kimball, 2002a).

*Teacher Assessment Process (TAP):* The name given to the standards-based teacher evaluation system that is used in the Massachusetts suburban school district that is being studied (Reading Public Schools, 2007).

**Conceptual Framework**

A standards-based teacher assessment system should be a continuum that links district commitment, administrative commitment, and teacher commitment with the overall purposes of school and teacher improvement. As seen in Figure 1, Shinkfield and Stufflebeam (1995) describe a conceptual framework that identifies four sets of variables that interact to cause the success or failure of a teacher evaluation system. The context
Context: State/Community/District School
- Federal/state mandate and controls
- Collective bargaining
- Public expectations
- Funding
- District policies, goals, and priorities

District/School Inputs
- Job descriptions
- Evaluation standards
- Evaluation schedule
- Contracts
- Evaluation policies
- Efficient management of process
- Training of evaluators
- Trust
- Periodic review of process

Evaluation Process
- Clarify process
- Obtain and review data
- Provide formative feedback and summative results
- Guide professional improvement
- Use to improve district/school
- Inform personnel decisions

Evaluation Products
- Feedback for improvement
- Planning training programs
- Organizational change
- Improved service to students

Figure 1. Conceptual model for study.
variable influences all of the other variables and is associated with functions such as state law, collective bargaining agreements, district policies, funding, and public expectations. The inputs are district and school inputs, which include the management of the teacher evaluation process, and enabling conditions, whose presence assists the operation of the teacher evaluation system and whose absence likely impedes the teacher evaluation operations. These enabling conditions include trust of the evaluators, amount of training, interactions between evaluators and evaluated personnel, and periodic review and improvement of the evaluation system. The teacher evaluation process includes delineating teacher responsibilities; collaboratively obtaining and documenting data and judging performance; providing formative feedback; reporting summative results; and applying information to guide professional development or to inform personnel decisions. Finally, the products include the quality of the evaluation results and the influences of the evaluations on individual professionals and groups of professionals, on the school district and individual schools, and on students and parents (pp. 96-101). This research study will gauge the effectiveness of the evaluation inputs, process, and products, by collecting and interpreting the perceptions of teachers and administrators. The results will allow the school district to conduct a periodic review and improve the evaluation system.

Outline of Study

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. This chapter provided an introduction and overview of the study including the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research and guiding questions, the significance of the study, the limitations, the delimitations, pertinent definitions, and an overview of the methodologies which will be used. Chapter II includes a review of the literature on teacher evaluation.
Chapter III provides an detailed explanation of the procedures and methodology that will be used in this research study. Chapter IV provides an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data from this study. Finally, Chapter V provides a discussion of the findings and conclusion.
Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The teacher evaluation literature includes a large body of research with many topics. For the purpose of this review, the literature and research is focused on the following: qualities of effective teachers, purpose of teacher evaluation, ineffective teacher evaluation systems, effective teacher evaluation systems, research on standards-based teacher evaluation systems, and conclusions.

Qualities of Effective Teachers

Over the last 60 years, there has been an exponential increase in the number of research studies that have been conducted on the qualities of effective teaching, which have evolved into the basis for teacher evaluation criteria. In the 1940’s and 1950’s, researchers looked at teacher traits such as voice, appearance, emotional stability, warmth and enthusiasm as effective qualities. However, there is limited data from that time period, other than correlation data which linked teacher enthusiasm to effective teaching and student learning (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

With the launch of the Sputnik satellite by the Soviet Union in 1957, the teacher research in the 1960’s and 1970’s emphasized improving the basic skills of students in mathematics and science instruction. During that time period, researchers advanced a clinical supervision model similar to the one designed by the Harvard School of Education faculty in 1960 to augment instruction. This system focused on teachers and supervisors working together to set goals and determine progress. The model consisted
of pre-observation conferences to identify goals and data collection methods; multiple classroom observations that included collection of objective data; and post-observation conferences to analyze data, verify data, and plan next steps for improvement (Stiggins & Duke, 1988). Manatt (1982) built upon the Harvard clinical supervision model and developed an evaluation system that encompassed teacher involvement in the evaluation process; centralized and collaborative development of performance criteria based on research and local priorities; goal setting; multidimensional methods for assessing teacher skills; analysis of results with teachers and development of specific targets for improvement; and a pre-observation and post-observation conference. It was during this time that additional studies were designed to link specific teacher behavior with student achievement. This research, designated as the research on teacher effects, showed connections between teacher behavior and skill connection. This research shaped the foundation for a set of teaching skills that make up the current framework for teaching (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

During the 1970’s and 1980’s, Hunter’s (1982) work on prescriptive teaching practices shaped the way that practitioners looked at teaching. This system was designed to improve teacher decision making and thus enhance student learning. Although it was not research-based, practitioners began to implement teacher directed, structured classrooms which focused on what a teacher does, instead of what a teacher is (Shinkfield & Stufflebeam, 1995). Hunter’s model led to the design of a clinical supervision system that centered on teacher growth and increasing teacher excellence, with an emphasis on the decisions that a teacher made in a classroom lesson. Although the technique was formative in nature, some practitioners, state policymakers, and local school districts
began using the concepts in Hunter's model to develop evaluation instruments which contained checklists and ratings scales, encouraging only a single narrow view of a teacher. The tool became more summative in nature and focused on employee decisions, rather than teacher growth (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

With the release of the 1983 study called *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative of Education Reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), educators in the 1980's and 1990's were under increasing scrutiny to prepare students for a changing job market. Students were now required to develop a deeper understanding by learning more complex skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and collaborative learning. Moreover, there was an increased understanding of how children learn. Research on teaching methodology and content developed new insights into how content, teacher, learner, and context must be interconnected for effective teaching and learning to occur (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

Stronge and Tucker (2005) identified several key qualities of effective teachers including the following:

1. Have formal teacher preparation training.
2. Hold certification and are certified within their fields.
3. Have taught for at least three years.
4. Are caring, fair, and respectful.
5. Hold high expectations for themselves and their students.
6. Dedicate extra time to instructional preparation and reflection.
7. Maximize instructional time via effective classroom management and organization.
8. Enhance instruction by varying instructional strategies, activities, and assignments.

9. Present content to students in a meaningful way that fosters understanding.

10. Monitor students' learning by utilizing pre and post assessments, providing timely and informative feedback, and re-teaching material to students who did not achieve mastery.

11. Demonstrate effectiveness with the full range of student abilities in their classrooms, regardless of the academic diversity of the students. (p. 2)

Numerous studies have been conducted linking the qualities of effective teachers with student achievement. Marzano, Pickering and Pollock (2001) conducted a meta-analysis that linked specific instructional strategies to an increase in student achievement. Sanders (as cited in Tucker & Stronge, 2005) concluded that students who were with an effective teacher three years in a row scored significantly higher on state achievement tests than students who were placed with low-performing teachers three years in a row. A comparable study in Dallas, Texas (Tucker & Stronge, 2005) produced similar results.

In 1996, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future published a report, What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future, (as cited in Darling-Hammonds, 1997) which developed a series of recommendations that covered the entire continuum of teacher development, including teacher evaluation standards. The first recommendation linked teacher standards to student standards. It made the connection between what effective teachers should know and be able to do in order to help students succeed at meeting the new standards that will prepare them for a twenty-first century workforce (Darling-Hammond, 1997). These standards were developed collaboratively
by three groups: the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which sets standards for schools of education; the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), which develops standards for the licensing of beginning teachers; and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which sets standards for accomplished practice (Darling-Hammond, 1997). These three different sets of standards are aligned with one another and with teacher assessments. These assessments measure how teachers meet these standards by looking at evidence with teachers of their teaching performance using such artifacts as videotapes of teaching, lesson plans, student work, and analyses of curriculum. The rigorous standards from these three organizations truly provided an opportunity to use formative evaluation as a means to foster teacher growth and improve student learning.

Purpose of Teacher Evaluation

One of the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 was to ensure that all teachers would be highly qualified by the 2005-06 school year. Each state was responsible to define how a teacher would reach highly qualified status. In Massachusetts, teachers attain this status by completing a combination of requirements, including possessing a degree in the content area that he or she teaches, passing the Massachusetts Test for Educational Licensure (MTEL), as well as, either having certification in the area that he or she teaches, or completing a plan that requires attendance at workshops and courses in specific content areas (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2007).

Although there are no Federal laws governing teacher evaluation, virtually every public school district, by order of state law or regulation, has a formal procedure for the
evaluation of teachers. In 1995, Massachusetts General Law c.71, 38 and 603 CMR 35.00 was passed to give local school committees the authority to develop an evaluation system for teachers and administrators. That law specifies that the purposes of evaluation are (a) to provide information for the continuous improvement of performance through an exchange of information between the person being evaluated and the evaluator, and (b) to provide a record of facts and assessments for personnel decisions. The law clearly defines teacher evaluation as a “system to enhance the professionalism and accountability of teachers…which will enable them to assist all students to perform at high levels” (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2007, p.1).

*Summative and Formative Evaluations*

Researchers describe the two main purposes of teacher evaluation to be summative and formative. Summative evaluations provide information to make personnel management decisions such as promotion, dismissal, and salary increase; while formative evaluations promote the professional growth of teachers (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Kleinhenz, Ingvarson, & Chadbourne, 2002; Scriven, 1988; Stiggins & Duke, 1988). Shinkfield and Stufflebeam (1995) view teacher evaluation as “improving the performance of teachers, students, and the organization as a whole” (p. 2). Haefele (1993) and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (Gullickson, in press) posit that a teacher evaluation system should look at all aspects of human resource activities including conducting the hiring process, providing constructive feedback, recognizing and reinforcing outstanding teaching practices, aligning staff development activities, documenting evidence for dismissal, and unifying teachers and administrators in their collective efforts to educate students. Peterson (2000, 2004) highlights other
purposes as well, which include informing stakeholders of teacher performance, limiting bad teacher evaluation practices, identifying exemplary practices for emulation by other teachers, providing exemplars for professional developers and pre-service educators, providing data for educational researchers, and improving individual teacher performance (pp. 68-69).

Howard and Harman (2007) describe a school district that uses a standards based evaluation system to have the following purposes for evaluation (p. 47):

1. To promote achievement and growth in every student
2. To ensure a competent staff member in every certified position
3. To increase professional competency of staff in every certified position
4. To provide feedback to every staff member
5. To recognize outstanding staff
6. To identify staff development needs
7. To identify staff in need of remediation and possible termination
8. To assist in the assignment of staff

These purposes are consistent with the Personnel Evaluation Standards (Gullickson, in press).

Therefore, the findings from these studies lead to the conclusion that if local evaluation systems are to be used beyond the limitations of a summative process to make personnel decisions, then the focus should shift to making local evaluation systems more formative in nature. This would allow the teacher evaluation system to be a growth-oriented process for each individual teacher with an emphasis on overall school quality. If the ongoing professional growth of the teacher becomes the focal point of teacher
evaluation systems, all teachers have the potential to improve, not just the minimally competent teachers. As Stiggins (1986) stated:

Thus, if our goal is to improve general school quality — and we use only those strategies that affect a few teachers — overall school improvement is likely to be a very slow process. Growth-oriented systems, on the other hand, have the potential of affecting all teachers — not just those few who are having problems. There is no question that all teachers can improve some dimension(s) of their performance. (pp. 53-54)

Ineffective Teacher Evaluation Systems

Unfortunately, the majority of teacher evaluation systems focus on summative methods, rather than formative methods. Most systems in practice today were developed 30 years ago and have not been updated to reflect current research on effective teaching practices. These systems rely on the documentation of a small number of observable behaviors that focus on isolated qualities of classroom management, effective routines and procedures, and teacher personality (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Annual goal setting and review are often part of this process and some districts even add a form of clinical supervision (Peterson, 2004). While these are useful components to teacher evaluation, they do not adequately foster teacher growth and improvement.

There are other problems associated with teacher evaluation systems. First, there is a lack of precision in evaluating performances. Most systems are not standards-based and rely on a scale that has not been calibrated to identify the different levels of a standard. In addition, the culture in many school environments does not support teacher growth, thereby, creating the expectation that all veteran teachers are on the higher end of
the rating scale. Shinkfield and Stufflebeam (1995) describe a case study of an urban school district where 95 percent of the teacher evaluations indicated that the teachers were superior, even though the achievement level of most of the students in those teachers' classrooms were well below minimum standards on an annual basis. Another problem associated with teacher evaluation systems is the lack of communication between the evaluator and the teacher. In traditional systems, communication is top-down and evidence of teacher performance is collected only by the administrator during classroom observations, creating an artificial snapshot of a teacher. This hierarchical system is problematic because the teacher is automatically in a passive role and does not contribute to the evaluation. In addition, the very nature of the process leads to a negative climate where the administrator is looking for a weakness in the teacher performance (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). If this type of climate exists in a school, the teacher behavior in a formal classroom observation will be vastly different because the teacher will feel that it is a high stakes observation that will affect his or her evaluation.

Another factor that could affect traditional teacher evaluation systems is the lack of differentiation between novice and experienced practitioners. In most systems, the teacher evaluation process, the standards used and the level of expectation are similar for both first year and veteran teachers. This type of structure can lead to different types of attitudes towards evaluation by teachers in different stages of their careers. Peterson (2000, 2004) illustrates that beginning teachers expect and solicit evaluation, because it reinforces what they are doing in the classroom. On the other hand, veteran teachers are much less positive about teacher evaluation because the process and standards used are too vague and ambiguous. They perceive their final evaluation rating as depending more
on the qualities of the evaluator than how they teach. As a result, veteran teachers view evaluation as unimportant or irrelevant.

The role of the evaluator is a critical factor in determining the success of an effective teacher evaluation system. Reviews of the research literature of the past 25 years highlight the principal as playing a strong positive role in successful evaluation systems (Colby, Bradshaw & Joyner, 2002). In contrast, research has also found that ineffective systems rely heavily on the principal or another administrator as the primary evaluator, creating more of an emphasis on summative, rather than formative. This is problematic because many teachers are more expert regarding their work than the administrators who evaluate them. For example, an administrator with a mathematics background may not have the knowledge base to accurately evaluate a foreign language teacher. In a Rand study (Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, & Berstein, 1984), researchers found that “the lack of sufficient resolve and competence on the part of principals to evaluate accurately” (p.2) was a major problem in school districts with ineffective evaluation systems. Peterson (2000) stated the following:

Seventy years of research on principal ratings of teachers shows that they do not work well. Well designed empirical studies depict principals as inaccurate raters both of individual teacher performance behaviors and of overall teacher merit. These problems go beyond simply developing a better rating form, informing teachers of the items on the rating forms, or improving the training of principals as raters, although these strategies are offered by many who are interested in preserving current practice. (p. 19)
Effective Teacher Evaluation Systems

The literature on teacher evaluation systems over the last 40 years has consistently supported two significant findings. The first conclusion is that teachers and administrators have always recognized the importance and necessity for evaluation, even though they have had serious concerns about its implementation and the lack of effect that the results had on teachers, their classrooms, and their students. The second conclusion from the research is that evaluation systems designed to support teacher growth and development using a formative evaluation approach resulted in higher levels of teacher efficacy as well as more thoughtful and reflective practices, while still being able to sustain a high level of accountability and expectations (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). The need for a more formative approach to teacher evaluation is supported by many changing conditions including: (a) the changing of roles, responsibilities and relationships among teachers, students, and administrators; (b) the increased understanding of how adults learn, grow, and develop; (c) the current research on the importance and complexity of teaching; (d) the increased focus differentiating between professional development and teacher evaluation; (e) an understanding about effective professional development programs; and (f) an assessment of traditional forms of supervision.

Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Pease (1983) identify five minimal conditions for a successful teacher evaluation system. These conditions include that (a) teachers and administrators understand the criteria and process for evaluation; (b) teachers and administrators understand how these criteria and processes relate to the basic goals of the organization; (c) teachers perceive that the evaluation procedures are intended to enable
and motivate them to improve their performance; (d) principals perceive that procedures enable them to provide instructional leadership; (e) participants understand that the evaluation process allows them to achieve a balance between external controls and autonomy. Moreover, Colby (2001) emphasizes that “the teacher evaluation process needs to be tightly connected to the district priorities and school functions, as well as, provide an evaluation environment that supports ongoing, professional learning” (pp. 16-17). The Joint Committee on Standards for Effective Evaluation (Gullickson, in press) used a different approach by stating that teacher evaluation systems should have four basic attributes: propriety, utility, feasibility, and accuracy. Propriety is aimed at protecting the rights of students, teachers, administrators, and anyone else affected by an evaluation system. Utility is intended to make evaluations informative, timely, and influential. Feasibility recognizes that teacher evaluations are conducted in settings that have limited resources and instructional time, and are influenced by a variety of social, political, and governmental forces. Finally, accuracy articulates the need to determine whether an evaluation has produced dependable valid information about the relevant qualifications or performance of a teacher. This document requires that personnel evaluations be ethical, fair, useful, feasible, and accurate, as well as, provide special consideration to issues of diversity.

The key to an effective teacher evaluation system is a set of credible teaching standards. In a standards-based teacher evaluation system, teachers’ performance is evaluated against a set of standards that define a competency model of effective teaching (Heneman, Milanowski, Kimball, & Odden, 2006). Standards serve several purposes in a teacher evaluation: model what teachers are expected to know and be able to do based
upon the research and best practices; describe desirable levels of performance; and clarify the elements of what teachers can expect to improve in over the long term (Kleinhenz, Ingvarson & Chadbourne, 2002). Furthermore, Danielson (2007) describes the importance of having a framework or standards:

A framework for professional practice can be used for a wide range of purposes, from meeting novices’ needs to enhancing veterans’ skills. Because teaching is complex, it is helpful to have a road map through the territory, structured around a shared understanding of teaching. Novice teachers, of necessity, are concerned with day-to-day survival; experienced teachers want to improve their effectiveness and help their colleagues do so as well; accomplished teachers may want to move toward advanced certification and serve as a resource to less-experienced colleagues. (p. 2)

Odden (2004) specifies that a standards-based teacher evaluation system must include a set of teaching standards that describes in detail what teachers need to know and be able to do; a set of procedures for collecting multiple forms of data on teacher’s performance for each of the standards; and a related set of scoring rubrics that provide guidance to assessors or evaluators on how to score the various pieces of data to various performance levels (p. 127). Peterson (2004) describes multiple data systems to include not only administrator visits, conferences and teacher rating forms, but pupil achievement data, student and parent surveys, peer review of materials, documentation of professional activity, teacher test scores, National Board Certification, action research projects, school improvement participation, and information unique to the individual teacher. Moreover, Heneman and Milanowski (2003) note that a standards-based teacher evaluation system
should be a part of a comprehensive human resource management system that includes recruitment, hiring, induction, retaining, promotion and development of teachers.

Furthermore, Danielson and McGreal (2000) emphasize that standards-based teacher evaluation systems should be linked to the mission of the school district, be viewed as a continuous process, emphasize student outcomes, and be supported with adequate resources to be successful.

McGreal (1986) researched 300 teacher evaluation systems and identified nine commonalities that emerged as best practices in teacher evaluations systems. One commonality was that positive attitudes and procedures needed to promote instructional improvement rather than negative attitudes and procedures. Another commonality was that evaluation procedures were flexible and that data collection was tailored to the needs of the individual teacher. Another best practice was that teacher evaluation systems were most effective when the focus was on specific indicators of classroom instruction and teaching behaviors that can be improved. The next commonality was that there were individualized professional development goals that were identified collaboratively by teachers and administrators. Another commonality was that effective teacher evaluation systems emanated from an agreed upon and clearly articulated definition of teaching that gives the teacher and the administrator a common language. A sixth commonality was that there was a reliance on pre-observation planning, observation of specified behaviors, and a post observation feedback conference. The use of alternative data sources such as self-evaluation, peer evaluation, parent evaluation, student evaluation, student performance, and examination of classroom artifacts was widely used in exemplary teacher evaluation systems. Another commonality was a differentiated system for
tenured and non-tenured teachers. Finally, exemplary teacher evaluation systems conducted a complete training program of skills and understandings for all participating teachers and supervisors so that they can effectively implement a growth system.

Relationship Between Teacher Evaluation System and Student Achievement

Research has also been conducted measuring the relationship between teacher evaluation scores using a standards-based teacher evaluation system and student achievement. Odden (2004) posits that if teaching standards describe effective instructional strategies, then when they are implemented in the classroom, student achievement should increase. Holtzapple (2003) reported in a study conducted in the Cincinnati Public School System that teachers who received the lowest ratings on the Teaching for Learning domain in their standards-based evaluation had students who performed lower on state and district tests than predicted on prior year test scores. Kimball, White, Milanowski, and Borman, (2004) and Henemann, Milanowski, Kimball, and Odden (2006) conducted similar studies in urban school districts and found positive relationships between teacher evaluation scores on a standards-based teacher evaluation system and student achievement. The evidence supports that the instructional practices measured by these evaluation systems contribute to student learning. However, the research also indicated that the amount of student gain was different in each of the four school districts, indicating that implementation is pivotal to the success of a standards-based teacher evaluation system.

Leadership and Implementation

One of the keys to effective implementation lies with the leaders of the schools and school district. Leaders have two choices on how to implement a teacher evaluation
system: as a superficial and meaningless bureaucratic necessity or as a meaningful process that could be a catalyst for improving teaching and learning. The second choice requires the type of school leadership which involves all professional educators as essential to developing schools as professional learning communities. Lewin (as cited in Covey, 1990) discusses the importance of involving people who are part of the problem to create change, also known as force field analysis. If administrators involve teachers in the implementation of a new teacher evaluation system, they will be committed to coming up with solutions, as well as, buy into the importance of teacher evaluation as a professional growth tool. This will reduce the restraining forces that are blocking effective implementation and increase the driving forces that will accelerate effective implementation.

Effective implementation of the teacher evaluation system and ownership by the stakeholders will also be determined by how the leaders can develop strong moral connections within the school community. Sergiovanni (2001) describes effective leaders as developing moral communities which provide moral connections among the stakeholders and helping them to become self-managing. In a moral community, the leader, “serves as head follower by leading the discussion about what is worth following and by modeling, teaching, and helping others to become better followers” (p. 33, 34). It is through this process that the lifeworld, or the traditions, rituals, and norms that define a school culture, are formed. For effective change to occur, it is the norms of professional educators that must drive professional practice, rather than rules and procedures.

Where lifeworld has a focus on the school culture, systemworld is associated with, “the management designs and protocols, strategic and tactical actions, policies and
procedures, and efficiency and accountability assurances” (Sergiovanni, 2000, as cited in Davis, Ellett, & Annunziata, 2002, p. 294). All organizations need similar systemsworld procedures to accomplish their goals. Teacher evaluation systems fall into the cultural area of the systemsworld. However, integrating the teacher evaluation system in the everyday life of the school involves developing a supportive culture and the kinds of effective leadership of the lifeworld perspective. Effective implementation “flourishes when the lifeworld is the generative force for determining the systemsworld” (p. 294).

To support this framework, Davis, Ellett, and Annunziata (2002) described a case study comparing and contrasting two types of leadership styles in facilitating organizational change: the knight in shining armor and the small jazz combo. Both leaders were involved in implementing a new teacher evaluation system in their individual schools within the same school district. The principal described as the knight in shining armor was hostile toward the new teacher evaluation system, so therefore protected teachers from “an uninformed, inconsistent, and hostile evaluation policy that was being unfairly forced on teachers by a heavy handed central administration” (p. 295). Consequently, the culture of this school is characterized by mistrust, fear, and misunderstanding of the teacher evaluation system. There was minimal site-based professional development to prepare teachers for the new system. Teachers believed that the new system could not effectively ever work to improve teaching and learning.

Essentially, in this school, the principal used the administrative systemworld power to stifle the lifeworld of the school.

In contrast, the principal described as the small jazz combo used the new teacher assessment and evaluation system for the improvement of teaching and learning.
Professional educators collaborated together towards the goal of quality teaching and learning. Each staff member took part in the leadership necessary to implement change. Regular meetings were held to discuss the progress of the new system in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Teachers believed that they had the capacity to be successful in the new teacher evaluation system. In this case, the systemsworld was used to support and strengthen the lifeworld of the school.

The principal’s capacity for innovation will determine how complete the implementation process will be. Halverson, Kelley and Kimball (2004) put forward that this capacity is measured in terms of an individual’s will and skill to implement new practices. Will is defined as the level of motivation of the principal to implement the evaluation system, and skill is the ability of the principal to engage in the intended practice. These two areas can be constrained or augmented depending upon prior context of practice, constraints on innovation, multiple professional responsibilities, experience of the leader, and the training received to implement the system.

Research on Standards-Based Teacher Evaluation Systems

Several studies were analyzed that focused on the use of standards-based teacher evaluation systems. Kimball (2002, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c) and Kimball, White, Milanowski, and Borman (2004) reported on the following case studies: the Annoka-Hennepin Public School District in Minnesota, the Washoe County Public School District in Nevada, and the Newport News Public School District in Virginia. Each case study examined the entire K-12 district, and did not delineate between elementary, middle, and high school. The school districts implemented the use of Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching (Danielson 1996, 2007) as the central part of its
teacher evaluation system. In each case study, the school district was dissatisfied with its previous evaluation system because of the lack of accountability and lack of emphasis on professional growth. All three school districts appointed a committee of teachers and administrators to design the evaluation tool to match the culture and needs of the school district. Consistent with the Danielson model, all three school districts included multiple sources of data in their evaluation system including goal setting, classroom observations, portfolios, self-assessments, instructional unit plans, log of family contacts, professional development activities, and other contributions.

Each school district decided to implement the new teacher evaluation system differently. For example, Washoe County field tested the evaluation system for 2 years, Annoka-Hennepin piloted for 1 year, and Newport News did not pilot the system prior to implementation. Training for teachers and administrators varied in each school district from district wide to building-based. In Annoka-Hennepin and Washoe County, the new system was aligned with other human resource activities such as professional development, recruitment, and induction; however, at Newport News, the alignment was to a lesser degree. Overall, all three districts reported that the standards-based teacher evaluation system has positively altered the nature of teacher evaluation because of clear standards, mutual input from both teachers and administrators into the evaluation process, an emphasis on self-directed growth, and a mindset to continuously improve the process.

Heneman and Milanowski (2003) used a mixed method approach to describe and evaluate the first two years of a district-wide implementation of a standards-based teacher evaluation system using the Danielson (1996, 2007) model in the Cincinnati public schools. Both studies examined K-12 teachers and did not differentiate the results by
level. During the first year of implementation there was a mixture of problems and successes. On the success side, teachers and administrators appeared to understand the teaching standards and accepted them as representation of good teaching. Many teachers saw the potential of the new system for helping them improve their performance.

Unfortunately, there were also many problems during the first year of implementation. The most significant was the increased workload that the system imposed on the evaluators, resulting in many of the administrators unable to complete their teacher evaluation assignments in a timely fashion. Teachers were concerned about the additional workload of the portfolio, uncertainty about how to create the portfolio, and a lack of feedback from administrators. Other issues included concerns about the expertise level of the evaluators for some of the content areas, consistency of evaluation decisions across schools, and differences in the interpretation of the rubrics across evaluators.

Based upon the feedback from the pilot year of implementation, several changes were made to the evaluation system. Additional specialists were hired to assist in the number of evaluations. Written feedback needed to be provided within 5 days after the observation. The amount of training included calibration sessions to rate videotapes of sample lessons for administrators and teacher training on how to compile a portfolio.

Three methods were used to assess teacher reactions: surveys of teachers, interviews with teachers, and an exit survey of teachers who left the district. There were both positive and negative reactions to the teacher evaluation system. The most positive reaction was teachers’ understanding and acceptance of the four performance domains of the Danielson (1996, 2007) system and accompanying standards. Another positive
reaction was the district’s receptiveness to feedback from teachers and administrators about the problems and glitches of the system. Teachers also reported examples of changes in their instructional practices in response to the classroom observations and feedback they received. This finding suggests that the evaluation system has the potential to affect a change in teacher behavior to improve instruction.

The researchers reported that there were negative reactions to the new system as well. First, the new system was a shock to many teachers who had not been held accountable for several years with the previous evaluation system. In addition, the evaluation system potentially could be linked to teacher pay in the future, which may have created the high stress levels indicated in the survey and interview results. This resulted in several teachers leaving the district with 50% of those teachers indicating that their teacher evaluation system was a factor in their decision to leave.

*Case Studies of Standards-Based Teacher Evaluation Systems*

Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, and Bernstein (1984) reviewed four evaluations systems in Salt Lake City, Utah; Lake Washington, Washington; Greenwich, Connecticut; and Toledo, Ohio. Each district approached teacher evaluation differently. They emphasized different purposes for evaluation; they used different methods for assessing teachers; and they assigned different roles to teachers, building level administrators, and central office administrators. However, all four districts followed certain common practices in implementing their teacher evaluation systems. They all emphasized the following implementation factors (p. 26):

1. Provide top-level leadership and institutional resources for the evaluation process.
2. Ensure that evaluators have the necessary expertise to perform their task.

3. Ensure administrator-teacher collaboration to develop a common understanding of evaluation goals and processes.

4. Use an evaluation process and support systems that are compatible with each other and with the district’s overall goals and organizational context.

It is the emphasis of these four factors; organizational commitment, evaluation competence, collaboration and strategic compatibility that has made teacher evaluation a meaningful process in each of the case studies.

Furthermore, Stiggins and Duke (1988) performed case studies of K-12 teachers who had used a standards-based teacher evaluation system to identify the factors that contribute to the quality and impact of any particular teacher evaluation experience. Their studies concluded that there are five keys to success in teacher evaluations; (a) the teacher, (b) the evaluator(s), (c) the procedures, (d) the feedback, and (e) the context. Each key has important attributes that lead to a successful implementation of a standards-based teacher evaluation system. For example, teacher attributes include instructional competence, personal expectations, openness to suggestions, orientation to change, and subject knowledge. Furthermore, evaluator attributes include credibility, persuasiveness, patience, trust, experienced track record, and modeling. They concluded that the key to success in a growth-oriented, standards-based teacher evaluation system appears to be careful attention to all of the attributes including: teachers and supervisors being willing to contribute to that success, procedures for gathering performance data being carefully planned and implemented, feedback being delivered in a thoughtful manner, and the context being one in which teacher growth is valued.
Kimball (2002, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c) conducted three qualitative case studies of elementary and high schools in three large school districts which had implemented a new standards-based teacher evaluation system. In all three cases, the model that was implemented was again *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* (Danielson, 1996, 2007). Three of the attributes referred to above were examined: analysis of feedback, enabling conditions, and fairness perceptions. Each of these attributes is also presented in the Personnel Evaluation Standards developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (Gullickson, in press). In each of the case studies, the new evaluation systems established more structure, provided increased opportunities for teacher input and dialogue, and drew on multiple data sources for evaluation decisions. Teachers and evaluators saw the systems as substantial improvement over their prior years, yet implementation problems were evident (Kimball, 2002a, p. 264).

In reference to the feedback attribute, teachers stated that it was positive; however there were variations in the feedback timing, utility, and credibility. For example, most teachers were encouraged to continue what they were doing, resulting in fewer instances where feedback was used to change instructional strategies. In addition, professional development was not directly influenced by the evaluation process. Moreover, specific evaluation standards, multiple data sources, and increased opportunities for input enhanced teacher perceptions of fairness. However, increased administrative workload with the new evaluation system, combined with insufficient training, led some teachers to question fairness.
Kimball (2002a) concluded that simply adopting a standards-based evaluation system is not enough to transform teacher evaluation into a growth process. He cites insufficient training, little accountability for evaluation quality and consistency and lack of alignment of human resource systems as barriers to successful implementation. In order to mobilize a new standards-based teacher evaluation system past its initial implementation years, there needs to be training for evaluators on how to provide feedback and defend evaluations, as well as, aligning of human resource activities such as hiring, induction, and professional development around a vision of teaching.

The implementation of other standards-based evaluation tools, in addition to the Danielson (1996, 2007) model has been researched as well. Davis, Pool, and Mits-Cash (2000) conducted a field study of the implementation of the Professional Assessment and Comprehensive Evaluation System (PACES) in several elementary, middle, and high schools in a large urban school district. Teachers and administrators were interviewed on the implementation process. There were several dominant themes throughout the teacher responses. The two most common were lack of time for implementation and lack of training. In addition, teachers cited that there was a lack of knowledge about the process which caused an increase in stress and anxiety. Principals were excited about PACES and believed that it was an opportunity to improve teaching and learning; however, they had reservations and concerns on time, training, consistency, and fairness. The results also concluded that in-school leadership has an impact on the overall opinions and knowledge of PACES in the school, the level of misinformation about PACES, and the readiness of school personnel for implementing PACES.
Research has also compared traditional state-mandated teacher evaluations which emphasized a summative evaluation process with locally developed teacher evaluation systems that focused more on a formative evaluation process. Colby (2001) used a mixed method study and a similar survey instrument used by Stiggins and Duke (1988) to measure teacher perceptions on the impact that evaluation systems have on school improvement, professional development and student learning. Conclusions were that locally developed alternative teacher evaluation systems were perceived as having a stronger impact on school improvement, professional development, and student learning than state mandated teacher evaluation systems. The results of this study imply that teacher evaluation policies and practices can serve as a catalyst for creating connections in practice between school improvement, professional development and student learning. By implication, therefore, developing teacher evaluation systems at the local level is a viable strategy for strengthening teacher evaluation and its connections to school improvement, professional development and student learning.

Conclusions

Based on the above research, there are several conclusions that can be made about the implementation of a teacher evaluation system. First, and foremost, a standards-based model, such as the Danielson (1996, 2007) framework should be designed and articulated by teachers and administrators to match the local needs of the school district. This model will provide the basis for all of the other components of the teacher evaluation system. Second, the school district needs to decide on the purpose of the teacher evaluation system. Will the purpose of the system be summative, formative, or both? Summative purposes, usually mandated by state law, cause teacher anxiety and
mistrust if not implemented effectively. Formative purposes focus on instructional improvement, school improvement, and teacher growth. Next, the focus should be on the implementation of the new teacher evaluation system, not just the actual rubric or instrument. Implementation errors provide reasons to doubt the validity of the system, and an excuse not to take high performance expectations seriously (Heneman & Milanowski, 2003). Moreover, there will be different and increased role expectations. A standards-based model will require teachers to change instructional practices to meet the higher expectations. In order to succeed, administrators will need to focus their time on learning the new system, providing timely feedback, and working with teachers on instructional improvement and professional development activities. As a result of the change in roles and expectations, teachers and administrators will need to be thoroughly prepared for implementing those changes. This system will raise the bar for both teachers and administrators, so training in the specific knowledge of the process, understanding of the time demands, and performing observation and evaluation skills will be critical. Next, there needs to be an alignment of human resource management systems with the evaluation system, including recruitment, hiring, induction, and professional development. Finally, the teacher evaluation system needs to have an ongoing evaluation component to gauge effectiveness. Surveys, interviews, and a standing committee to assess the system need to be implemented to ensure a mindset of continuous improvement.

The majority of the research reviewed focused on the implementation of teacher evaluation systems in large school districts in either the Southeastern or Midwestern parts of the country. Additional research needs to be conducted in exploring differences in
evaluation effectiveness as a function of level (elementary, middle, high school), professional status versus non-professional status teachers, geographic region, and experience level of teachers. Moreover, further research should add to the understanding of criteria for effective evaluation; examine the effectiveness of different types of teacher evaluation systems; and examine the impact of teacher evaluation systems on school improvement, professional development, and student learning (Colby, 2001). This dissertation research will address some of these questions as a standards-based evaluation system is implemented in a small suburban community in Massachusetts.
Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methods and procedures that were used to analyze the perceptions of teachers and building-level administrators in a Massachusetts suburban school district regarding the implementation of a locally designed standards-based teacher evaluation system. These methods and procedures are discussed in six sections: (a) overview, (b) research design, (c) sampling, (d) instrumentation, (e) data collection, and (f) data analysis.

Overview

This study will use a mixed method approach integrating quantitative and qualitative data. This type of technique is one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on practical grounds. It employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to maximize the understanding of research problems. The data collection involves both numeric information using instruments, as well as text information using focus groups. This produces both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2003). Quantitative data will be gathered using the Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) questionnaire (Stiggins & Duke, 1988). Qualitative data will be gathered from focus group sessions.
Research Questions

The following research question is examined in this study: What are the perceptions of school administrators and teachers regarding the effectiveness of a collaboratively designed, standards-based, teacher evaluation system that was implemented in a Massachusetts suburban school district during the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years? To determine the perceptions of the administrators and teachers, the following guiding questions are addressed:

1. How do school administrators and teachers differ in their perceptions on the overall effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system in the following areas: improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth?

2. How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

3. How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

4. How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

5. How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by professional and non-professional status teachers?

6. How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?
7. How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?

**Background Data of Participants**

This study involves educators from a small suburban school district located near Boston, Massachusetts. During the 2007-08 school year, this school district had a pre-K through 12 population of 4,332 students. The population from which the subjects were selected include all 314 teachers, and 22 administrators working in one pre-school, five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school who were employed during the 2007-08 school year. The teachers who volunteered to participate in this study include a sample of elementary classroom teachers in grades pre-kindergarten through 5, middle school teachers in grades 6 through 8, and high school teachers in grades 9 through 12. Teachers are defined as those who are full time or part time employees who work with students and who are evaluated using the Reading Public Schools Teacher Assessment Process (TAP). The subjects included regular and special education teachers, as well as those teaching in specialized areas such as art, music, physical education, library media, and technology integration. Long term and short term substitute teachers were not included in this study. Administrators included anyone who observes or evaluates teachers using the TAP evaluation system including eight building principals, four building assistant principals, the Director of Pupil Services, and nine high school department chairpersons. The high school department chairpersons were coded as administrators because they are directly involved in the formal observations and contribute to the year end evaluation of high school teachers.
Teacher Evaluation Process Used in School District

The administration and teachers of this school district collaboratively designed the Teacher Assessment Process (TAP), beginning in 2003. Between the 2003-04 school year and the 2005-06 school year, the evaluation system was piloted using the Danielson (2007) rubric as the standards for a summative evaluation. However, during the 2006-07 school year, a new evaluation system was collaboratively developed and implemented by the Teacher Assessment Process committee, a group comprised of teachers and administrators. This revised Teacher Assessment Process included several formative components, as well as, a summative component. In addition, the Danielson rubrics were replaced with a set of rubrics originally designed by Marshall (2006) and revised by the Teacher Assessment Process Committee. Marshall’s (2006) rubrics originated from a combination of different standards-based models including Danielson (2007), Saphier (1997), North Star Academy Charter School in Newark, New Jersey, Boston Public Schools, San Francisco Public Schools, and Aspire Charter Schools in California (Marshall, 2006, pp. 2-5).

The TAP standards used in this suburban school district contain six areas that are assessed for each teacher: Planning and Preparation for Learning; Classroom Management; Delivery of Instruction; Monitoring, Assessment, and Follow-up; Family and Community Outreach; and Professional Responsibilities. Each area has four levels of proficiency; Exceeding the Standard of Excellence, Meeting the Standard of Excellence, Progressing Toward the Standard of Excellence, and Does not Meet the Standard of Excellence. Each level of performance was defined to add clarity for evaluation purposes. Each of the levels has 10 to 15 indicators that specify a teacher
behavior in that area. The indicators correspond with each level so that there is a progression of improvement as one proceeds from *Does not Meet the Standard of Excellence* to *Exceeding the Standard of Excellence*. Currently, rubrics exist for general classroom teachers, but not for specialists such as special education teachers, school psychologists, reading specialists, instructional technology specialists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and school adjustment counselors. An alternative evaluation process for professional status teachers has not been implemented; however, an improvement plan process for professional status teachers who are struggling has been implemented.

The TAP evaluation system includes both a summative and formative component. Consistent with Massachusetts state law on evaluation, non-professional status teachers have a summative evaluation annually, and professional status teachers have a summative evaluation biannually. In addition, non-professional status teachers have two formal observations and an unlimited number of informal observations annually, whereas, professional status teachers have one formal observation and an unlimited number of informal observations biannually. In the summative evaluation component, the evaluator is encouraged to add pertinent comments at the end of each area. Formative techniques in the TAP include a teacher self-assessment, written reflection, annual goal-setting that aligns with the TAP rubric, midyear meetings with the evaluator, and multiple data collection methods. A teacher improvement plan with peer support is designed for teachers who are not meeting the standard in specific areas. The school district has begun to align its human resource components, such as recruitment, hiring, induction, and professional development with the new standards.
Research Design

This study uses a mixed method case study research approach integrating quantitative and qualitative data. Stiggins and Duke (1988) state that “the kind of research methodology most likely to be productive in exploring and understanding issues related to implementation of effective growth-oriented evaluation systems is district case-study methodology” (p. 127). Quantitative data is primarily used, with the use of qualitative data to confirm the findings and provide support for understanding the results from the quantitative research. According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), the goal of mixed methods research is to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of single research studies. Quantitative data was gathered in May and June of 2008 using the Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) questionnaire (Stiggins & Duke, 1988). Permission to use this survey was received in January, 2008 from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Qualitative data was gathered from focus group sessions during June, 2008 involving a subset of teachers and administrators using a set of questions designed to explore teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions on the district’s Teacher Assessment Process (TAP). These questions were designed from the theoretical model and pre-tested with a jury of experts, consisting of five educational leaders who were not be part of the research study.

Sampling

The research guiding questions examined the perceptions of administrators and the subgroups of professional status teachers, non-professional status teachers, elementary, middle, and high school teachers. All teachers who participated in the quantitative data collection had been evaluated with the new TAP process either during
the 2006-07 or 2007-08 school year. Because of the small population size of teachers in
the district, all teachers who had been evaluated during those 2 years were invited to
participate. Fifty-three percent (53%) of the teachers and 64 percent of the administrators
participated in the quantitative portion of the study. According to Leedy and Ormrod
(2005), at least 50% of a population of a size under 500 should participate in a
quantitative study. As designated by the Institutional Review Board process, a few
weeks prior to the administration of the written survey and focus group sessions, the
researcher met with each school staff, the leadership teams of each school, and the
executive board of the teachers' association to explain the study, their rights as
participants, the survey, and the focus groups. All teachers and administrators received
the written survey via interoffice mail in their school mailbox with written directions and
a blank return envelope. As part of the process, they had 4 weeks to complete the written
survey anonymously and confidentially. Due to the low population size, all building level
administrators were invited to participate in both the written survey and the focus group
sessions.

For the qualitative portion of the study, there were a total of 10 focus groups; 4
administrator groups and 6 teacher groups. The 4 administrator groups were divided by
level (Elementary, Middle, High School, and High School Department Chairpersons) and
consisted of three to five administrators per focus group. The 6 teacher focus groups
contained approximately three to four teachers in each group and consisted of 1 group in
each of the following areas: Elementary Nonprofessional Status Teachers, Elementary
Professional Status Teachers, Middle School Nonprofessional Status Teachers, Middle
School Professional Status Teachers, High School Nonprofessional Status Teachers, and
High School Nonprofessional Status Teachers. To produce a stratified random sampling of each subgroup, an assistant researcher not employed by the school district selected the teachers for the researcher based upon their level and status, using a randomized number selection system. To protect the confidentiality of the teacher and administrator responses, selected teachers and administrators were assigned a number value within their position. The master list of names and numbers were only available to the assistant researcher and to an individual who assisted the assistant researcher in the focus group discussions. The researcher did not have access to the list and did not conduct any of the focus group sessions because of the researcher's administrative position in the school district that is being studied. Each focus group session lasted approximately one hour.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used to gather data for this mixed method study. The Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) questionnaire will be used to gather quantitative data for both teachers and administrators. Focus groups were conducted to gather qualitative data. Prior to any administration of surveys and questions, a complete Institutional Review Board (IRB) process was conducted and approval was given by the Seton Hall Institutional Review Board to conduct the study on May 13, 2008.

*Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) Questionnaire*

The TEP is a data collection instrument developed by Stiggins and Duke (1988) and modified in several other studies (Colby, 2001; Hughes, 2006; Rindler, 1994). This 55 item questionnaire was originally developed based upon three research studies designed to better understand growth-oriented teacher evaluation. Teachers who completed the TEP were asked to respond to the questions based upon their most recent
evaluation experiences. The TEP instrument examined perceptions relating to the five key attributes for effective growth-oriented or formative teacher evaluation. These include attributes of the (a) teacher, (b) evaluator, (c) evaluation process, (d) feedback received, and (e) evaluation context. In addition, the instrument measures the impact of the evaluation process on teacher attitude, teaching behaviors and strategies, the teaching and learning process, student learning, student achievement, school improvement, school climate, and professional growth. The instrument presents items with a Likert-type response set at a 5 point scale from low to high. For the purposes of this study, additional questions were added and some minor modifications were made to measure perceptions in the overall quality of the TAP process, school improvement, professional development, and student achievement pertinent to the suburban school district being studied.

Administrators were given a modified version of the TEP, which was pre-tested by a jury of experts.

Prior to the administration of the TEP to the suburban school district, a pre-test was administered for trial purpose in the early spring of 2008 with educators not involved in the study. All participants were asked to make comments and suggestions relating to the readability of the TEP, appropriateness of the questions, and the overall quality of the questionnaire. Any findings from this pre-test were incorporated into the revised TEP as appropriate.

*Instrument development and validity.* The attributes that are examined in the TEP were selected based on research conducted by Stiggins and Duke (1988). The focus of their research was to better understand growth oriented teacher evaluations that had the potential to help all teachers improve. The research was conducted as three separate
studies over a 3 year period. Each study evolved into the next study in order to reinforce the studies that preceded it. In the first study, the researchers examined how existing laws and collective bargaining agreements were translated in actual district practices. In the second study, the researchers identified instances of successful teacher evaluation and explored the antecedents for success. The results of the second study identified the attributes described below, which resulted in the design of the TEP questionnaire. In the third study, the questionnaire was administered to 450 teachers in five school districts. The results of the questionnaire validated the results of the previous two studies and revealed the value of the questionnaire to make needed changes in local teacher evaluation systems. Therefore, the validity of the TEP was established during its development. The items and scales were written to reflect keys to growth-producing evaluation, as described by teachers who benefited from the evaluations. The validity of these attributes was confirmed in subsequent field applications.

Instrument reliability. The TEP has been found to be an instrument of high reliability and proven through numerous research studies. The internal consistency reliability of the 55-item questionnaire was .93 suggesting that the questionnaire asks a highly cohesive set of questions about the evaluation process (Stiggins & Duke, 1988). Therefore, the reported internal consistency reliability coefficient of .93 is in line with Cronbach (1951) who indicated that reliability coefficients above 0.6 are desirable and values above 0.8 were required for a developed scale. In addition, the high estimate of internal consistency of the total instrument suggests that the scales of each attribute are both internally consistent and highly correlated. While the scale related to teacher attributes is independent of the others, the other four scales (evaluator, evaluation
procedures, feedback, and context) are moderately to highly correlated (Stiggins & Duke, 1988).

Focus Groups of Teachers and Administrators

A focus group is a “carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment” (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 5). For the purpose of this study, focus groups were used to obtain a candid view of educators’ perceptions on the Teacher Assessment Process (TAP) used in the suburban school district. As described above, four administrator and six teacher focus groups were conducted by the assistant researcher. All groups were asked to discuss the following topics: (a) the purpose of teacher evaluation, (b) the positive and negative effects of the evaluation system, (c) the effect of teacher evaluation upon student achievement, school improvement initiatives and teaching performance, and (d) the improvements needed for the teacher evaluation process.

The questions used for teachers were as follows:

1. What are the major purposes of the teacher evaluation process used in your school?

2. What have been the most effective aspects of the current TAP process in your school?

3. What have been the least effective aspects of the current TAP process in your school?

4. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on improving teaching in your school?
5. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on the professional growth of educators in your school?

6. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on student achievement in your school?

7. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on school improvement in your school?

8. For those of you that have had experience with the old TAP process that was in place from 2003-06, how would you compare the two systems?

9. If you had the audience of the state board of education, what suggestions would you make to improve teacher evaluation?

10. How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?

The questions that were used for the administrative focus groups were similar and included the following:

1. What is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process in the Reading Public Schools?

2. What have been the positive effects of the current TAP process?

3. What have been the negative effects of the current TAP process?

4. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on improving teaching in the district?

5. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on the professional growth of educators in the district?
6. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on student achievement?

7. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on school improvement?

8. For those of you that have had experience with the old TAP process that was in place from 2003-06, how would you compare the two systems?

9. If you had the audience of the state board of education, what suggestions would you make to improve teacher evaluation?

10. How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?

Validity and reliability for qualitative method. For the purpose of this study, triangulation was used to ensure the internal and external validity of this study. Triangulation is a research strategy where, “multiple sources of data are collected with the hope that they will all converge to support a particular hypothesis or theory” (Leedy & Ormond, 2005, p. 99). In this study, both quantitative data in the form of the TEP questionnaire and qualitative data in the form of focus groups were collected to confirm findings. The focus group questions tie into the theoretical model, the literature and support the research questions. Those questions were pre-tested with a jury of experts in April, 2008 consisting of 5 educational leaders who were not a part of the research study.

Reliability is the extent to which a measurement instrument yields consistent results when the characteristic being measured has not change (Leedy & Ormond, 2005). To ensure reliability as much as possible within the context of the qualitative segment of this study, focus group questions were conducted similar in nature to the topics and
attributes addressed in the TEP. Triangulation methods were used to determine if the results are consistent with the data collected.

Data Collection

A concurrent data collection triangulation strategy (Creswell, 2003) was used where both quantitative and qualitative data were collected at the same time. This method was used to confirm, cross-validate or corroborate findings within this study. The advantage of this type of model is that it can result in well-validated and substantiated findings (Creswell, 2003). The alternative methods of data collected for this study consisted of distribution and administration of the Teacher Evaluation Profile (Stiggins & Duke, 1988) questionnaire used to gather quantitative data and focus group sessions conducted to gather qualitative data. Once the Seton Hall Institutional Review Board Process was completed and approved on May 13, 2008, permission was requested and received from the superintendent of the suburban school district to conduct the study, including focus groups, and a survey of the teachers and administrators. The research study began shortly after approval. In all, up to 314 teachers and 22 administrators were asked to participate in the TEP questionnaire, and 90 teachers and 22 administrators were asked to participate in the focus group sessions. All qualitative and quantitative data were gathered during May and June of 2008. Therefore, findings of the quantitative data were not known while the focus groups were conducted.

For all teachers and administrators who were chosen to participate in the TEP questionnaire, a packet, including a cover letter that introduces the researcher, the research process, the purpose of the study, a copy of the TEP questionnaire, and appropriate directions were sent to each participant via interoffice mail to each of their
individual school mailboxes. The cover letter also noted that their participation in the study is anonymous and purely voluntary and that responses will be kept confidential. A similar letter and an informed consent form were sent to those teachers and administrators who were participating in the focus group sessions. Anonymity and confidentiality were carefully explained to all participants in the study.

The following steps were adapted from Leedy and Ormrod (2005) and were used by the assistant researcher to conduct the focus group sessions: (a) identify some questions in advance, (b) make sure the interviewees are representative of the group, (c) find a suitable location, (d) get written permission, (e) establish and maintain rapport, (f) focus on the actual questions, rather than on the abstract or hypothetical, (g) do not put words in people’s mouths, (h) record responses verbatim, (i) keep reactions to yourself, (j) treat the responses as perceptions, rather than facts, (k) take group dynamics into account. Do not let some participants dominate the conversation.

Data Analysis

The TEP questionnaire collected data was reduced using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 15.0 statistical software package. The SPSS software is designed to aid in data analysis identified as the process of examining, summarizing and drawing conclusions from data (George & Mallery, 2007). A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to analyze the data collected with the identified subgroups, including administrators and teachers; elementary, middle, and high school teachers; and professional status and non professional status teachers. The process for reducing the interview and focus group data consisted of (a) creating a transcript for each focus group session, (b) creating a document for each guiding question by extracting all
quotes from the focus groups that pertained to the topic, (c) reviewing each document and categorize the quotes into themes, (d) classifying all quotes under the appropriate theme, (e) analyzing the findings.

Tables 1, 2, and 3 describe the alignment of the data sources and data collections techniques with the research questions. The qualitative and quantitative survey questions aligned with the research questions are located in the appendix.

**Summary**

The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions of teachers and building-level administrators in a Massachusetts suburban public school district, regarding the effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system that was designed from 2003-2006, and implemented during the 2006-08 school years. This study analyzed teacher and administrator perceptions in regards to improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated teacher professional growth. The study also analyzed the positive and negative impacts of implementing a standards-based teacher evaluation system. This Teacher Assessment Process (TAP) was a collaboratively designed, standards-based evaluation system developed by the teachers and administrators of this Massachusetts suburban school district.

The criteria used to identify the research were described. Research procedures and methods of data collection were described as conducting focus group studies with stratified randomly selected subjects and administering the Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) questionnaire to a sample of teachers and administrators in the school district.
Chapter IV provides the findings, analysis, and summary of the qualitative and quantitative data, while Chapter V presents the summary and conclusions.
Table 1

Alignment of Guiding Questions with TEP Attributes and Focus Group Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding question</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Data Collection Technique</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do school administrators and teachers differ in their perceptions on the overall effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system in the following areas: improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth?</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>TEP Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>TEP Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>TEP Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?</td>
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<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>TEP Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by professional and non-professional status teachers?</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>TEP Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>TEP Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?</td>
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<td>Focus Group</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>TEP Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guiding question</td>
<td>Teacher TEP Question</td>
<td>Administrator TEP Question</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How do school administrators and teachers differ in their perceptions on the overall effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system in the following areas: improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth?</td>
<td>2-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?</td>
<td>2-9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?</td>
<td>1,30-57</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>6. How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?</td>
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Table 3

*Alignment of Research Questions with Focus Group Questions.*

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<tr>
<th>Guiding question</th>
<th>Teacher Focus Group Questions</th>
<th>Administrator Focus Group Questions</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. How do school administrators and teachers differ in their perceptions on the overall effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system in the following areas: improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth?</td>
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<td>2. How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?</td>
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<td>3. How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?</td>
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<td>4. How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?</td>
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Chapter IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions of teachers and building-level administrators in a Massachusetts suburban public school district, regarding the effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system that was designed from 2003-2006, and implemented during the 2006-08 school years. This study analyzed teacher and administrator perceptions in regards to improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated teacher professional growth. The study also analyzed the positive and negative impacts of implementing a standards-based teacher evaluation system. Both qualitative and quantitative measures were employed to capture the perceptions and attitudes of teachers and administrators to answer the following research questions:

1. How do school administrators and teachers differ in their perceptions on the overall effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system in the following areas: improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth?

2. How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?
3. How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

4. How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

5. How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by professional and non-professional status teachers?

6. How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?

7. How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?

Nature of the Qualitative Study

The research subject population selected for the qualitative portion of the study consisted of a stratified random sample of teachers and administrators from a suburban school district north of Boston, Massachusetts. There were 10 focus groups conducted for the qualitative portion of this study. Six of the focus groups conducted were teacher focus groups where each was identified with the following characteristics: Professional Status Elementary Teachers, Nonprofessional Status Elementary Teachers, Professional Status Middle School Teachers, Nonprofessional Status Middle School Teachers, Professional Status High School Teachers, and Nonprofessional Status High School Teachers. There were 4 administrator focus groups, designated as elementary, middle, high school, and high school department chairpersons. Overall, 22 administrators and 90 teachers were stratified randomly selected to participate in the focus group sessions. At
the completion of the focus group sessions, 18 administrators participated in the focus group sessions, representing 82\% of the total subject population and 23 teachers participated in the focus group sessions, representing 26\% of the selected population.

The teacher focus group sessions were asked a series of 10 questions. The questions focused on the perceptions of each subgroup (professional status teacher, nonprofessional status teacher, elementary teacher, middle school teacher, high school teacher, administrator) on the effect that a teacher evaluation system has on improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth. The focus group sessions also solicited input on how to improve teacher evaluation both from a global sense and as a locally designed system.

Presentation and Analysis of Qualitative Findings

All 10 focus group sessions took place in a conference room at the district office of the suburban school district studied.

Research Question 1

How do school administrators and teachers differ in their ratings on the overall effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system in the following areas: improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth?

As a result of the focus group sessions several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of questions a, d, e, f and g for the teacher focus groups and the administrative focus groups pertaining to research question 1. For question a, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP used in your school?
Shinkfield and Stufflebeam (1995) view teacher evaluation as "improving the performance of teachers, students, and the organization as a whole (p. 2)." Haefele (1993) and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (Gullickson, in press) posit that a teacher evaluation system should look at all aspects of human resource activities including conducting the hiring process, providing constructive feedback, recognizing and reinforcing outstanding teaching practices, aligning staff development activities, documenting evidence for dismissal, and unifying teachers and administrators in their collective efforts to educate students.

The researcher found that all four administrator focus groups perceived the purpose of teacher evaluation as a way to help teachers make continuous progress. As one administrator in the elementary administrator focus group stated,

The purpose is to improve instruction and to encourage teachers to be reflective of their practices and to engage in conversations in decisions that they may have about instruction and kids, choice of materials, and primarily help to improve instruction.

An administrator in the middle school administrator focus group said,

I believe the purpose is to help staff make continuous progress towards reaching higher and higher standards. I also believe the purpose is now that we have standards to be able to have much more substantive discussions in areas of expertise of teaching.

A member from the high school department chairperson focus group acknowledged,

I think the primary purpose is to provide a system where we give feedback to teachers so they can improve in their teaching and the goal would be to provide a support system that brings all teachers in their competency levels to a very high level...so that the staff is teaching at a very high level all around.

Three of the administrator focus groups also stated that the purpose of the current teacher evaluation system is to provide a common language throughout the school district. As one administrator put it, "I think it is also to provide a common language for all teachers
and administrators and to provide a common set of standards.” In addition, the 3
administrator groups, excluding the department chairpersons, commented on how the
TAP led to a more collaborative approach between teacher and administrators. As one
administrator from the elementary focus group stated, “…I think a huge piece of this is
the collaboration piece where you have an opportunity to work with someone and suggest
things that they might not be thinking outside the box and being able to hear just another
approach.” Two administrator focus groups mentioned that the process could be used for
employment decisions, if necessary, but with a focus on exhausting all options of
working with that teacher before making that employment decision. As one
administrator from the middle school administrator focus group stated,

Obviously, in other times the purpose is to document staff members who are not
reaching those standards. It gives us a very specific process by which to
document that and teach them to improve in those areas, but if not, to make
decisions based upon that.

When teacher focus groups were asked the same question, their answer focused
more on setting and achieving goals to improve their teaching, which was not mentioned
by any of the administrative focus groups. Where administrators focused on the process
providing growth based upon a set of standards, the teachers focused more on the purpose
of the TAP which was to identify strengths and weaknesses and develop goals to address
those strengths and weaknesses. All six teacher focus groups discussed the concept of
establishing annual goals to address weaknesses. As one teacher in the Elementary PTS
group stated, “I think to identify goals, teacher goals, things to work on, and improve.” A
teacher in the Middle School PTS focus group supported that concept by stating,

Help teachers set goals. Part of it. It is also used for evaluation, though, so. It is
a tricky balance because you are using it to set goals and yet you know that you
are going to be evaluated on those goals so its hard to set lofty goals, I guess. You try to be realistic. That is not so bad, I guess.

A teacher in the High School Non-PTS focus group stated it this way,

To me, I think the goal of the teacher evaluation process is to help us think about our teaching. To set goals for ourselves, think about what we want to do, aim for those goals, and be specific in our tasks. It is just not teaching great, but thinking about the process and the big picture and how does it fit into the curriculum, how does it fit into standards, how does it meet the needs of testing, but kind of thoughtfully.

A teacher in the High School PTS focus group combined all of the above thoughts and said,

I see it first as an assessment of a teacher’s strengths and weaknesses as a teacher and identify the areas that need improvement. I like the way it lays out the standards and so it gives teachers a sense of what the expectations are of them and I think it gives administrators a way to see what is going on how teachers teach and how student’s behave.

Three of the 6 teacher focus groups discussed the reflection and self-evaluation piece of the TAP, which is a component that was introduced to the district in the last two years. As one Middle School Non-PTS teacher put it,

I think it would be to do a self-evaluation piece to look at the whole TAP process to better your teaching, your professional development, and to figure out where your strengths and weaknesses are and work toward having more strengths than weaknesses.

An Elementary Non-PTS teacher stated, “I think that it helps you reflect on the teaching that that you have done, figuring out the strengths and weaknesses, what has worked well this year and what you should change for next year.” Another Elementary Non-PTS stated, “I look at it as an opportunity for the goals that you set at the beginning of the year to reflect upon those and wrap up to see how you progressed in those areas.”
Five of the 6 teacher focus groups discussed the role of administration in the TAP process. Only 1 of those 5 focus groups saw administrators as a partner in the process.

As one Elementary Non-PTS teacher put it,

I see it as useful feedback for me as how I can improve and my principal and I use it as a jumping off point to discuss different aspects of teaching and what my strengths are and what I need to focus on next year in a general sense.

The other four teacher focus groups discussed administrators more as a supervisor in the process and less as a collaborative partner. As one High School PTS teacher stated,

I also think it would be useful for administrators to come into the classroom to have an idea of what is going on in the school. So it is a way to force administrators to come in and see what is going on.

A High School Non-PTS teacher supported this concept by putting it this way,

And I also think that it is a vehicle where the teacher can share with the administrator what he or she is doing in their classroom. What their goals are for their particular lesson, and what their objectives are and what their assessment procedures are in the classroom. For many administrators, this may be the first opportunity that they can touch base with the teacher, unless they go in informally. So this is a way that they can really get to know what they are doing in the classroom.

A Middle School PTS teacher talked about the role of administration in this manner,

“...to prioritize and organize what you think is most important in that you are on the same wavelength with administration. That is most important.”

Only one focus group, the High School PTS focus group, discussed the purpose of teacher evaluation as a tool to make employment decisions. One teacher in that group stated, “I think the purpose is to determine if a teacher is doing his or her job and in an appropriate manner and to determine if they are up for rehire.”
The next focus group question that aligns with research question 1 is question d. For question d in the focus group session for teachers and administrators, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: *What are some ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed teaching in your school?* All 4 administrator focus groups identified ways that the TAP has changed teaching in a positive manner in their schools. For example, one member of the High School Department Chairperson focus group stated the following:

I have seen cases where teachers have improved or changed because of the TAP process. That they have seen the rating and seen comments of so apparently I am not meeting the standard or exceeding the standard in this area so I need to do a little bit better at that so I have seen teachers making change. It has had an effect.

All 4 focus groups discussed that the common language that has been established in this process has led to improved teacher instruction. As one elementary administrator stated, “I think that it has furthered the common language and you can have conversations with one person and have similar conversations with another, using the same wording and it is better understood.” An administrator from the Middle School Administrator focus group further supported this by stating, “I think that it has created a common language in what I hear and a common language and a common expectation, in terms of what a good lesson looks like.”

Three of the 4 administrator focus groups specifically stated that the process is particularly helpful for new teachers. For example one elementary administrator stated,

I think with the new teachers that they have really analyzed and looked at their evaluation and their midyear observation and I noticed a change from that first observation to that second observation because of things that I had commented on because of an initial observation, so I think it was just clear and explicit for her and it was easy for her then to go back and make changes.

A high school department chairperson put it this way,
"What I do think is that the newer teacher coming in has a more clearer idea and may help people starting out in particular to know where they are aiming and where they are heading.

The administrator focus groups also commented on some evidence that they have noticed the TAP has changed teaching in their schools. Two of the focus groups emphasized that they have seen advancements in the use of technology in the classroom as a result of the TAP. One middle school administrator commented,

...the technology piece...I think that there are veteran teachers who are at this point in their career, would not have moved forward and gotten trained in all of this new technology if it had not ended up being a piece of the evaluation....Not keen on technology to begin with, but this was a little push and once they began doing it, they enjoyed it, they incorporated all of their lessons and they are doing a great job, but without that little push, you would have not seen that.

Two of the 4 focus groups discussed that they noticed an increase in the use of educational objectives for student learning. As one middle school administrator put it, “I have definitely seen a difference in the number of teachers that have put the objective out there and communicated it clearly and throughout the course of the lesson.”

Not every administrator felt that the TAP has improved teacher instruction. In 2 of the administrative focus groups, there were administrators who felt that it has not changed the way that they have approached teachers about improving. One high school department chairperson stated,

I don't know if it has changed teaching, but it levels the playing field so that everyone knows what is being assessed....That, other maybe being a little more specific, I don't think it has changed the process for me drastically. I feel that I give the same feedback and information for teachers that I gave under the older system....But, I think that I have seen people improve through TAP, but I also saw people improve through methods that were using before as well.

An elementary administrator commented that the document itself has not changed instruction, rather it is the focused conversations that has changed instruction,
I don’t know if I could say that the document has really changed instruction. I think it has been the focused conversations based on what has been asked of them and the give and take around the conversations that have been for teachers and it certainly has been helpful to me as an administrator to understand the decisions and process that the organization that they are setting up in their classroom.

When the same question was asked to the teacher focus groups the perceptions were mixed and different in some cases from the administrator perceptions. Three of the 6 focus groups had teachers in them where they did not feel that the TAP has changed their teaching. In the High School PTS focus group, for example, a teacher connected the professional relationship with colleagues, rather than the TAP as a means for improving instruction:

I feel that the change in my teaching comes more from collaborating with the peers in my department…I think that is more what I see this being is help for a non-professional status teacher. And I would say definitely collaborating with the department, working on curriculum with other department members, is something that is very, very useful in making my teaching and my classroom better.

The high school PTS teacher felt that this process is better suited for non-PTS teachers, however, one high school non-PTS teacher stated,

I don’t know if it has really affected my teaching, maybe how I am organizing what I am going to be doing, but I don’t think my teaching…has changed. Getting certain things accomplished by a certain time period, but I don’t know if the actual teaching…has changed because of it.

Five of the 6 teacher focus groups had teachers that emphasized that the self-evaluation, goal setting and accomplishment of those goals emphasized as part of the TAP helped them change their instruction. A middle school non-PTS teacher stated,

I think just that self-evaluation piece again and the things that I wanted to focus on and maybe prior to something like this it would just be maybe in the back of my head I will work on that. Maybe having the focus areas you really need to work towards the areas and address that and not, oh, I will put it on my to do list and never getting around to doing it, but here you have to be held accountable at the end of the year.
An elementary Non-PTS teacher put it this way, "It is clear expectations, goal setting, things that you do as a teacher and for your students and it is good to have done for yourself as well." An elementary PTS teacher continued this theme by stating, "I think I reflect on what the set goals are and if I am moving towards the accomplishments of those goals. They seem to be more in the foreground than they had in the past."

An increased emphasis on technology was discussed by teachers in 3 of the 6 focus groups. One teacher in the middle school PTS focus group stated, "I have definitely tried a lot more of the technology, when we have gotten different things and I said that I have better try. I have pushed myself a little bit, but not a ton, not a ton." A high school Non-PTS teacher echoed those comments by stating,

It if think about the specific goals, kind of communicative and technology focused goals, and it kind of governed how I set up my classroom this year and I incorporated the SMART Board more, I use it constantly now, so it has become second nature.

This notion that the TAP led to an increase use of technology is comparable with both administrator and teacher focus groups.

That next focus group question that aligns with research question 1 is question e. For question e in the focus group session for teachers and administrators, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: *What effect do you think the current teacher evaluation process has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school?* When analyzing the data from the administrator focus groups, the High School Administrator and the High School Department Chairperson focus groups feel that the environment created by federal and state regulations and contractual incentives are more of the reason for increased professional growth than the TAP. One high school administrator stated that
I don’t know if I would say it is the TAP, but as much of the environment... the ones in the first half of their profession are looking for professional development, they know that it is part of it, they have so much to learn, they realize that, and in the past where you were on your own, I think that it is required by the systems to provide that professional development and more consistent yearly professional development.

In comparison, a high school department chairperson put it this way.

...there are reasons why people participate in professional growth activities whether it be for advanced certification or effecting their salary status or for areas of interest or internal motivation to learn and to improve. I don’t see a direct correlation with that and to the TAP document.

Although the Elementary and Middle School Administrator focus groups did not say that TAP is the sole reason for professional growth of teachers in schools; rather, they felt that the TAP was a part of the overall reason for professional growth. One elementary administrator stated:

I think it is part of the overall culture, not so much directly related to the TAP. TAP is a document that is aimed at everyone being their best, improving instruction, making things great for kids, and it sorta sets the tone in the culture.

Another elementary administrator agreed,

I think it clarifies priorities within the district. It clarifies what good teaching is and defines it, more specific ways in a more classroom-centered manner. And it helps with the discussions, focuses on the discussions.

This concept was also reinforced by one of the middle school administrators,

...I would argue that they are trying different things because of TAP, because they don’t want a bad grade. So, they are figuring out entry point activities that they would have not sought in the past. For example, they are going to the technology integration specialist, they are going to the library media specialist so that they can do things so that they can articulate on their pre-evaluation summary or their EBO’s at the beginning of the year. That they are trying things. Things as simple as the use of the lab on wheels. Kids using laptops in classrooms. Things that we would not have seen teachers doing in the past, they are doing this, and now that they are doing this, they want to make it very public that they are doing this. Please see me doing this, please do not give me a “P” again, ya know, or give me a “P” and understand that I am moving toward an “M”.
Another middle school administrator commented on how the TAP has improved teacher
growth in the area of technology,

Well, I think technology, we are talking about technology being in the forefront,
whereas, you wrote about it in a narrative three years ago, it was a narrative. Ya
know, what did that look like, it looked like a hundred different things as defined
by a hundred different people. Now it is more concise, it is more concrete, more
direct, and I think that comes from or some it comes from improvement plans
being connected and aligned with the TAP.

When the teacher focus groups were asked the same question, the comments were
similar to the administrator focus groups. For example, one high school PTS teacher
echoed what was stated by the high school administrator focus groups that recertification
was driving professional growth, not the TAP. As one high school PTS teacher stated,
“...I think because of the recertification, you have to do that. The PDP’s is fueling it at
this point.” Four of the other 5 focus groups discussed how technology professional
development has increased over the last 2 years, in part because it is an indicator on the
TAP rubrics. As one elementary non-PTS teacher stated,

I think from my understanding areas of technology was a huge jump which was
indicative of filling those out what people had access to and also assessment tools
that were more formative.

One middle school PTS teacher stated that it is more difficult to get access to the
technology than it used to be because of the increased emphasis through the TAP.

The other thing that I have noticed is competition for the technology in the
building. We used to get it when we wanted to, but I think because now it is in
the front of their mind with the TAP document that I want to work on technology
for myself and I want to get involved and take that leap and try different styles of
teaching has made it really difficult to get the computer lab and the COW.

Three of the 6 focus groups discussed how the TAP has become part of the culture for
professional growth. The high school non-PTS focus group discussed how the foreign
language department came up with a collective goal to improve with technology throughout the school year.

In our department because we have decided on a collective goal with the technology theme with the language lab. Because that was a group decision in September, we ended up having a lot of group training in the language lab throughout the year.

The middle school non-PTS focus group commented on using faculty meeting time to look at specific areas of the rubric and having discussions about those areas.

We have had a couple of faculty meetings where we looked at specific areas of the document and broken into smaller groups to talk about it.

An elementary non-PTS teacher echoed the same thoughts,

When it first came out, I think it helped my principal to see that there were many teachers who were weak in an area, so we had little helpful handouts, and little workshops, and role play things.

Overall, there seems to be similarities between teachers and administrators on the impact that TAP has had on the professional growth of teachers. High school teachers and administrators tend to perceive state and federal recertification laws and collective bargaining agreement incentives as the reason for the increase in professional growth. Other levels see the TAP as a process that helps contribute to the professional growth culture of the school district, particularly in the area of technology integration. The data from the elementary and middle school focus groups indicate that TAP has become the basis for goal setting, staff conversations, and other professional learning community conversations as described by Dufour and Eaker (1998). The data collected from administrative and teacher elementary and middle school focus groups align with the research of Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Pease (1983) who identified five minimal conditions for a successful teacher evaluation system. These conditions include that (a)
teachers and administrators understand the criteria and process for evaluation; (b) teachers and administrators understand how these criteria and processes relate to the basic goals of the organization; (c) teachers perceive that the evaluation procedures are intended to enable and motivate them to improve their performance; (d) principals perceive that it enables them to provide instructional leadership; and (e) participants understand that the evaluation process allows them to achieve a balance between control and autonomy.

The next focus group question that aligns with research question 1 is question e. For question e in the focus group session for teachers and administrators, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: *What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your school?*

In analyzing the data of the administrator focus groups, a few patterns emerged. All 4 focus groups indicated that TAP does not directly change student achievement in the schools. However, what became clear is that it indirectly has a major effect on student achievement through increased emphasis on professional growth. As one elementary administrator put it,

I think instruction is as good as the people who are instructing and because this process leads people to more professional development opportunities and to think about personal growth, I think it can only lead to a positive outcome on student achievement, but I don’t have anything to base that on, I just know it. I am thrilled with the interest in professional development and I know that we will see the fruits of that as we move forward.

A middle school administrator concurred,

So I think as teachers are trying different things, they are learning and it is having a positive effect on student learning. For example, if a teacher is using a lab on wheels to do a virtual tour of a museum of a place that they are going to go on a field trip, it gives students prior knowledge before they go, it gives them more insight into what they are studying, it is more connected. Whereas, before, the
teacher would never have brought students up to the computer lab, done a virtual
tour, they are figuring out ways to get some sort of technology into the
curriculum. Some are very, very small, others are much more ambitious.

Two of the 4 administrative groups feel that the consistency of the use of the TAP from
teacher to teacher will help change student achievement in each school. They feel that
the TAP will standardize the classroom experiences that students will receive. As one
middle school administrator put it,

All of those components of good instruction we talked about earlier that are listed
there in the document. I mean, it is helping students get a consistent experience
when they are changing rooms and subject areas. They are getting a consistent
experience on how curriculum is delivered to them. Which I think is helping
them achieve and retain all that.

Not all focus groups were completely convinced that the TAP could indirectly change
student achievement in a school. One member of the High School Department
Chairperson Focus group stated,

I think that I have the same problem in that it is pretty tough to measure what
student improvement...again you would hope that different activities and different
styles of teaching, hopefully the use of summarizers has increased. But it is hard
to know if it is the key to increased student performance.

One of the administrators in the high school administrator focus group echoed the
sentiment expressed by the high school department chairperson, “I am uncomfortable
with that because I think that there is a lot of hope and a lot of feeling, but I don’t know if
I have evidence to prove student achievement.”

When the teacher focus groups were asked the same focus group question, 5 of
the 6 focus groups indicated that that TAP indirectly seemed to change student
achievement in the classroom. An elementary non-PTS teacher discussed how the rubric
exemplifies what good teaching looks like,
I would say as teachers, we are more conscious of all of the aspects of what makes a great teacher and the TAP document helps us to remind us of those things, then we are more likely to do them in our classroom and that helps our students. So it is a broader checklist of things that has a ripple effect. It kind of reminds us and makes us more aware and making sure no one forgets them.

Middle school PTS teachers emphasized how different instructional strategies found in the TAP directly benefit students.

I think kids are more empowered by all of this. It is a trickle down effect, but ultimately, they are the clientele, they are the ones that benefit all of this, so the technology piece. I just think the SMART Board has changed the way students are engaged and the COW and the calf.

One elementary PTS teacher discussed how the stating of goals and being aware of the TAP indicators changes student achievement in the classroom.

So I think clarifying those things for yourself and saying this is what the expectation is for me and it makes things clearer for the students too. I am more self-reflective, goal oriented teacher which will definitely channel down to the student and the effectiveness of the classroom and the effectiveness of the instruction. So if you are focusing on all of these little bullets and then the children are going to have a positive, hopefully, they will be positively affected by those teaching practices.

A high school non-PTS teacher linked goals to student achievement by stating that, “I think that anytime that you are reflective about your process for what you are doing in the classroom, the goal is that reflection would play out in student achievement.”

One of the 6 focus groups, the high school PTS group had mixed thoughts about the effect that TAP would have on changing student achievement. One teacher felt that the TAP has no effect on student achievement, rather it is other variables.

The TAP to me is just a reflection of the evaluator. Like, how am I doing, am I doing well in my teaching? It is the courses that I am taking, it is the collaboration that I am having with people in my department, it is the workshops that I go to and meet people from other schools that are giving me ideas, to make my classes better. And those are the things that are going to make my class a better class, not just the document.
The teacher that is quoted above perceives the TAP as just a document, rather than a process. The thoughts expressed by this teacher are similar to a teacher evaluation system that is more summative where information is provided only to make personnel management decisions such as promotion, dismissal, and salary increases (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Kleinhenz, Ingvarson, & Chadbourne, 2002; Scriven, 1988; Stiggins & Duke, 1988). This perception labels teacher evaluation as an event, rather than a process, which Toch and Rothman (2008) refer to as drive-by evaluations. Another teacher in this same focus group disagreed with the other teacher’s assessment of the process and referenced strategies from The Skillful Teacher (Saphier & Gower, 1997),

It has a lot to do with the RBT thing, the Research for Better Teaching where you do a lot of checking for understanding strategies. You know, the 3-2-1, the ticket to leave…That kind of technique, you know, were never mentioned before. I love the way that it is reflected here….You have to take the courses, and that is what it means to be a professional. It means to continue to say that I am not comfortable resting on my laurels here, I am going to learn something. So it means to be in classes frequently….This document is good for any teacher, and district, any subject…

This teacher’s perception, along with the other focus groups perceive teacher evaluation more as a drive-in rather than drive-by evaluation (Toch & Rothman, 2008). If the purpose of a standards-based evaluation system is to improve schools and student achievement, it must encourage individual teachers to become better teachers (Stiggins & Duke, 1988, p. 3).

That next focus group question that aligns with research question 1 is question e. For question e in the focus group session for teachers and administrators, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: In your opinion, what effect do you notice the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school?
When analyzing the data of the administrator focus group sessions, 2 of the 4 focus groups discussed that the TAP helped create a consistency across the school. As one elementary administrator put it,

I think that it helps unify our school and gets everybody on the same page. So as we are looking through this and as a school feel that we need to strengthen, classroom management, for example, then, if there is a group of us, we might form a learning community and read some books or do some research and put into our school improvement plan and so I think again it holds everyone accountable to the same set of standards and where it is easy to identify.

A high school administrator agreed,

It is the whole notion of professionalism that this is concrete and specific. And the consistency as we go from room to room. I think the prior document and the prior process was so open-ended that we could be looking at different things depending upon what the circumstances were, so I think that this brings consistency.

One administrative focus group, the High School Department Chairperson focus group, stated that there are several more professional development opportunities that are tied to the TAP. One member stated that, "I think that professional development opportunities have been tied into some of the TAP and that there has been a move to provide training and professional development in the areas." Moreover, the Middle School Administrator focus group discussed how conversations focused on the TAP changed the climate of the school, which led to greater school improvement. As one middle school administrator put it,

It highlights what staff development we need and we have done a lot of work examining the TAP document together and deciding who has what expertise in the building and run workshops during faculty meetings or whatever so I think that has happened a lot in the area of technology, in the area of special education and kids who need accommodations, and so forth. Again, I think when you set up a time so that people can systematically look at what teaching is and how to get there and show people how to get there, then you, then it makes improvements in the school. If not, change the climate where the focus is on teaching and learning,
as opposed to who is parking in the wrong spaces in the parking lot. It is quality conversation.

When the teacher focus groups were asked the same question, there were some similar responses. Four of the 6 teacher focus groups discussed the consistency that the TAP provides and how that consistency allows for groups of teachers to focus on similar topics. For example, one middle school non-PTS teacher discussed how classroom management in the school has improved using the TAP,

Well, I think there are more teachers who are cognizant of using the activators and summarizers, making sure that the blackboard configuration is up. The school improvement, in terms of students coming to class they know to look at the SMART Board or the white board so that they know.... You don’t have a lot of that classroom management and discipline in terms of school improvement.

A high school PTS teacher stated,

Well, I think that it is very consistent with other points that are going on in the district like offering more pd and infusing technology into the curriculum and more professional development time where we collaborate. You know, consistent with best practices in other areas.

The middle school PTS focus group discussed how the TAP is linked to the school improvement plan, “It is all about the same thing. If we are all working on the same aspects of the TAP document then that is also then that is connected to the school improvement plan instead of being disjointed.” The elementary PTS focus group discussed how communication with parents has improved as a result of the TAP,

Well, that little piece of family and community outreach, I think we are informing parents more in what we are doing. So they are aware of what is going on. And it is helping them be more involved in the process, so even if they are not there, they know what we are working on. Perhaps it is something they can follow through at home.

Four of the 6 focus groups specifically mentioned that the TAP process has contributed to an increase in technology integration in the school district. As one elementary Non-PTS
teacher put it, “I am thinking technology in particular. It is trying to get more SMART Boards into the school, more trainings, finding ways to incorporate that more into the student’s work.”

There were teachers from some of the focus groups who did not perceive that the TAP had an effect on school improvement. One teacher from the high school PTS group felt that the TAP and state and federal guidelines, did not keep good teachers in the system,

I don’t know if this is the TAP, but things have become state and nationwide more rigid as far as keeping people in your school system. And if somebody doesn’t comply with the state regulations, then they don’t become a highly qualified teacher and get the Master’s in Education in the specified amount of time. Even though they may be a terrific teacher, they can’t keep them anymore.

One high school non-PTS teacher stated that, “It doesn’t feel like we have had it long enough to be able to gauge.” This indicates that perhaps the TAP has not been implemented completely at the high school for teachers to see the effect on school improvement.

Research Question 2

How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

As a result of the focus group sessions several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of questions a, d, e, f, g, h for the teacher focus groups. Where research question one analyzed in depth several of the themes between teachers and administrators, this question focuses on the differences and similarities in perceptions between elementary, middle, and high school teachers.
For question a in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: *In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP used in your school?* As mentioned in research question one, elementary teachers saw the purpose of the TAP as a tool for improvement by using the goal setting process, the professional development provided and the conversations with administrators. As one elementary non-PTS teacher put it,

> I see it as useful feedback for me as how I can improve and my principal and I use it as a jumping off point to discuss different aspects of teaching and what my strengths are and what I need to focus on next year in a general sense.

An elementary PTS teacher echoes this response by stating, “It really looks at all of the different ways that you are improving yourself as a person and how that hopefully will also be a positive effect on the school and the students.”

Middle school teachers had some additional perceptions about the purpose of the TAP. Although they agreed with elementary teachers that the TAP is a tool for teacher improvement, one middle school non-PTS teacher felt that the TAP was dictating what excellent teaching was supposed to look like,

> I think there is a feeling in some ways that the TAP document is sort of trying to renegotiate what excellent teaching is and teachers who were at excellent status have now somehow methodically been bumped down to lower levels.

Although the middle school teachers had a positive outlook on the TAP, they did not seem as positive about the true purpose of the TAP. As one middle school PTS teacher explained,

> Help teachers set goals. Part of it. It is also used for evaluation, though. So, it is a tricky balance because you are using it to set goals and yet you know that you are going to be evaluated on those goals so it’s hard to set lofty goals, I guess. You have to be realistic.
The perception from the above teacher indicates that risk taking may not acceptable in that school culture.

From the high school teachers’ perspective, they see the TAP as an opportunity for administrators to come into the classroom. As one high school non-PTS teacher stated, “For many administrators, this may be the first opportunity that they can touch base with the teacher. Unless they go in informally, this is a way that they can really get to know what they are doing in the classroom.” A high school PTS teacher echoed a similar thought,

I also think it would be useful for administrators to come into the classroom to have an idea of what is going on in the school. So it is a way to force administrators to come in and see what is going on.

Another high school PTS teacher stated that a purpose of the TAP is to make employment decisions, “I think to determine if a teacher is doing his or her job and in an appropriate manner and to determine if they are up for rehire.” Some high school teachers also concurred with the elementary and middle school focus groups in that the purpose is to focus on the goal setting process. As one high school non-PTS teacher put it:

I think it is a way to align or a way to be sure that teacher’s goals are first of all, being set and second of all, being met, and third of all, being aligned with whatever the district’s goals are or the path with which the district is going down.

High school teachers did not mention the TAP as a vehicle for self-reflection and improvement, which was stated in the other teacher focus groups. One high school teacher did mention that the TAP is, “an assessment of teacher’s strengths and weaknesses and identify the areas that need improvement.” However, it was never supported that teachers would grow as part of the process.
For question d in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: *What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed your teaching?* Elementary teachers expressed that the TAP indicators allow for clear expectations, goal setting across a wider range of areas and reflection piece associated with the TAP has changed their teaching. As one elementary PTS teacher put it,

*I think it really breaks down everything in a concise way. Just the whole act of teaching, not just the delivery of instruction, it is the management and the preparation and the outreach and everything that is included in that.*

An elementary non-PTS teacher supported that thought by stating,

*It just doesn’t take into account the actual lesson, but how you can communicate with parents or relationships with a student too. It reminds you in all areas of your teaching and what expectations you should have for yourself.*

The middle school teachers observed the TAP as a list of the type of exemplary teaching practices that should be happening in a classroom. As one middle school non-PTS teacher put it, "I think it is really intended to look at the large scope of teaching….how you can act out a particular lesson to a unit to a year, how you put in all of the external pieces together.” One middle school PTS teacher agreed,

*I am still seeing it as guidelines and things that are natural, but other things, other specific items, in there sorta frame it for me or help me remember, so I do use it as a guide and framework, because it aligns with….And I think there are some things in there that make me think differently about my approaches and how I can make them better and improve upon them.*

High school teachers had mixed perceptions about the way that TAP has changed their teaching. Some high school teachers did not feel that the TAP has changed their teaching at all. As one high school PTS teacher put it, “not particularly.” As discussed in the first research question, they felt that their teaching has changed as a result of
collaborating with their peers and taking courses. A high school non-PTS teacher commented how the way the evaluation is conducted does not allow teachers to change, …the evaluation that has been done is based on two class periods, by two different evaluators, so I think it is kind of limited opportunity for evaluators to really have a good grasp on what goes on in a day to day basis in the classroom.

Another high school non-PTS teacher stated, “I think right now, just being my first year here, I don’t think it has changed my teaching.”

Other high school teachers felt differently and discussed how the goal setting piece has changed their teaching. As one high school non-PTS teacher stated,

I think for me this year it helped me develop where I wanted to go in terms of initiatives that I wanted to set up. If just gave me sort of a guideline, okay, here I am now, where do I see myself next year, and what do I need to do in the meantime to get there? So it made me more aware of what I wanted to do with the goals that I wanted to set up.

A high school PTS teacher agreed,

One of the things that I like that we have to come up with is that we have to come up with goals every year. It is a very positive thing because it allows you to really work on the things that you want to work on this year. I really like that aspect.

For question e in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school? This question examined the perceptions of teachers on the effect that the TAP has on elevated professional growth as stated in research question 2.

Elementary teachers felt that there has been significant professional growth in the area of technology. As one elementary PTS teacher stated,

When I went through my evaluation year, I was told that an area that I needed to work on was technology….You know, you really would not think about that, but technology is a really big part of teaching, but that affected me this year because I have put a lot of focus on technology and we have gotten a lot of technology in
the classroom so that has helped. So I feel like I have gone way ahead. So, it really helps to build your awareness about what you need to work on. Not seeing it as a negative, but, oh, a positive.

An elementary PTS teacher agreed, "I think from my understanding areas of technology was a huge jump which was indicative of filling those out what people had access to and also assessment tools that were more formative."

Middle school teachers felt that the TAP has led to an increase in professional development offerings in the district. As one PTS teacher stated,

I'm thinking about the fact there seems to be more opportunities that are being offered....But it seems that more than any time in my career here, there are easily accessible opportunities, I think. For little or no money. Which is if you look at the history of how long I have been here, that is just unheard of. So I think the TAP document, perhaps because they are asking for so much, then the administrators are making sure the offerings are there for people.

A middle school non-PTS teacher agreed, "I think people participate in a lot of professional development, a lot more than I have seen in other places."

When analyzing the high school teacher focus groups, they had a different perception on the effect of TAP on professional growth. Although they acknowledged that there was a significant amount of professional development opportunities available in the district, they did not feel that people were motivated to take participate in those opportunities because of the TAP. As one high school PTS teacher stated,

There is not a shortage of interesting, useful, professional development activities. And I think that has more influence than anything. I have never heard one person refer to their evaluation as a motivator for taking courses.

When a high school non-PTS teacher was commenting on a common goal that the foreign language department had on technology, the following was stated,

I don't know if that was for the reflective piece of the evaluation again, as something that we all felt that it was something we all needed to do so let's be evaluated for what we are doing anyway.
Compared to the other two levels, the high school teachers did not perceive the TAP as a process to foster professional growth, rather it was other external factors such as district offerings, state and federal certification requirements, and salary incentives that enticed teachers to participate in professional development activities. In addition, all of the focus groups described professional growth as an external function where teachers were taking courses or workshops, rather than tied into a professional learning community as discussed by Dufour and Eaker (1998), where a school has a shared mission, vision, and values, participates in collective inquiry, builds collaborative teams, is willing to experiment, seeks continuous improvement, and assesses themselves on the basis of results rather than intentions.

For question f in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: *What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your classroom?* This question examined the perceptions of teachers on the effect that the TAP has on increased student learning as stated in research question 2.

The conversation in the elementary focus group sessions emphasized instruction and assessment. They explained that the TAP has helped direct them to try exemplary teaching practices such as using activators, summarizers, formative and summative assessments, and differentiating and scaffolding instruction. As one elementary PTS teacher stated:

> I think, too, stating goals before a lesson is taught, writing them out. It has changed me, I am writing them out as a little blip for kindergarteners, and yeh, it can be done.

One elementary non-PTS teacher stated,
I just think focusing on the formative and summative assessments that I find I am more aware of staying on top of where kids are succeeding and where they are having a little bit of trouble. I am able to redirect my teaching then. So, because I am more aware of the assessment piece via TAP, then I was able to help the kids.

Middle school teachers had mixed perceptions about the effect that the TAP has on student achievement. Middle school PTS teachers, for example, gave similar responses as elementary teachers, focusing on the instructional pieces that are associated in the TAP rubric. As one teacher stated,

I think kids are more empowered by all of this. It is a trickle down effect, but ultimately, they are the clientele, they are the ones that benefit from all of this, so the technology piece.

Middle school non-PTS teachers had a different perception. They felt that teachers intrinsically are motivated to help students achieve, whether the document existed or not. As one teacher stated, “I think those things help student achievement, but I am not sure that those things are done because of the document.”

It is interesting to note that some teachers refer to the TAP as a document, while others refer to it as a process. It seems that teachers that look at the TAP as a document perceive teacher evaluation as more of a summative process, with two formal observations and an end of the year evaluation. However, teachers that refer to the TAP as a process, look at the TAP as more formative and growth oriented in nature. For example, a member of the High School PTS focus group referenced the TAP as document that did not have an effect on student achievement.

Collaborating with the department, other department members, going to workshops of people in other school districts. This is very, very valuable you learn a tremendous amount by talking to people from other schools. Going to professional conferences and things like that. That has much more impact than this document itself.
Other high school teachers perceived the TAP to indirectly affect student achievement. There was also less emphasis on instruction as compared to the other levels. As one high school non-PTS teacher stated,

I think that it impacts student achievement in a less direct way. The goals are based upon self-improvement. Student achievement is kind of a secondary measure for the self-improvement and attaining whatever your goal is.

Out of the three levels, high school teachers overall did not link the TAP to student achievement, rather, they looked at their own goal-setting, attendance at professional development workshops, and collaboration with colleagues as the mechanisms that increase student achievement.

For question g in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school? This question examined the perceptions of teachers on the effect that the TAP has on sustained school improvement as stated in research question 2.

At the elementary level, two common themes emerged from the focus group discussions. The first theme is the perception that the TAP has an effect in improving the use of technology in the schools. As one elementary PTS teacher commented on the support that the school based parent teacher organization has given to provide technology resources, thereby allowing teachers and administrators to use the TAP process to improve technology integration in the school.

Much more supportive. Not much more, but supportive in supplying technology. It has been unbelievable. I mean the school improvement plan to up the technology. A lot of the goals that we have are technology related that we would not have ever seen without the input from PTO.

Another theme that emerged was the increased discussion on goals. As one elementary
PTS teacher stated,

I think we are saying that our goals for next year are going to be more often than we did before. I think colleagues are saying more often, oh I am going to make that a goal for next year. Goals come up in conversations more. But, just the idea of talking about goals comes up more, I think.

That theme continued with middle school teachers who saw the TAP as a way to focus on similar goals in the school, leading to a more uniform school improvement process. As one middle school PTS teacher stated, “I think it is easier to have a focus because you pick things off of that. Everybody is kind of working on the same thing. Whether it is technology or differentiated instruction”. Middle school non-PTS teachers talked about the consistency in the use of activators and summarizers as a result of the TAP.

Well, I think that there are more teachers who are cognizant of using the activators and summarizers, making sure that the board configuration is up. The school improvement, in terms of students coming to class they know to look at the SMART Board of the white board so that they know.

High school teachers had a different perspective than elementary and middle school teachers in that they felt the TAP is more beneficial to the growth of new teachers, but not necessarily for a veteran teacher. As one high school PTS teacher put it, “…it does outline different areas so that if a new teacher is being evaluated, it does outline different areas so that you can have the conversation about how to meet the standard and improve.” Another high school PTS teacher stated that, “it could be a great tool for the mentors to work with the protégé as the protégé is progressing towards having their evaluation.”

For question h in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: From your perspective, how has the TAP process seemed to
*improve your effectiveness as a teacher?* This question examined the perceptions of teachers on the effect that the TAP has on improved teacher instruction and elevated professional growth as stated in research question 2.

Elementary teachers focused on the whole continuum of improvement, including participating in self-reflection, setting goals, and monitoring those goals for effectiveness. One elementary PTS put it this way,

> ...if you are really focused on the elements that are within the TAP document and you are self-reflecting on what is important, where do I need to improve, where am I doing okay, where can I do a little bit better then, I think that 99% of the teachers are going to take that into consideration and really focus on the areas that they need to improve on and work towards bettering themselves.

An elementary non-PTS teacher put it this way, “we are giving goals, we come up with goals with our administrators, work towards them and see how well we do, and bring it to the forefront of our thoughts.”

Middle school teachers had similar perceptions as elementary teachers. One middle school professional status teacher stated,

> Well, I think, I like the way you say process...I think the process has just kept the forefront of your mind what we are here for and we should be ever changing and ever improving and not be stagnant.

A middle school non-PTS teacher echoed similar thoughts,

> Experiencing the needs of students and getting this professional development that I know will help my students, pursue this degree that is going to help my students, and the energy also of the teachers, feeling that the staff and teachers that you work with are focused on what is best for the students.

When the high school focus groups were asked this question, the discussion was short. The high school PTS focus group passed on the question, indicating that they did not feel that the TAP improved their effectiveness as a teacher. The high school non-PTS focus group, felt that the reflection piece allowed them to become a more effective teacher.
Kind of more of the same, but the reflective piece, I think, makes me consider more how I am presenting the material and perhaps make me more of an effective teacher, but at least that would be the hope.

It was evident from the analysis of the data from this question that the elementary and middle school focus groups perceived the TAP to help make them more effective teachers because of the entire process, including the self-evaluation, goal setting, and monitoring of those goals. High school teachers, on the other hand, did not perceive the TAP to help them become a more effective teacher.

Research Question 3

How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

As a result of the focus group sessions several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of questions b and i for the teacher focus groups. This question focuses on the differences and similarities in perceptions between elementary, middle, and high school teachers on the positive impact of the TAP.

For question b in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: The current TAP process has been in place for 2 years. During that time, what have you noticed are some of the positive effects of the program?

Elementary teachers felt that a positive aspect of the TAP is the collaboration piece between a teacher and the administrator. As one non-PTS teacher explained,

I think the positive is the collaboration of how its done. It’s not all one-sided as it used to be. In the early years, the principal comes in and makes all the judgment and observation. Now, we are being asked to evaluate ourselves and bring that to the table. So I think that it makes it a fair representation, because often times principals don’t know what we are doing.

An elementary non-PTS teacher agreed,
I certainly think that scheduled time to meet with your administrator. That point of year or different points of year where you stop and think about those sorts of things so it is kind of putting something like that into your daily schedule.

Middle school teachers focused more on the actual indicators of the rubric and how the process is the same for everybody. As one middle school PTS put it,

I think it has mainstreamed and have made everything the same and equal across the district. It is the same process for everybody. And also, I like kind of knowing what to expect after the first time, you kind of know what to expect. And it’s useful.

A middle school non-PTS teacher explained the comprehensive standards are a positive aspect of the TAP.

The scope of it, the broad scope of it....I like that it addresses the fact that teaching is a lot more than the specific things that we say or do in the classroom. I like that it has pieces about action in the community and communication with families and things like that because I do believe that is important.

High school teachers emphasized the standards as well and delineated that the scope is broad enough to cover all aspects of teaching. As one high school PTS teacher put it,

...it gives teachers the expectations. Sort of like a rubric when you give students an assignment to do, they have a rubric of what expectations a student has to meet. And the indicators that are laid out are one of the positive aspects. It tells the teachers what the district considers to be a good teacher.

A high school non-PTS teacher discussed the scope of the TAP.

It is a large scope, but I think that is one of the positives. It includes not only what your goals are in terms of professional development or school involvement or those kind of things, but it does take into consideration your ability to be a team member, your ability to work professionally, those kind of things and I think those are kind of key components when you are considering a staff member as a whole.

For question I in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare? Although not all
teachers at each level were able to answer this question because they were not in the district when the old TAP was in place, it was important to ask this question to allow participants to give both the strengths and weaknesses of the current TAP in comparison with the old TAP. The weaknesses will be addressed in research question 4.

Although participants in the elementary non-PTS focus group were not part of the old TAP, the elementary PTS focus group stated that this process was much more collaborative than the old TAP. As one teacher stated, “I think this new way of doing it really involves the teacher and the principal collaboratively working together instead of a one-sided view. I think that is a huge difference.”

Middle school teachers also spoke to the process as being a positive aspect of the new TAP. As one non-PTS teacher stated,

There is a process. There is structure, there is accountability. All of that is in place and I think I like that personally and having worked in other districts, I do like that process. In a lot of ways, it does make me feel respected as a professional.

High school non-PTS teachers were not in the school district when the old TAP was in place, however, high school PTS teachers indicated that the old system had a narrative that did not make sense and that this process, which contains a rubric, is better.

...I did not care for the stream of consciousness, it just was not pointed, it was misleading and it was not indicative of what was going on in the classroom. It would be pages and pages of transcript. And half the time, I said, I am not reading this because it doesn’t make sense. This went in one ear. This came from someone else. I am like, were we in the same class? So I think that it was very ineffective. So this is better.

Overall, the perception of the teachers who have experienced both TAP systems is that the new TAP is a better process because it has well defined standards in a structured process.
Research Question 4

How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

As a result of the focus group sessions, several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of questions c, i, j, k, and l for the teacher focus groups. This question focuses on the differences and similarities in perceptions between elementary, middle, and high school teachers on the weaknesses of the TAP.

For question c in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process? Elementary teachers who participated in the focus group sessions felt that the TAP process forms were too time consuming to complete for a teacher, particularly the self-assessment, the pre-observation form, and the pre-evaluation form. As one elementary non-PTS stated,

A lot of detail. A little overwhelming when the principal gives you something and says fill it out, see where you think you are. Oh, my goodness, this is going to take a while.

An elementary PTS teacher took the concept one step further by discussing how the administrator uses the information that is provided by the teacher to write the evaluation.

Sometimes, I think that I am the one who is writing the evaluation. And I put in, as I am sure others do, I put in a great deal of time answering all of those questions. I felt in the past that administration takes all and just copies it and there it is. I have done all of the work.

Middle school teachers also spoke about the length of the document, the number of indicators in the standards, and the level of attainability of some of the standards. One middle school PTS teacher put it this way,
There are too many separate bullets or items that you have to address and think about each. It is overwhelming sometimes. And some of the descriptors are unattainable, you know, at the highest level.

A middle school non-PTS teacher described their first year with the TAP document as being an overwhelming process.

Last year, I felt, oh God, I shouldn’t be teaching because this almost seems unattainable. To be exceeding the standard in all the areas I thought, oh my!...It was overwhelming to look at the document.

A middle school PTS teacher expressed the same thoughts by stating, “And so I thought for new teachers right off the bat, instead of looking at a positive document, it is an overwhelming one.”

Similar to the middle school teachers, the high school teachers collectively focused more on the number of standards and the wording of those standards in the TAP rubric. A high school non-PTS teacher stated that the rubrics should be more specific to the teaching position and stage of that teacher’s career,

I think that just because it is so detailed that and the broad strokes that are painted when you go through the pre-process that it does not allow for enough customization of differentiation between say a special education teacher and a department person staff member of a language person. I also think that it does not allow for enough detailed variation between a first and second year teacher and a veteran teacher in the building. It is very detailed, but I think at the same time, it is very broad. The two sound like a contradiction, but I really feel like the detail of it limits the scope.

One high school PTS teacher would prefer a narrative over the number of standards,

I find that there are so many categories under each standard that some of them seem redundant, some of them seem to use a lot of educational jargon. What is scaffolding? When you think about it, yeh, I guess what that is, but what is the point? Too jargony. The thing that I like most about it and the thing that I look to immediately are the comments. Like what are the comments that are being made here as opposed to these little check, check, check, check, check. I guess everything in education seems to be going to checklists and without any. And I find the comments much more meaningful than I do the checklist and then
sometimes the checklist, um, the document, if you are just coming in once to observe someone, there is no way you could possibly look at every standard.

For question i in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: *For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare?* Although this question does not pertain to most of the non-PTS teachers, it is useful to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of the current TAP process with the old TAP process.

Elementary non-PTS teachers were unable to answer this question, however elementary PTS teachers commented that this process is much more time consuming, which is consistent to their previous comments in question c. Teachers felt that even though they had more input in the process, there was much more paperwork involved.

As one teacher stated,

> …the responsibility for filling out the document is put on that teacher’s shoulders, rather than the administration’s shoulders. Before we had to plan our lesson and get stressed out a little bit, sweat, and listen to what they had to say about it, but now we have to put a lot more time and energy into filling out the document.

Elementary PTS teachers also stated that there should be an alternative evaluation component, which did exist in the old TAP system, but was not included in the beginning implementation of the new TAP system.

Middle school PTS teachers also discussed the need for an alternative evaluation in the new TAP process. This alternative evaluation could be open to PTS teachers and allow them to focus on projects that would help with their professional growth.

The high school non-PTS teachers could not participate in this question because they were not in the district when the old TAP was in place. The high school PTS teachers, however, commented on how they felt that the administrator should focus on
standards that the teacher feels is important to observe in a classroom setting. This was the process used in the old TAP at the high school. One teacher commented about a former high school administrator that focused on particular standards,

She was an outstanding observer. She always had the pulse of the class and she wrote a nice narrative for the evaluation. I thought that she was one of the best people that I have ever had coming into a classroom. She really wrote great evaluations.

Another teacher stated that it is important for the teacher to pick the standards that need to be observed,

Actually, I think the evaluatee should pick the standards that we think are important, then we should be able to say I want to focus on classroom management or planning and preparation for learning. Now you have an opportunity. It is about this is the research I am reading, this is what I am doing, this is the blogs that I have read, this is how other people are doing it, or this is a conference that I went to. You know, you could be evaluated on those things.

The teacher continued by discussing how true professional growth would occur if teachers were given more choice of standards,

A good administrator could say, well I am interested in x, y, and z, you know and questioning techniques. That may be really nice, but, unless there is at the beginning of the year, a school wide focus on that, but it is not really fair to have the administrator pick it. But, it is very fair for the person being evaluated to say, please focus on how well I question students. Do I give them sufficient wait time? You know, am I asking questions that summarize well?

Although the teacher did not mention it by name, the description is very similar to the alternative evaluation mentioned by both the elementary and middle school teachers.

For question j in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say? This question gave teachers the opportunity to assess the TAP from the lens of the Massachusetts Board of
Education. It provided some insight from a global perspective, how teacher evaluation should change.

Both non-PTS and PTS elementary and middle school teachers had different suggestions, all described in detail in research question 7, which compares the perceptions of professional status and non-professional status teachers.

Both high school focus groups had discussions on the frequency of observations and the use of walkthroughs to help monitor instruction. High school non-PTS teachers indicated that they would like to see more frequent observations, more consistent feedback, peer observations, and walkthroughs. As one teacher stated,

I think it is hard for administrators to come into one class and get a pulse. I have four of the same foreign language classes and they are all different. And because of the student interactions and because of the learning going on, I tend to teach each a little differently in each of those classes. So, it is hard to go into one and say, oh, this is how this person is teaching. I know its time and you can’t always get into those classes, but to stop in and maybe see the whole realm of all of the classes. Maybe if it is even for ten or fifteen minutes. Just to go in and see what is happening and get a better idea than one specific class, twice a year.

One teacher brought up peer evaluations.

We really don’t have the opportunity, oh, I suppose we do, but we don’t really practice here peer evaluation. But, I would love the opportunity to go into other classes and see how things are going on in there.

On the subject of walkthroughs, here is what one teacher stated.

We do not see a lot of walkthroughs. In my previous district we had administrators walking through at least once a week, wandering through, even for 30 seconds. That presence was noted behaviorally, it was also noted by the teachers.

When the assistant researcher inquired as to why there were less walkthroughs at the high school level than the other levels, one high school PTS teacher answered in this manner,

It is too big a staff. We are in our own little pods, in our little departments so I think that it is different than in an elementary school or even a middle school. I
mean just walk down the corridor. You are dealing with fewer students, fewer staff, and you have more personal rapport.

Another high school PTS teacher also commented,

Actually, since most of the students I teach are in the other assistant principal’s load, it is rare for my evaluating assistant principal to walk into my room. My non-evaluator assistant principal walks into my room all the time to get a student. My evaluating assistant principal came in the other day, but I think it is the first time he has been in my classroom all year because it is not my evaluation year. They are not familiar with how my class runs. You know, they say they want to come in and drift in and out and that happens once in a blue moon.

Another high school PTS teacher comments about how important the observation becomes towards the evaluation.

The observation becomes the big piece of the evaluation. And so that is what we were saying at the beginning that one little vignette of your year then becomes the whole deal. And if you are a non-PTS teacher there are three little vignettes in one year. And if the first one did not happen until January, you have very little time to make any corrections.

For question k in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: *What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process?* Elementary teachers did not have any common changes that they would make to the TAP, however, they had changes from a professional status and nonprofessional status point of view, which will be addressed in research question 7.

Middle school teachers discussed the four levels of each standard (Exceeding the Standard, Meeting the Standard, Progressing toward the Standard, and Does not Meet Standard) and how the difference between an E (Exceeding the Standard) and M (Meeting the Standard) is sometimes so insignificant. As one Middle School PTS teacher explained,

I really believe the whole E, M, P is really an issue. The E and the grading. That it is a grading scale. And to figure out a way, I mean you literally have veteran teachers of my years plus nervous of this document. And to me that is not what the document should be done to a person. It should be encouraging and
something that you want to strive for, but there has to be a way that you do what both sides need.

High school teachers also discussed some specific professional status teacher and nonprofessional status teacher issues, which will be analyzed in research question 7.

For question 1 in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group:  *How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?* This final question was asked to see if there were any other weaknesses perceived in the TAP that were not addressed in previous questions.

Elementary teachers felt that it would be helpful if a peer observation component was put in place as either part of the TAP process or integrated within the school culture. As one elementary non-PTS teacher stated, “Sometimes I think that other people besides the administrator could have input on how well a teacher is teaching; team colleagues, grade level colleagues, so other perspectives would be helpful.” An elementary PTS teacher concurred,

I think that having teachers observing a teacher is something that I think is less threatening than having a principal come in. I think that would be another piece that would be interesting, I think.

Middle school teachers felt that having conversations as a faculty about what good teaching looks like in each of the standards would be an excellent way to strengthen instruction. They also mentioned peer coaching as a way to get a teacher’s perspective on a lesson. As one middle school non-PTS teacher stated,

Why couldn’t it be that either on a monthly that we have the early release days sometimes, why couldn’t it be that one of those or a couple of those early release days could be dedicated to talking about any of the standards and how could we as a school, you know, get better and utilize peer coaching or peer observation whatever you wanted to call it.
A middle school PTS teacher added,

One of the ideas was getting together and work on action items and lessons....Observations, peer poaching, and I think too that sharing of self, not just the lessons and document, but what I would consider accomplishments and sharing of teachers.

A high school non-PTS teacher also emphasized the peer coaching piece,

I also think as we were saying earlier that the peer evaluation is important. I know the times that I have had the opportunity to go into other classrooms. Again, as a new teacher, I am a sponge, but I feel like I learn so much being in other rooms and seeing how they do things.

High school PTS teachers did not offer any additional ideas on how to improve teacher evaluation so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction.

**Research Question 5**

How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by professional and non-professional status teachers?

As a result of the focus group sessions several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of questions a, d, e, f, g and h for the teacher focus groups. This question focuses on the differences and similarities in perceptions between professional and non-professional status teachers on the effect of TAP on improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth.

For question a in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: *In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP used in your school?* Professional status teachers (PTS) saw the purpose
of TAP as a tool for improvement, by identifying strengths and weaknesses, and establishing goals to strengthen those weaknesses. As an elementary PTS teacher stated,

I think in addition to all of those things not only just to assign goals, but to monitor if you are reaching previously agreed upon goals. So goal making and seeing if you are reaching the goals, the effectiveness of the teachers, in terms of administration, how you see yourself and how administration also views your work.

A high school PTS teacher agreed by stating, “And I think to give teachers feedback to improve their teaching.”

Non-PTS saw a similar purpose to the TAP process as the PTS teachers. As one middle school non-PTS teacher put it, “I would hope that it would improve teaching to strengthen weaknesses and improve upon the strengths.” A high school non-PTS teacher focused more on the goals by stating,

Putting goals out in front of you and making sure that you are meeting the goals and that you are always corresponding to what the district is looking for and the curriculum that has been set up doing everything that we need to do based on the curriculum.

Non-PTS teachers also saw the TAP as a reflective process. As one elementary non-PTS teacher stated,

I see it as a time, you know your day is so distracted and there is so much going on, it is almost like forced stopped and think time. You know, a forced time for you to stop and think about, you know, certain things. Just because you end up forgetting.

A high school non-PTS teacher concurred about the reflection piece by stating, “Yes, I think that is the objective, I don’t know if it is always true, but I think the goal is to be a reflective process.” Reflection was not mentioned by the PTS teachers.

For question d in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: What are some ways that you have noticed that the TAP has
*changed your teaching?* The data from this question addresses the perceptions of PTS and non-PTS teachers on how the TAP has improved teacher instruction.

For the most part, PTS teachers did not perceive that the TAP has changed their teaching, particularly at the middle and high school level. As one middle school PTS teacher put it,

I don’t think it has changed my teaching as much as highlighted to me what I think the administration is looking for.... I can’t think of anything in particular that I have changed, but it has given me a picture of as a district and as a school what they are looking for.

A high school PTS teacher stated that it is not TAP that has changed teaching, but the increased technology resources and professional development opportunities at the high school.

I would say that is true for me too and courses that I take would be a greater impact in how I am teaching and what I am teaching....What has made us change is that we have these new resources that we did not have before.

PTS teachers also commented how the goal-setting process has changed their teaching, however, they emphasized that the goal setting process was always part of teacher evaluation, not necessarily the current TAP process. As one elementary PTS teacher put it, “We always had goals and EBO’s and focused on those.”

Non-PTS teachers discussed the reflective piece of the TAP that has helped them changed their teaching. As one middle school non-PTS teacher stated, “I agree...in that I reflect, I examine what I teach and do what is best for my students....” An elementary non-PTS teacher supported this idea by stating, “And just that self-reflecting time in that you always want to reflect on your lessons that you should be reminded on what you should be reflecting on within those lessons.” A high school non-PTS teacher also supported this piece by commenting, “Each year, I kind of tried to incorporate more of
those pieces whether it is just through the evaluation process or the reflective piece that
the evaluation process kind of makes you do.”

For question e in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher
asked each focus group: What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP
has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school? The data from this
question addresses the perceptions of PTS and non-PTS teachers on how the TAP has
elevated professional growth in the schools.

Non-PTS teachers indicated that the TAP does directly or indirectly contribute to
professional growth. Elementary non-PTS teachers, for example, discussed that it was
the goal setting piece that helped teachers grow as professionals.

I think sometimes it is the goal setting part of the aspect and not as much the
checking at the end, but the little details of it. Having one of those goals being a
team goal, kind of forces you, but it reminds you,...that you should be talking to
your team.

Middle school non-PTS teachers discussed how the TAP was used at their level to talk
about what good instruction looked like.

We took a section of the document, say delivery of instruction, looked it over, and
talked in small groups about what would it look like for a teacher to meet the
standards or exceeding it and concerns and questions that we had about it.

High school non-PTS teachers have used the TAP process to focus on technology
integration. In that focus group, that goal was pursued both as an individual goal and a
department goal. As one teacher put it, “For me, it is the technology piece, trying to
improve that. So, I think that is helpful to think about.”

Most PTS teachers felt that the district has done an excellent job of linking
professional development opportunities to the standards of the TAP, particularly in the
areas of technology integration, differentiated instruction, and skillful teaching.
However, some PTS teachers feel that the professional growth of teachers is linked more to state recertification requirements and contractual incentives, rather than the TAP. As one high school PTS teacher put it, “Well, I think because of recertification, you have to do that. The PDP’s is fueling it at this point.” In contrast, some PTS teachers felt that the standards did directly link to professional growth. As one elementary teacher stated,

I look at the areas and it says, exceeding the standard, meeting the standard, and does not meet standard. For me, looking at this, I am evaluating myself, it is reminding me of the things that I really need to be aware of and focusing on as a teacher and if I want to be exceeding that standard. I think for teachers that it needs to see what you need to work on, areas perhaps that you are not giving much focus. If defines some of the important areas of good teaching. I look at that and say, oh my gosh, I am not doing that enough. You can really be hard on yourself.

For question 1 in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: *What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your classroom?* The data from this question addresses the perceptions of PTS and non-PTS teachers on how the TAP has increased student learning in the schools.

Non-PTS teachers had mixed perceptions about the connection between TAP and student achievement. In all 3 non-PTS focus group sessions there were teachers who felt that the TAP either directly or indirectly affected student achievement, while others felt that it is just good teaching practices, not the TAP that affected student achievement. One elementary non-PTS teacher gave a concrete example how the TAP has affected student achievement in the classroom.

...activating the prior knowledge and summarizing the lesson, I do try to do that and it promotes more conversation among the students and they feel more comfortable once their brains have been refreshed. I try to do that more.
A middle school non-PTS teacher also felt that the TAP indirectly affected student achievement.

I think as time goes on, when you see a reflection about the fact that you use those things as a positive thing when you may continue and try to add onto those things. So, I can see how moving on that document would help and force those behaviors.

Another middle school non-PTS teacher saw it as an expectation of the culture of the district.

I think as a new teacher coming in, you know, seeing a document like this with all of these goal settings, all of these criteria, although it can be overwhelming, you can get the sense, wow, I really have to step it up because this district means business. So, maybe professional development might happen because you see it that it is well documented that this is what is expected.

A high school non-PTS teacher surmised about the impact that the TAP has on student achievement when it involves technology, “When you reflect and you say that you want to increase the use of technology and you accomplish that. It directly impacts student achievement.” One elementary non-PTS teacher consciously linked the TAP directly to student achievement by the way teachers model the process.

The only thing that I can think about is, you know, part of the evaluation is having your boss, the administration, come in and watch you. And the kids notice that. The kids know that someone is there and having the conversation with them that you know when other teachers come in to watch you that people come in to get ideas so that you can learn and improve yourself. So sometimes even having the conversation with the kids about I talk to others and I try to improve myself just like you try to improve yourself. So in some aspects, I am the teacher, but I am a student too!

One middle school non-PTS teacher did not see a connection between the TAP and student achievement and stated:

Number I said that about the intrinsic nature that we do and we try to professionally develop ourselves all the time because we want to, not because the document tells us that we should. You know, we want to increase our student achievement because we want our students to do better.
PTS teachers, overall, saw at least an indirect connection between TAP and student achievement. One elementary PTS teacher stated, “I think that the goals are broken down, it kind of automatically causes you to break down your goals with your students.” Another elementary PTS teacher commented that:

I think it keeps me focused when I say this is what the objective is. Then all of that superfluous stuff is gone and focus on the bottom line on what is it that I really want these kids to walk away with.

One high school PTS teacher gave an example of how the TAP has affected student achievement in the classroom by stating:

I do remember reading through the indicators at some point. And the one that sticks out to me is frequently checks for understanding and gives student helpful feedback if they are confused. And in some of our professional development things, the John Collins Writing Course, or the rubrics course or something like that, they did this thumbs up, thumbs down voting thing. And I remember seeing the thing in the TAP that frequently checks for understanding and, oh, I could do that thumbs up thing in my classroom. And now, I do it on a regular basis.

One high school PTS teacher disagreed with the connection between TAP and student achievement:

The TAP to me is just a reflection of the evaluator. Like, how am I doing, am I doing well in my teaching? It is the courses that I am taking, it is the collaboration that I am having with people I my department, its workshops I go to and meet people from other schools, that are giving me ideas, um, to make my classes better. And those are the things that are going to make my class a better class, not just the document.

For question g in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: What effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school? The data from this question addresses the perceptions of PTS and non-PTS teachers on how the TAP has had on sustained school improvement in the schools.
Non-PTS teachers commented how there are more teachers focused on particular goals that are linked to the TAP, such as technology and literacy. Because more are striving toward the same goals, the school is able to improve more effectively. One elementary non-PTS teacher commented, “One year we had a focus on literacy and so we had different times on Thursday afternoons devoted to little workshops or exercises to do as a team.” A middle school non-PTS teacher talked about the conversations the teachers have been having about the TAP and how that leads to school improvement, by stating “...I like the way that we have tried to initiate conversations about the evaluation process just to get people thinking about it and people talking about it....we talk about it, we break into groups, and compare how we do different things and certain standards.” A non-PTS high school teacher agreed by putting it this way, “...all of the teachers are going through the same process so there is a group headed in the same direction through the same thinking and the same questions which could show improvement for the school.”

PTS teachers also commented on the consistency of the process and how common goals such as family and community outreach, technology, and communication have become school wide goals, which are linked to individual teacher’s TAP goals. As one middle school PTS teacher stated, “If we are all working on the same aspects of the TAP document then that is also then connected to the school improvement plan instead of being disjointed.” Another middle school PTS teacher stated, “Anything that is goal oriented should help improve the kid’s performance, the teacher’s instruction, the school’s performance, the district.”
For question h in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: *From your perspective, how has the TAP process seem to improve your effectiveness as a teacher?* The data from this question addresses the perceptions of PTS and non-PTS teachers on how the TAP has improved teacher instruction. Although this question was similar to question d, which was asked earlier in the focus group sessions, it gave teachers an additional opportunity to offer their perspectives.

Non-PTS teachers discussed the reflection piece and the conversations with administrators that helped improve their effectiveness as a teacher. One elementary non-PTS stated, “We are giving goals, we come up with goals with our administrators, work towards them and see how well we do, and bring it to the forefront of our thoughts.” A middle school non-PTS teacher put it this way:

I think that the conversation that you have. I know the most powerful ones that I have are when I sit down with administrators and just talk turkey. You know, get down to business, where do I want to improve, where can I see you improve?

A high school non-PTS teacher added more by stating, “...the reflective piece, I think, makes me consider more how I am presenting the material and perhaps make me more of an effective teacher, but at least that would be the hope.”

For the most part, PTS teachers gave similar feedback as non-PTS teachers in that the reflection piece, the monitoring of the goals, and the conversations were critical to the process. The only exception to this was the high school PTS focus group that passed on the question because they did not feel that the TAP improved their effectiveness as a teacher. One elementary PTS teacher stated:

Monitoring, now how I am doing. I made these changes and how has that affected my classroom teaching and how has it affected my relationships with
parents, whatever you are working on. Or taking the classes if you want to get better at technology and there are classes offered within the district and you take those and say, I have applied that now so I am working towards those goals so all of those things so anything you are doing is improving yourself as a teacher.

Research Question 6

How do the perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status?

As a result of the focus group sessions, several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of question b for the teacher focus groups. This question focuses on the differences and similarities in perceptions between professional and nonprofessional status teachers on the positive impact of the evaluation system.

For question b in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: The current TAP process has been in place for 2 years. During that time, what have you noticed are some of the positive aspects of the program?

With non-PTS teachers, two common themes emerged; the self reflection piece and self-evaluation associated with the process, and the level of detail and clarity of the indicators and standards. They felt that it is this detail that clearly spells out what it is expected of teachers in this school district. One elementary non-PTS teacher stated that, “...I like how detailed it is too and how many different sections and so many levels of each section. You can really see what it takes to be an effective teacher.” A middle school non-PTS teacher talked about the self-evaluation piece of the TAP by adding:

I think a positive effect is that it is always good to self-evaluate, so that was there for us to look at. I think with students it is a good thing, for teachers, it is a good thing, and for administrators it is a good thing to try to see what the criteria is and see where we fit so when there is a conversation. It is more meaningful.

A high school non-PTS teacher discussed the reflection piece of the TAP by stating:
I think it makes us reflect on. You know we are busy doing our everyday teaching and getting our classes ready and it helps us to reflect on our teaching in general and helping us improve, not just with a class ready for the day, but looking over the year, and what we could look ahead to.

PTS teachers gave several positive comments about the TAP, some different from non-PTS teachers. Where non-PTS teachers focused on the reflection piece and the level of detail and clarity of the indicators and standards, PTS teachers felt that the consistency of the process for all teachers, the quality of the standards, and the conversations that have occurred with staff as the positive aspects of the TAP. One middle school PTS teacher commented:

Yeh, I would say to that we have done some great faculty meeting discussion on some of the bullets and what that looks like so we have done some nice sharing with each other on what some of the bullets are. Most of the teaching and learning things that we have. What does this look like in the classroom? We have some guided discussion that has been great.

Another middle school PTS teacher discussed the standards, stating, “And I think the product we are using is fairly objective because it is pretty detailed worded in a detailed way. So it does not leave as much room for misunderstandings of the different categories.”

Research Question 7

How do the perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status?

As a result of the focus group sessions several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of questions c, j, k, and l for the teacher focus groups. This question focuses on the differences and similarities in perceptions between professional and non-professional status teachers on the weaknesses of the evaluation system.
For question c in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: *Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process?* Several emerging themes came from the non-PTS focus groups. First, they felt that the process is too detailed and overwhelming for a new teacher coming into the school district. It is interesting to note that non-PTS teachers commented in research question six that the clarity and detail of the standards was a positive aspect of the TAP. One elementary non-PTS teacher stated that the TAP has, “A lot of detail. A little overwhelming when the principal gives you something and says fill it out, see where you think you are.” A middle school non-PTS teacher concurred by stating, “I think to a beginning teacher it may seem to be overwhelming with so many points in five or six different areas.”

Another perception expressed by non-PTS teachers is the fact that they normally do not receive a rating of “Meeting the Standard” or “Exceeding the Standard” in the first few years as a teacher. As one elementary non-PTS teacher put it:

> I know that I have heard from various people about where beginning teachers are supposed to fall on that and I have heard that they are to be progressing toward and I heard sometimes that they are meeting towards. I personally would feel very guilty and feel like I was not doing my job to the best of my ability if I was progressing toward, so someone that wants to be meeting towards the standard just because I feel like I am not doing....I have heard from various different people that newer teachers are supposed to be mostly progressing or mostly meeting depending on who you talk to...

A middle school non-PTS teacher offered a similar comment by stating, “...I expect that because I am a new teacher, I am going to be progressing and I haven’t arrived yet.”

Another common theme by non-PTS teachers was that there was very little difference in some cases between some of the indicators in the “Meeting the Standard” and “Exceeding the Standard” categories. One elementary non-PTS teacher stated, “The
wording for exceeds and the wording for meets sometimes is so similar that sometimes I could not figure out the differences between the two.” A middle school non-PTS teacher concurred by stating:

Sometimes I feel that when you look at the wording of it, the difference between what is meeting the standard and exceeding the standard. I have a little trouble teasing out that difference and I get this feeling that in my own teaching some of the times when I exceed the standard, I have done it by accident.

Furthermore, some non-PTS teachers felt that some standards were written so that they could never be achieved by any teacher. One middle school non-PTS teacher stated:

I also think that some of the standards are written as utopian, that I would not guess that there would be any one human being that could get exceeds in some of these and even exceeds one day and not the next. Anytime you see ‘all students engaged all the time’, 100% all of the time, its not life and so I don’t think those kind of things are, I don’t think they foster about people trying to attain that level of performance.

Another perception among non-PTS teachers is that there should be a differentiated set of rubrics or expectations for beginning teachers that is different from veteran teachers. One elementary non-PTS teacher stated:

So sometimes I think that the document should be different from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. If that is going to be the mentality that you can’t exceed yet at the beginning of the year, then it should be a slightly different document at the beginning of the year that says here where you are because of the fact that you have not done the year so something along those wording and I don’t always like the fact of how could I have dropped in my teaching.

PTS teachers agreed with non-PTS teachers that the process was overwhelming. As one elementary PTS teacher put it, the process was “very time consuming” and “very paper heavy”, particularly in the evaluation year. Moreover, they felt that there were too many indicators in each standard. As one middle school PTS teacher stated, “It made me kind of feel like that there were too many things to concentrate on like you can’t possibly meet all of those different areas.” A high school PTS teacher went further and stated:
I guess everything in education seems to be going to checklists and without any. And I find the comments much more meaningful that I do the checklist and then sometimes the checklist, um, the document, if you are just coming in once to observe someone, there is no way you could possibly look at every standard.

Others agreed with non-PTS teachers on the level of attainability for some standards.

One middle school PTS teacher stated, “And some of the descriptors are unattainable you know at the highest level....That seems a little harsh.”

For question j in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say? In this question, non-PTS teachers continued to identify weaknesses in the current TAP process with themes similar to question c. Teachers again offered the suggestion that there should be a differentiated document for teachers depending upon the level of experience. As an elementary non-PTS teacher put it, “perhaps having a different document depending on the number of years that you have been teaching.” Along a similar line, there was a perception among non-PTS teachers that the focus of what a teacher is evaluated on should be streamlined in the first few years of teaching. As one middle school teacher stated,

So there are six categories and ten to twelve objectives for each category. I guess that is 60-70 things to think about, you know, for a whole year. You know, if you just pick one thing, Planning and preparation for learning, command of the subject area. You decide at the beginning of the year that you would like to learn more about this particular area or topic that is in my subject area and that is what you are working towards next year.

Another set of suggestions focused on more feedback throughout the year by administrators and teachers. These suggestions included the use of walkthroughs by administrators, and peer observations. As one high school non-PTS teacher put it, “I
think that number one on the list would be that the evaluations be more frequent or observations be more frequent and just more consistent feedback.” Another high school non-PTS teacher noted that, “we don’t really practice peer evaluation here. But, I would love the opportunity to go into other classes and see how things are going on in there.”

PTS teachers also felt that walkthroughs or informal observations would be a suggestion to improve the current TAP. As one elementary PTS teacher stated, “...once you are professional teaching status, I really like the informal, coming in walkthroughs because you are going to see real teaching, not some staged lesson.” Middle school PTS teachers agreed. One teacher stated, “…if they do more walkthroughs and just drive by evaluations they would have a clearer understanding of what you know.”

For question k in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process? Non-PTS continued with the theme of receiving consistent feedback from administrators on a timely basis. One of the areas that they would like to see improved is to have a midyear meeting with their administrator where they can discuss progress on goals and other areas. In the focus groups, some teachers had midyear meetings, while others did not. In the elementary non-PTS focus group, for example, one teacher stated that, “we have a midyear to kind of review the goals to see where you are at.” However, another elementary teacher in the same focus group stated, “I don’t have a midyear. I was just thinking it would be nice to have a midyear to see how you are doing.” A middle school non-PTS teacher commented on the delayed timing of the observation process:

It is just that it is a cumbersome process and in order for it to be done well it has to be done in a timely manner. With time to have good conversations and
processing time... You know that when you sit down a month afterwards, is it really about the lesson, is it about teaching, or is it about getting the document done?

When asked question k, PTS teachers had fewer changes that they would make to the TAP process, when compared to non-PTS teachers. One middle school teacher commented that the different levels of standards, Exceeding the Standard, Meeting the Standard, Progressing toward the Standard, and Does not Meet the Standard, needs to be reexamined. As the teacher stated:

I really believe the whole E, M, P is really an issue. The E and the grading. That it is a grading scale. And to figure out a way, I mean you literally have veteran teachers of my years plus nervous of this document. And to me that is not what the document should be done to a person. It should be encouraging and something that you want to strive for, but there has to be a way that you do what both sides need.

For question 1 in the focus group session for teachers, the assistant researcher asked each focus group: How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction? Non-PTS teachers felt that the TAP process overall was too time consuming and that time should be set aside for the different administrator meetings. In addition, they felt that the different forms need to be streamlined with the ability to complete them online. As on non-PTS elementary teacher put it, “I would like to see a little bit of time allocated to us to fill out the forms. I always feel like I have to do it over a weekend and with so many other things maybe eliminate a staff meeting or something...” Another non-PTS elementary teacher discussed the pre and post observation meetings by stating,

I think teachers should have the choice if you want it during a special time after school or I think there should be an option where you get coverage in your classroom not losing your prep time and not have to stay in and not have to come early.
A high school non-PTS teacher discussed the amount of paperwork involved in the TAP by stating:

It seems like some of the pieces of TAP are more paperwork and time oriented than focused on instruction...It is a time consuming process in that I don't know if there is a way to get shorter or sweeter or set it up so some of the forms are online so that you can just click on whatever you want and get the forms faster, instead of getting bogged down on a 20 page document that you have handed in to your building principal or evaluator or whoever.

PTS teachers did not focus on the time involved with the TAP, rather, they continued on the theme of peer coaching and using colleagues as part of the TAP process. One elementary PTS teachers stated, “You learn so much from your colleagues and maybe feel, no offense to administrators...I guess it depends on your relationship with your administrator, you could have you guard down a little bit more with you colleague.” Another elementary non-PTS teacher echoed similar comments by putting it this way, “...observing best practices. You have an area that you are trying to improve in, and there is a teacher within your school and in another school that...is one of the areas that I want to work on.” A middle school PTS teacher had a similar idea by stating, “Observations...Peer poaching. And I think too that sharing of the self, not just the lessons and the document, but what I would consider accomplishments and achievements of teachers.” One high school teacher discussed the need to include more than just one observation in the evaluation by stating, “I think what was said before was the idea of not all being based on a single observation per year. More thorough observations, perhaps.”

Nature of the Quantitative Study

As stated in Chapter I, the purpose of this study is to analyze the perceptions of teachers and building-level administrators in a Massachusetts suburban public school district, regarding the effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system that
was designed from 2003-2006, and implemented during the 2006-08 school years. This study analyzes teacher and administrator perceptions in regards to improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated teacher professional growth. The study also analyzes the positive and negative impacts of implementing a standards-based teacher evaluation system.

The research subjects selected for the quantitative portion of the study consisted of the entire population of teachers and administrators from a suburban school district north of Boston, Massachusetts. Questionnaires were distributed via interoffice mail to 22 administrators and 316 full and part time teachers in the 9 schools of the Massachusetts suburban school district. A total of 14 administrator questionnaires (64%) were returned and 170 teacher questionnaires (53.8%) were returned. This is consistent with the results reported by Colby (2001) where 55% of the TEP questionnaires were returned. Two of the teacher questionnaires (.6%) returned were blanks. Therefore, 182 (99.4%) of the total returned questionnaires were determined complete and usable.

Participation Level of each Subgroup

Each subgroup varied in the number of participants. The smallest subgroup, the administrators had 14 survey participants, while the largest participation subgroup was the Elementary PTS teachers with 52 survey participants. The percentage of participants for each subgroup ranged from 45% (High School and Elementary Non-PTS Teachers) to 69% (Middle School Non-PTS Teachers). A breakdown of each subgroup’s participation including the total number of available participants, the number of questionnaires that were returned for each subgroup, and the subgroup’s percentage of the total returned questionnaires for the study can be found in Table 4.
Table 4

Subgroup Participation of Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Number of Potential Participants</th>
<th>Number of Returned Questionnaires</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Returned Questionnaires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Non-PTS</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School PTS</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School Non-PTS</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School PTS</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Non-PTS</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary PTS</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Teachers</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Characteristics of the Respondents

The participants who responded to the questionnaire varied in their years of experience, teaching status, level, and the last year evaluated. These statistics were described in Tables 5 through 8.

Teaching status. As seen in Table 5, Professional Status Teachers were the largest group of survey respondents with 111 (61.0%) of the participants. Non-Professional Status Teachers consisted of 57 (31.3%) respondents and the administrator group had 14 (7.7%) respondents.
Years of experience. The teachers' years of experience varied from less than 3 years to the largest group at 13 or more years of teaching experience (34.6%). As indicated in Table 6, approximately one-fourth of the teachers had less than 7 years teaching experience. Thirty-nine (21.4%) of the respondents have only taught in this school district.

Table 5

Respondents Teaching Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator (Includes High School Department Chairs)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

Respondents Total Years Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3 Years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7 Years</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-12 Years</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 or More Years</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Taught in Reading</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Level of teaching. As seen in Table 7, elementary teachers were the largest group with 77 (42.3%) respondents. High school teachers were the smallest group with 47 (25.8%) respondents.

Evaluation year. As seen in Table 8, 44 (24.2%) teachers were last evaluated during the current year, the 2007-08 school year. However, the majority of the respondents (64.3%) had been evaluated during the 2006-07 school year, which is the first year of the implementation of the TAP process in this school district. In addition, 7 (3.8%) of the teachers indicated that they had not been evaluated in the last two years.

Quality of evaluation process. This question on the TEP asked respondents their perception of the overall quality of the TAP evaluation process. As seen in Table 9, 107 (58.8%) of the respondents indicated that the current teacher evaluation process is of above average quality or higher. Moreover, 15 (8.3%) of the teachers indicated that it was below average quality or lower.

Teacher overall performance on TAP. This question on the TEP asked respondents what their overall performance was on their most recent teacher evaluation through the TAP process. As indicated in Table 10, no respondents scored themselves below average. Moreover, 161 (88.4%) of the respondents indicated that they received a score of above average or greater on the TAP which indicates that in most of the standards they received a score of "meeting the standard" or "exceeding the standard."
Table 7

*Respondents Level of Teaching*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades PreK-5</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6-8</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 9-12</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>182</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8

*Respondents Last Year Evaluated*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08 School Year</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07 School Year</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 2006-07 School Year</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>182</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9

*Respondent’s Perception of Quality of Evaluation Process*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor Quality (1)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Average Quality (2)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Quality (3)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Average Quality (4)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent Quality (5)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>182</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10

*Teacher Overall Performance on the TAP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does not meet standard (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding the standard (5)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>182</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prior experience with teacher evaluation. Respondents were asked about their experience with teacher evaluation prior to their most recent teacher evaluation experience. The choices ranged from “Waste of Time” to “Very Helpful.” As seen in Table 11, 46.7% found the teacher evaluation process helpful, 37.9% were non-committal, and 14.2% found the process to be a waste of time.

Table 11
Respondents Experience with Teacher Evaluation Prior to Most Recent Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waste of Time (1)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Helpful (5)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>182</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent's Self-Perception of Attributes

Section 3, part A of the TEP (Questions 10-18) asked respondents to describe themselves in relation to several attributes, including overall performance on implementing the TAP (for administrators), overall performance on the TAP (for teachers), professional expectations of themselves, orientation to risk-taking, orientation to change, orientation to experimentation, openness to criticism, knowledge of technical aspects of teaching, knowledge of curriculum content, and experience with teacher
evaluation prior to most recent experience. A Likert scale from 1 to 5 was used with 5 being the strongest level of an attribute and 1 being the weakest level of an attribute. Each respondent answered based upon their perceptions of their individual attributes. As seen in Table 12, a mean score for teachers and administrators is listed for each attribute. This score is derived from the Likert scale answer given by the respondent. The possible mean score could range from 0 to 5.

*Overall comments of personal attributes.* As indicated in Table 12, all of the mean scores displayed for the attributes are well above the neutral Likert scale score of 3. For teachers, the scores ranged from 3.4371 to 4.6429, with the lowest score being the type of experience they had with their teacher evaluation prior to their most recent experience and the highest score being their own professional expectations.

Administrator mean scores were very comparable to the teacher mean scores, ranging from 3.4500 to 4.6374. As with the teacher mean scores, the lowest mean score was the type of experience they had with their teacher evaluation prior to their most recent experience and the highest score was their own professional expectations.

*Respondent's Perception of TAP Evaluator*

Section 3, part B of the TEP (Questions 19-29) looked at the TAP evaluator attributes. Teachers described their perceptions of the evaluator and the administrators assessed their own performance as an evaluator. The TEP examined several evaluator attributes including credibility, working relationship with teacher, level of trust, interpersonal skills, temperament, flexibility, knowledge of technical aspects of teaching, capacity to model or demonstrate needed improvements, familiarity with teaching
assignment, usefulness of suggestions for improvement and persuasiveness of rational for suggestions.

Table 12

*Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of their own Attributes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute (Question Number on TEP)</th>
<th>Teacher Mean Score</th>
<th>Administrator Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Performance on TAP (10)</td>
<td>4.1958</td>
<td>4.1732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Expectations of Self (11)</td>
<td>4.6429</td>
<td>4.6374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to Risk Taking (12)</td>
<td>4.1548</td>
<td>4.1484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to Change (13)</td>
<td>4.3185</td>
<td>4.3269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to Experimentation (14)</td>
<td>4.1339</td>
<td>4.1181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to Criticism (15)</td>
<td>4.1557</td>
<td>4.1381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Technical Aspects of Teaching (16)</td>
<td>4.0714</td>
<td>4.0934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Curriculum Content (17)</td>
<td>4.5241</td>
<td>4.5056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience with Teacher Evaluation prior to most recent Experience (18)</td>
<td>3.4371</td>
<td>3.4500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 13, the teacher mean scores ranged from 3.4699 to 4.2381, with the lowest being the administrator’s capacity to model or demonstrate needed improvements and the highest mean scores being working relationship and temperament. Conversely, the administrator mean scores were higher, ranging from 3.7857 to 4.7143 with the lowest mean score being persuasiveness of rationale for suggestions and the highest mean score being the attribute of temperament. The data indicates that the attributes that were more focused on the interpersonal skills were higher and more
comparable between teachers and administrators than the attributes associated with the knowledge and technical aspects of teaching.

Table 13

*Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of the TAP Evaluator*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute (Question Number on TEP)</th>
<th>Teacher Mean Score</th>
<th>Administrator Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credibility as a source of feedback (19)</td>
<td>3.9435</td>
<td>4.2143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working relationship (20)</td>
<td>4.2381</td>
<td>4.1429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Trust (21)</td>
<td>4.1488</td>
<td>4.2857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Manner (22)</td>
<td>4.1905</td>
<td>4.3571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperament (23)</td>
<td>4.2381</td>
<td>4.7143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility (24)</td>
<td>3.9792</td>
<td>4.5714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of technical aspects of teaching (25)</td>
<td>4.0417</td>
<td>4.4286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to model or demonstrate needed improvements (26)</td>
<td>3.4699</td>
<td>4.0714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with teaching assignment (27)</td>
<td>3.7143</td>
<td>4.2143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness of suggestions for improvement (28)</td>
<td>3.6796</td>
<td>4.0714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasiveness of rational for suggestions (29)</td>
<td>3.5749</td>
<td>3.7857</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Respondent's Perception of the Attributes of the Procedures Used*

Section 3, part C of the TEP (Questions 30-33) looked at the attributes of the procedures used during the most recent teacher evaluation. These attributes included the communication of standards, the clarity of the standards, the appropriateness of the
standards for each teaching assignment, and the uniqueness of the standards for each teaching assignment.

As seen in Table 14, the teacher mean scores ranged from 2.6273 to 3.8204, with the lowest mean score being the uniqueness of standards for individual teachers and the highest mean score being communication of TAP standards. The administrator mean scores were comparable, ranging from 3.3571 to 3.9286 with the lowest mean score being uniqueness of standards for individual teachers and the highest mean score being the communication of TAP standards. The data indicates that there is a clear need to create standards for specialized teaching positions, such as special education teachers, school psychologists, library media specialists, and guidance counselors, which are currently not available in the TAP. It is also interesting to note that the teacher mean scores for clarity of TAP standards and appropriateness of TAP standards were higher than the administrator mean scores.

Table 14

*Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of the Procedures Related to the Standards used in the TAP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute (Question Number on TEP)</th>
<th>Teacher Mean Score</th>
<th>Administrator Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards Communicated Effectively (30)</td>
<td>3.8204</td>
<td>3.9286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards Clear (31)</td>
<td>3.8133</td>
<td>3.7143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards Appropriate for Teaching Assignment (32)</td>
<td>3.6242</td>
<td>3.5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards Tailored for Unique Needs (33)</td>
<td>2.6273</td>
<td>3.3571</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respondent's Perception of the Types of Performance Information Used

Section 3, part C of the TEP (Questions 34-40) looked at the sources of performance information that were considered as part of the evaluation. This information included classroom observations, meetings with the evaluator, examination of artifacts, examination of student performance, student evaluations, peer evaluations, and self-evaluations. The questions in this section measured if a variety of data were used for a teacher evaluation or just the formal observations.

As seen in Table 15, the teacher mean scores ranged from 1.8583 to 4.000, with the lowest mean score being the use of peer evaluations and the highest mean score being observation of classroom performance. The administrator mean scores were comparable, ranging from 1.787 to 4.4286 with the lowest mean score being the use of peer evaluations and student evaluations uniqueness and the highest mean score being the observation of classroom performances. The data indicates that observation of classroom performances is still considered the primary method used in teacher evaluation. Meetings with the evaluator, self evaluations and examination of artifacts are used in most evaluations and examination of student performance, peer evaluations, or student evaluations are not as frequently used.

Respondent's Perception of the Extent of the Observations in the Classroom

Section 3, part C of the TEP (Questions 41-44) examined the extent of the classroom observation. This information included the number of formal observations per year, the frequency of informal observations, the average length of formal observations and the average length of informal observations. The questions in this section measured
if a sufficient number and length of formal and informal observations were used as a data source for teacher evaluation.

Table 15

*Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of the Sources of Information used in the TAP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute (Question Number on TEP)</th>
<th>Teacher Mean Score</th>
<th>Administrator Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation of Classroom Performance (34)</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>4.4286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with Evaluator (35)</td>
<td>3.6823</td>
<td>4.0714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of Artifacts (lesson plans, materials, home/school communication, etc.) (36)</td>
<td>3.319</td>
<td>3.9286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of Student Performance (37)</td>
<td>2.8923</td>
<td>3.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Evaluations (38)</td>
<td>1.9392</td>
<td>1.7857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Evaluations (39)</td>
<td>1.8583</td>
<td>1.7857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Evaluations (40)</td>
<td>3.3489</td>
<td>3.2857</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The current TAP process mandates that non-professional status teachers have a formal observation at least twice a year and professional status teachers have a formal observation at least once every two years (Reading Public Schools, 2008).

As seen in Table 16, the teacher mean scores ranged from 1.2976 to 4.8450, with the lowest mean score being the frequency of informal observations and the highest mean score being average length of formal observations. The administrator mean scores ranged from 1.9286 to 4.8571 with the lowest mean score being the number of formal observations per year and the highest mean score being the average length of formal observations. The data indicates that the number of formal observations per year is between one and two observations, which is consistent with the TAP process.
Conversely, there is a difference in perception between teachers and administrators in the frequency of informal observations. Teachers indicated that informal observations averaged approximately once per month where administrators indicated that it was closer to once per week. Teachers and administrators both indicated that the average length of a formal observation is 30 to 40 minutes. However, there was a difference in perception between the length of an informal observation. The teacher data indicated that it was closer to a few minutes in length, while administrators indicated that an informal observation lasted for several minutes, but not as long as a formal observation.

Table 16

*Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of the Extent of the Observations Used in the TAP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute (Question Number on TEP)</th>
<th>Teacher Mean Score</th>
<th>Administrator Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of formal observations per year (41)</td>
<td>1.5536</td>
<td>1.9286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of informal observations (42)</td>
<td>1.2976</td>
<td>2.4643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of formal observation (43)</td>
<td>4.4850</td>
<td>4.8571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of informal observation (44)</td>
<td>1.6786</td>
<td>2.4286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Respondent's Perception of the Attributes of the Feedback Received in the Evaluation*

Section 3, part D of the TEP (Questions 45-53) examined the attributes of the feedback that is received during the TAP. This information included the amount of information received, frequency of formal feedback, frequency of informal feedback, depth of information provided, quality of ideas and suggestions contained in the feedback, specificity of information provided, nature of information provided, timing of
feedback, and if the feedback was focused on the TAP standards. The questions in this section measured if the feedback that was given by the administrator was of high quality and useful to the teacher as part of their growth process.

As seen in Table 17, the teacher mean scores ranged from 2.5774 to 4.2469, with the lowest mean score being the frequency of informal feedback and the highest mean score being feedback focused on the TAP standards. The administrator mean scores were higher in every attribute, except for the feedback focused on the TAP standards. The administrator mean scores ranged from 3.1429 to 4.0724 with the lowest mean score being the frequency of formal feedback and the highest mean score being the attributes associated with the amount of information received and feedback focused on the TAP standards. The data indicates that the timing and frequency of the feedback given by administrators is weaker when compared to the other attributes. Both teachers and administrators perceive the evaluations to be strong in the amount of the information received and that feedback is focused on the TAP standards. However, teachers perceive the depth of the information and the quality of the ideas and suggestions contained in the feedback as areas that need to be strengthened.

*Respondent's Perception of the Attributes of the Evaluation Context*

Section 3, part E of the TEP (Questions 54-58) examined the attributes of the evaluation context. This information included the amount of time spent on the evaluation process, the time allotted for professional development aligned with the standards, the availability of training programs and models of good practices, the clarity of policy statements regarding the purpose of evaluation, and the intended role of evaluation. The
questions in this section measured the perceptions of teachers and administrators in the resources available for the TAP and the district values and policies in evaluation.

Table 17

*Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of the Attributes of the Feedback Received*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute (Question Number on TEP)</th>
<th>Teacher Mean Score</th>
<th>Administrator Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Information Received (45)</td>
<td>3.7679</td>
<td>4.0714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Formal Feedback (46)</td>
<td>2.7262</td>
<td>3.1429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Informal Feedback (47)</td>
<td>2.5774</td>
<td>3.5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth of Information Provided (48)</td>
<td>3.4345</td>
<td>3.8571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the Ideas and Suggestions Contained in the Feedback (49)</td>
<td>3.3571</td>
<td>3.9286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity of Information Provided (50)</td>
<td>3.4583</td>
<td>4.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Information Provided (51)</td>
<td>3.8125</td>
<td>3.9643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing of Feedback (52)</td>
<td>3.3383</td>
<td>3.6429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback Focused on the TAP Standards (53)</td>
<td>4.2469</td>
<td>4.0714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 18, the teachers’ mean scores ranged from 3.2242 to 3.7242, with the lowest mean score being the time allotted during the school year for professional development aligned with the standards and the highest mean score being the amount of time spent on the evaluation process. The administrators’ mean scores were higher in every attribute, except for the availability of training programs and models of good practices. The administrators’ mean scores ranged from 3.0357 to 4.5000 with the lowest mean score being the availability of training programs and models of good practices and the highest mean score being the amount of time being spent on the evaluation process.
The data indicates that the TAP is a time consuming process for both teachers and administrators, and that professional development and training associated with the TAP process needs to be strengthened. Both teachers and administrators perceive the TAP to be more focused on teacher growth, however, administrators feel stronger about that value than teachers.

Table 18

*Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of the Attributes of the Evaluation Context*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute (Question Number on TEP)</th>
<th>Teacher Mean Score</th>
<th>Administrator Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Time Spent on Evaluation Process (54)</td>
<td>3.7242</td>
<td>4.5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Allotted During the School Year for Professional Development Aligned with the Standards (55)</td>
<td>3.2242</td>
<td>3.4286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Training Programs and Models of Good Practice (56)</td>
<td>3.3313</td>
<td>3.0357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of Policy Statements Regarding Purpose of Evaluation (57)</td>
<td>3.6494</td>
<td>4.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended Role of Evaluation (58)</td>
<td>3.6424</td>
<td>4.2143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings of the Quantitative Data

This section was designed to discuss the data in regards to the seven research questions. The findings of the quantitative data were presented below.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the perceptions of teachers and building-level administrators in a Massachusetts suburban public school district, regarding the effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system that was designed from 2003-2006, and implemented during the 2006-08 school years. This study analyzes
teacher and administrator perceptions in regards to improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated teacher professional growth. The study also analyzes the positive and negative impacts of implementing a standards-based teacher evaluation system. Both qualitative and quantitative measures were employed to capture the perceptions and attitudes of teachers and administrators to answer the following research questions:

1. How do school administrators and teachers differ in their ratings on the overall effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system in the following areas: improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth?

2. How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

3. How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

4. How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

5. How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by professional and non-professional status teachers?

6. How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?
7. How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?

*Research Question 1*

How do school administrators and teachers differ in their ratings on the overall effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system in the following areas: improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth?

The quantitative data for this research question was derived from section two (questions 2 through 9) in the TEP Questionnaire which looks at the overall rating of the TAP. Questions from this section included the overall impact of the TAP on professional practice, professional growth, student learning, student achievement, school improvement goals, school climate and culture, quality of teachers, and teacher goals. As seen in Table 19, each TEP question is aligned to one of the four areas outlined in research question 1. TEP questions 2 and 3 were associated with elevated professional growth; TEP questions 4 and 5 were associated with increased student learning; TEP questions 5 and 6 were associated with sustained school improvement; and TEP questions 8 and 9 were associated with improved teacher instruction.

As seen in Table 19, the teacher mean scores ranged from 2.7857 to 3.5238, with the lowest mean score being the positive impact of the TAP on school climate and the highest mean score being the positive impact of TAP on teacher goals. The administrator mean scores were higher than the teacher mean scores in every attribute, ranging from 3.1429 to 4.2857 with the lowest mean score being the positive impact of the TAP on student achievement and the highest mean score being the positive impact of TAP on
teacher goals. Most of the teacher scores were closer to 3.0, indicating that the TAP had neither a positive nor negative impact on the attributes in this section. The only exception was the score about teacher goals, which was slightly higher. This score indicated that the TAP does have a stronger impact on linking to teacher annual goals. Administrators perceived the TAP to have more of positive impact on the attributes described. Similar to the teacher perceptions, administrators did feel that the TAP had little or no impact on student achievement.

The data for research question 1 was analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) at an a priori alpha = .05. The three groups used for the ANOVA calculations were (a) administrators, (b) non-professional status teachers, and (c) professional status teachers. To analyze research question one, one-way ANOVA calculations were performed to examine the differences in teachers' and administrators perceptions regarding the impact of teacher evaluation on improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth between the three groups. Specifically, an ANOVA was performed with each group and TEP questions 2 through 9 as stated in Appendices A and B. A Tukey HSD (honestly significant difference) post hoc test was conducted when an ANOVA calculation yielded a statistically significant F-value at an a priori alpha = .05. The Tukey method is designed to make all pair-wise comparisons while maintaining the experiment-wise error rate at the pre-established alpha level (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute (Question Number on TEP)</th>
<th>Component of Research Question 1</th>
<th>Teacher Mean Score</th>
<th>Administrator Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall impact of TAP on Professional Practices (2)</td>
<td>Elevated professional growth</td>
<td>3.1168</td>
<td>3.6429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall impact of TAP on professional growth as an educator (3)</td>
<td>Elevated professional growth</td>
<td>3.1280</td>
<td>3.4286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive impact of TAP on student learning (4)</td>
<td>Increased student learning</td>
<td>3.0833</td>
<td>3.6071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive impact of TAP on student achievement (5)</td>
<td>Increased student learning</td>
<td>2.9107</td>
<td>3.1429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive impact of TAP on school improvement (6)</td>
<td>Sustained school improvement</td>
<td>3.2321</td>
<td>3.7857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive impact of TAP on school climate and culture (7)</td>
<td>Sustained school improvement</td>
<td>2.7857</td>
<td>3.5714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive impact of TAP on quality of teachers (8)</td>
<td>Improved teacher instruction</td>
<td>3.2964</td>
<td>3.9286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive impact of TAP on teacher goals (9)</td>
<td>Improved teacher instruction</td>
<td>3.5238</td>
<td>4.2857</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in Tables 20 and 21, the ANOVA calculation using all three groups was statistically significant in two areas, TEP question 7 which referred to the impact on school climate and culture and TEP question 9, which referred to the impact on the teacher goals that are developed each year. The impact on school climate and culture was statistically significant for $F = 3.192; \text{df} = 2, 179; \text{and } p \leq .043$. The mean scores for rating the impact of the TAP on school climate and culture for each group were as follows: (a) 2.785 for non-professional status teachers, (b) 2.7838 for professional status teachers, and (c) 3.5714 for the administrator group. Moreover, the impact on the teacher goals that are developed each year was statistically significant for $F = 3.029; \text{df} = 2, 179; \text{and } p \leq .050$. The mean scores for rating the impact of the TAP on school climate and culture for each group were as follows: (a) 3.5088 for non-professional status teachers, (b) 3.5315 for professional status teachers, and (c) 4.2857 for the administrator group.

The Tukey HSD post hoc test was used to determine the source of variance between the means after the statistically significant $F$-values were derived. The Tukey HSD post hoc test was used to compare all possible combination of means.

As seen in Table 22, the results of the post hoc test revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the administrator group and the professional status teacher group at $p \leq .037$ and a mean difference of -.78764 for the impact that the TAP has on school climate and culture. In addition, there is a statistically significant difference between the administrator group and the professional status teacher group at $p \leq .047$ and a mean difference of -.75468 for the impact that the TAP has had on teacher goals developed. The results of the post hoc tests indicate that professional status
Table 20

Analysis of Variance for Administrators, PTS, and Non-PTS for Research Question 1

*Improved Teacher Instruction and Sustained School Improvement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on School Improvement</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>1.902</td>
<td>.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>188.263</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.052</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>192.264</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on School Climate</td>
<td>7.979</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.990</td>
<td>3.192*</td>
<td>.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>223.713</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.250</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>231.692</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Quality of Teachers</td>
<td>5.730</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.865</td>
<td>2.501</td>
<td>.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>203.938</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>1.146</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>209.669</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Goals Developed</td>
<td>7.521</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.761</td>
<td>3.029*</td>
<td>.050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>222.242</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.242</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>229.764</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *p* ≤ 0.05.*
Table 21

Analysis of Variance for Administrators, PTS, and Non-PTS for Research Question 1

Elevated Professional Growth and Increased Student Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Professional Practice</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3.632</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.816</td>
<td>1.970</td>
<td>.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>164.130</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>.922</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>167.762</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Professional Growth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.206</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.603</td>
<td>.566</td>
<td>.569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>190.889</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.066</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>192.095</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Student Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3.587</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.794</td>
<td>1.737</td>
<td>.179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>184.881</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.033</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>188.468</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Student Achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.728</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.364</td>
<td>.337</td>
<td>.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>193.343</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.080</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>194.071</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p ≤ .05.
teachers and administrators have different perceptions about the impact that the TAP has on school climate and culture and the development of teacher goals. Administrators perceive that the TAP has a more positive impact in fostering a positive school culture and climate and supports and links to the development of teacher goals than professional status teachers. It may also indicate the need to differentiate the TAP for professional status teachers and non-professional status teachers.

Research Question 2

How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)? The quantitative data for this research question was derived from questions 2 through 9 in the TEP Questionnaire and analyzed by three groups; elementary teachers, middle school teachers, and high school teachers. Section 2 of the TEP (Questions 2-9) looked at the overall rating of the TAP. Questions from this section included the overall impact of the TAP on professional practice, professional growth, student learning, student achievement, school improvement goals, school climate and culture, quality of teachers, and teacher goals. As seen in Table 23, each TEP question is aligned to one of the four areas outlined in Research Question 2. TEP question 2 and 3 were associated with elevated professional growth, TEP questions 4 and 5 were associated with increased student learning, TEP questions 5 and 6 were associated with sustained school improvement, and TEP questions 8 and 9 were associated with improved teacher instruction.
Table 22  

Outcomes of the Tukey HSD post hoc Test for ANOVA TAP and its Impact on School Climate and Goals Developed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>(I) Teaching Status</th>
<th>(J) Teaching Status</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact on School Climate</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>.00569</td>
<td>.18217</td>
<td>.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.78195</td>
<td>.33346</td>
<td>.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>-.78764(*)</td>
<td>.31707</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td>.78195</td>
<td>.33346</td>
<td>.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>.78764(*)</td>
<td>.31707</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Goals Developed</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>-0.2276</td>
<td>.18157</td>
<td>.991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.77694</td>
<td>.33236</td>
<td>.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>-.75418(*)</td>
<td>.31602</td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td>.77694</td>
<td>.33236</td>
<td>.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>.75418(*)</td>
<td>.31602</td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p ≤ .05.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute (TEP Question)</th>
<th>Component of Research Question 1</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Professional Practice</td>
<td>Elevated professional growth</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.3896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2.9052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.0870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Professional Growth</td>
<td>Elevated professional growth</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.4935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2.8190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Student Learning</td>
<td>Increased student learning</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.4805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2.8362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.8936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Student Achievement</td>
<td>Increased student learning</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.3247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2.5690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.7234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on School Improvement</td>
<td>Sustained school improvement</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.6104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.1034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.9362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on School Climate</td>
<td>Sustained school improvement</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.2078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2.4310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.7660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Quality of Teachers</td>
<td>Improved teacher instruction</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.6883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.0088</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.1915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Goals Developed</td>
<td>Improved teacher instruction</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.7987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.4397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.4043</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in Table 23, the elementary mean scores were the highest in each category and ranged from 3.2708 to 3.7987, with the lowest mean score being the positive impact of the TAP on school climate and the highest mean score being the positive impact of TAP on teacher goals. The middle school scores were primarily the lowest mean scores of all three groups and ranged from 2.4310 to 3.4397, with the lowest mean score being the positive impact of the TAP on school climate and the highest mean score being the positive impact of TAP on teacher goals. The high school scores were primarily in between the elementary and middle school scores and ranged from 2.7234 to 3.043 with the lowest mean score being the positive impact of the TAP on student achievement and the highest mean score being the positive impact of TAP on teacher goals. With the exception of the question that focused on the positive impact of TAP on teacher goals, the middle and high school scores were at 3.0 or below indicating that the teachers at those two levels felt that the TAP had little or no impact on the areas indicated in research question 2. In contrast, all of the elementary mean scores were above 3.0 indicating that the teachers at that level perceived the TAP to have some positive impact on the areas indicated in research question 2.

The data for research question two was analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) at an *a priori* alpha = .05. The three groups used for the ANOVA calculations were (a) elementary teachers, (b) middle school teachers, and (c) high school teachers. To analyze research question 2, one-way ANOVA calculations were performed to examine the differences in elementary, middle, and high school teachers’ perceptions regarding the impact of teacher evaluation on improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth.
between the three groups. Specifically, an ANOVA was performed with each group and TEP questions 2 through 9 as stated in Appendices A and B. A Tukey HSD (honestly significant difference) post hoc test was conducted when an ANOVA calculation yielded a statistically significant F-value at an *a priori* alpha = .05.

As seen in Tables 24 and 25, the ANOVA calculation using all three groups was statistically significant in every area, with the exception of TEP question 9, the impact on teacher goals developed. The impact on professional practice was statistically significant for $F = 4.498$; $df = 2$, 178; and $p \leq .012$. The impact on professional growth was statistically significant for $F = 8.409$; $df = 2$, 179; and $p \leq .000$. The impact on student learning was statistically significant for $F = 8.922$; $df = 2$, 179; and $p \leq .000$. The impact on student achievement was statistically significant for $F = 11.185$; $df = 2$, 179; and $p \leq .000$. The impact on school improvement was statistically significant for $F = 7.994$; $df = 2$, 179; and $p \leq .000$. The impact on school climate and culture was statistically significant for $F = 8.626$; $df = 2$, 179; and $p \leq .000$. The impact on the quality of teachers was statistically significant for $F = 7.666$; $df = 2$, 178; and $p \leq .001$. The mean scores for each of the areas are located in Table 23.

The Tukey HSD post hoc test was used to determine the source of variance between the means after the statistically significant F-values were derived. The Tukey HSD post hoc test was used to compare all possible combination of means.

*Impact on professional practice and professional growth by level.* As seen in Table 26, the results of the post hoc test revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at
Table 25

Analysis of Variance for Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers for Research

**Question 2: Elevated Professional Growth and Increased Student Learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Professional Practice</th>
<th>Between Groups</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.070</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.035</td>
<td>4.498</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>159.692</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>.897</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>167.762</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Professional Growth</th>
<th>Between Groups</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.499</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.249</td>
<td>8.409</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>175.596</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>.981</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>192.095</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Student Learning</th>
<th>Between Groups</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.086</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.543</td>
<td>8.922</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>171.383</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>.957</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>188.468</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Student Achievement</th>
<th>Between Groups</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.560</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.780</td>
<td>11.185</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>172.512</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>.964</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>194.071</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: p≤.05.*
Table 26

*Outcomes of the Tukey HSD post hoc test for ANOVA TAP and its impact on Professional Practice and Professional Growth by Level.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>(I) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>(J) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Professional Practice</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>0.48444(*)</td>
<td>0.16468</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>0.30265</td>
<td>0.17651</td>
<td>0.203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-0.18178</td>
<td>0.18701</td>
<td>0.595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-0.30265</td>
<td>0.17651</td>
<td>0.203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>0.18178</td>
<td>0.18701</td>
<td>0.595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Professional Growth</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>0.67454(*)</td>
<td>0.17220</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>0.49351(*)</td>
<td>0.18334</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-0.18103</td>
<td>0.19438</td>
<td>0.621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-0.49351(*)</td>
<td>0.18334</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>0.18103</td>
<td>0.19438</td>
<td>0.621</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: *p ≤ 0.05.

p ≤ 0.010 and a mean difference of 0.48444 for the impact that the TAP has on professional practice. In addition, there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at p ≤ 0.000 and a mean difference of 0.67454 for the impact that the TAP has had on professional growth. Finally, there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the high
school teacher group at \( p \leq .021 \) and a mean difference of .49351 for the impact that the TAP has had on professional growth. The results of the post hoc tests indicate that elementary teachers have different perceptions from their middle school and high school colleagues about the impact that the TAP has had on professional growth and practice. Elementary teachers perceive that the TAP has had a more positive impact on their professional growth and practice as an educator than middle and high school teachers.

*Impact on student learning and student achievement by level.* As seen in Table 27, the results of the post hoc test revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at \( p \leq .001 \) and a mean difference of .64431 for the impact that the TAP has on student learning. Moreover, there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the high school teacher group at \( p \leq .004 \) and a mean difference of .58690 for the impact that the TAP has on student learning. In addition, there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at \( p \leq .000 \) and a mean difference of .75571 for the impact that the TAP has had on student achievement. Finally, there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the high school teacher group at \( p \leq .003 \) and a mean difference of .60127 for the impact that the TAP has had on student achievement. The results of the post hoc tests indicate that elementary teachers have different perceptions from their middle school and high school colleagues about the impact that the TAP has had on student learning and student achievement. Elementary teachers perceive that the TAP has had a more positive impact on improving the quality.
Table 27

Outcomes of the Tukey HSD post hoc Test for ANOVA TAP and its Impact on Student Learning and Student Achievement by Level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>(I) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>(J) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Student Learning</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.64431(*)</td>
<td>.17012</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.58690(*)</td>
<td>.18112</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-.64431(*)</td>
<td>.17012</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>-.05741</td>
<td>.19204</td>
<td>.952</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-.58690(*)</td>
<td>.18112</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.05741</td>
<td>.19204</td>
<td>.952</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Student Achievement</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.75571(*)</td>
<td>.17068</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.60127(*)</td>
<td>.18172</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-.75571(*)</td>
<td>.17068</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>-.15444</td>
<td>.19267</td>
<td>.703</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-.60127(*)</td>
<td>.18172</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.15444</td>
<td>.19267</td>
<td>.703</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p ≤ 0.05.

of student learning and improving student performance on standardized tests than middle and high school teachers.

Impact on school improvement and school climate by level. As seen in Table 28, the results of the post hoc test revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at p ≤ .010.
Table 28

Outcomes of the Tukey HSD post hoc Test for ANOVA TAP and its Impact on School Improvement and School Climate by Level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>(I) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>(J) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact on School</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.50694(*)</td>
<td>.17264</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.67422(*)</td>
<td>.18381</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-.50694(*)</td>
<td>.17264</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.16728</td>
<td>.19488</td>
<td>.667</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-.67422(*)</td>
<td>.18381</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-.16728</td>
<td>.19488</td>
<td>.667</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on School</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.77676(*)</td>
<td>.18891</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.44183</td>
<td>.20112</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-.77676(*)</td>
<td>.18891</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>-.33492</td>
<td>.21325</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-.44183</td>
<td>.20112</td>
<td>.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.33492</td>
<td>.21325</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: $p \leq .05$.

and a mean difference of .50694 for the impact that the TAP has on school improvement. Moreover, there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the high school teacher group at $p \leq .001$ and a mean difference of .67422 for the impact that the TAP has on school improvement. In addition, there is a statistically
significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at $p \leq .000$ and a mean difference of $.77676$ for the impact that the TAP has on school climate and culture. The results of the post hoc tests indicate that elementary teachers perceive that the TAP has a more positive impact on helping faculty achieve school improvement goals and helps foster a positive school culture and climate that supports learning than middle and high school teachers.

*Impact on quality of teachers and teacher goals developed by level.* As seen in Table 29, the results of the post hoc test revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at $p \leq .001$ and a mean difference of $.67954$ for the impact that the TAP has on teacher quality. Moreover, there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the high school teacher group at $p \leq .029$ and a mean difference of $.49682$ for the impact that the TAP has on teacher quality. The results of the post hoc tests indicate that elementary teachers perceive that the TAP has had a more positive impact on improving teacher quality than middle and high school teachers.

*Research Questions 3 and 4*

How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

The quantitative data for this research question was derived from questions 1 and 30 through 58 in the TEP Questionnaire and analyzed by three groups; elementary teachers, middle school teachers, and high school teachers. These questions examined
Table 29

*Outcomes of the Tukey HSD post hoc Test for ANOVA TAP and its Impact on Quality of Teachers and Teacher Goals Developed by Level.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>(I) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>(J) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Quality of Teachers</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.67954(*)</td>
<td>.18196</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.49682(*)</td>
<td>.19277</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-.67954(*)</td>
<td>.18196</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>-.18272</td>
<td>.20519</td>
<td>.647</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-.49682(*)</td>
<td>.19277</td>
<td>.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.18272</td>
<td>.20519</td>
<td>.647</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Goals Developed</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.35905</td>
<td>.19427</td>
<td>.157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.39445</td>
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<td>.140</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>-.35905</td>
<td>.19427</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.03540</td>
<td>.21930</td>
<td>.986</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>-.39445</td>
<td>.20683</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-.03540</td>
<td>.21930</td>
<td>.986</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: p ≤ 05.*
The quality of teacher evaluation by level. Question 1 of the TEP asks the respondents to rate the overall quality of the TAP. As seen in Table 30, the elementary mean score was the highest and the middle school mean score was the lowest. All three scores are above 3.0 which indicate that all teachers perceive the TAP to be above average in overall quality.

Table 30

Quality of Teacher Evaluation by Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute on TEP (Question Number)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Evaluation Process (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3.8421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.3103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.6087</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 31, the ANOVA calculation using all three groups was statistically significant for the quality of evaluation process. The quality of the evaluation process was statistically significant for $F = 7.008$; $df = 2, 177$; and $p \leq .001$.

As seen in Table 32, the results of the post hoc test revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at $p \leq .001$ and a mean difference of 0.53176 for the overall quality of the TAP. The results of the post hoc tests indicate that elementary teachers perceive that the TAP has a higher overall quality than middle school teachers perceive.
Table 31

*Analysis of Variance for Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers for Research*

**Questions 3 and 4: Quality of Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Between Groups</td>
<td>9.302</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.651</td>
<td>7.008</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>117.476</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>.664</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>126.778</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05

Table 32

*Outcomes of the Tukey HSD post hoc Test for ANOVA TAP and the Quality of the TAP by Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>(I) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>(J) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Evaluation</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.53176(*)</td>
<td>.14204</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.23341</td>
<td>.15219</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>-.53176(*)</td>
<td>.14204</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>-.29835</td>
<td>.16085</td>
<td>.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>.23341</td>
<td>.15219</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.29835</td>
<td>.16085</td>
<td>.155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05
Attributes of the standards used by level. Questions 30 through 33 of the TEP ask the respondents to rate the procedures related to the standards of the TAP process. As seen in Table 33, the elementary mean scores were the highest and the middle school mean scores were the lowest for each of the four areas related to the standards. With the exception of the attribute, standards tailored for unique needs, all three levels had mean scores above 3.5, indicating that the TAP standards are one of the strengths of the process. Scores were below 3.0 for the attribute, standards tailored for unique needs, indicating that this is weakness of the TAP. This indicates that differentiated standards for specialists such as special education teachers, guidance counselors, school psychologists, and library media specialists are absent in the district.

As seen in Table 34, the ANOVA calculation using all three groups was statistically significant for the attribute “standards tailored to fit needs.” This attribute was statistically significant for $F = 4.715; \text{df} = 2, 172; \text{and } p \leq .010$.

As seen in Table 35, the results of the post hoc test revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at $p \leq .007$ and a mean difference of .64237 for the attribute that is coded “standards tailored to meet needs.” The results of the post hoc tests indicate that elementary teachers perceive that the standards in the TAP are more tailored to fit their needs than the middle school teachers. This may be in part due to the fact that most elementary classroom teachers teach multiple subjects in a self-contained classroom setting, where middle school teachers teach specific subject areas.
Table 33

Attributes of the TAP Standards Used by Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute on TEP (Question Number)</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards communicated effectively (30)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.9740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.7069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.7391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards clear (31)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.9221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.5862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.8889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards appropriate for teaching assignment (32)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.7922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.4035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.5778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards tailored for unique needs (33)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2.9459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2.3036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2.7333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 34

Analysis of Variance for Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers for Research

Questions 3 and 4: Attributes of TAP Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards communicated effectively</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>2.856</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.428</td>
<td>1.642</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>154.835</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>.870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>157.691</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards clear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>4.149</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.074</td>
<td>2.062</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>178.046</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>1.006</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>182.194</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards appropriate for teaching assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>5.030</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.515</td>
<td>2.440</td>
<td>.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>181.372</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>1.031</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>186.402</td>
<td>178</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards tailored for unique needs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>13.291</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.646</td>
<td>4.715</td>
<td>.010*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>242.423</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>1.409</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>255.714</td>
<td>174</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05
Table 35

*Outcomes of the Tukey HSD post hoc Test for ANOVA TAP and the Attribute for Standards Tailored for Unique Needs by Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>(I) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>(J) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards tailored for unique needs</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.64237(*)</td>
<td>.21027</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.21261</td>
<td>.22443</td>
<td>.611</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-.64237(*)</td>
<td>.21027</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>-.42976</td>
<td>.23767</td>
<td>.170</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-.21261</td>
<td>.22443</td>
<td>.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.42976</td>
<td>.23767</td>
<td>.170</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05*
Attributes of the sources of performance information used by level. Questions 34 through 40 of the TEP ask the respondents to rate the different sources of performance information that may or may not be used in the TAP process. As seen in Table 36, the elementary mean scores were the highest for each of the seven attributes related to the sources of performance information. Overall strengths for all three levels include the use of observations and meetings with evaluators as part of the evaluation process. Overall weaknesses included the lack of use of student and peer evaluations as part of the process.

As seen in Table 37, the ANOVA calculation using all three groups was statistically significant for all of the attributes in this category except for "peer evaluations used as part of the evaluation." The attribute, "observations as part of the evaluation" was statistically significant for \( F = 3.238; \text{df} = 2, 177; \text{and} \ p \leq .042. \) Another attribute, "meetings with evaluators" was statistically significant for \( F = 7.242; \text{df} = 2, 178; \text{and} \ p \leq .001. \) "Examination of artifacts used as part of the evaluations" was statistically significant for \( F = 9.022; \text{df} = 2, 179; \text{and} \ p \leq .000. \) The attribute, "examination of student performance" was statistically significant for \( F = 3.893; \text{df} = 2, 178; \text{and} \ p \leq .022. \) Another attribute, "student evaluations was used as part of the evaluation" was statistically significant for \( F = 3.387; \text{df} = 2, 178; \text{and} \ p \leq .036. \) Finally, the attribute, "self-evaluations used as part of the evaluation" was statistically significant for \( F = 4.773; \text{df} = 2, 179; \text{and} \ p \leq .010. \)
Table 36

*Attributes of the Sources of Performance Information Used by Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute on TEP (Question Number)</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observations used as part of evaluation (34)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>4.1429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.7414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4.0889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with evaluators used as part of the evaluation (35)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.9351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.3017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.7391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of Artifacts used as part of the evaluation (36)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.5325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2.7586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.9362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of Student Performance used for part of the evaluation (37)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.1818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2.6810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.6739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student evaluations used for part of the evaluation (38)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1.7672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.7174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer evaluations used for part of the evaluation (39)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>1.9156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1.7719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.8696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-evaluations used for part of the evaluation (40)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.6364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.0259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.2766</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 37

*Analysis of Variance for Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers for Research*

**Questions 3 and 4: Attributes of Sources of Performance Information Used**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Information</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observations used as part of evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>5.806</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.903</td>
<td>3.238</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>158.694</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>.897</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>164.500</td>
<td>179</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings with evaluators used as part of the evaluation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>13.469</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.734</td>
<td>7.242</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>165.515</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>.930</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>178.983</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of Artifacts used as part of the evaluation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>11.119</td>
<td>9.022</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
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<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>220.598</td>
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<td>1.232</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of Student Performance used for part of the evaluation</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5.618</td>
<td>3.893</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>268.149</td>
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<td>3.387</td>
<td>.036</td>
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<td>1.368</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>.777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>177</td>
<td>1.356</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>179</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Self-evaluations used for part of the evaluation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
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<td>6.331</td>
<td>4.773</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
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<td>179</td>
<td>1.326</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250.095</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05*
Table 38

Outcomes of the Tukey HSD post hoc Test for ANOVA TAP and the Attributes for
Sources of Performance Information Considered as Part of the Evaluation by Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>(I) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>(J) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observations used as part of evaluation</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.40148(*)</td>
<td>.16463</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.05397</td>
<td>.17767</td>
<td>.950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with evaluators used as part of the evaluation</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.63334(*)</td>
<td>.16765</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.19593</td>
<td>.17970</td>
<td>.521</td>
</tr>
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<td>Examination of Artifacts used as part of the evaluation</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.77385(*)</td>
<td>.19301</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
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<td>.20549</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of Student Performance used for part of the evaluation</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.50078(*)</td>
<td>.20888</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.50791</td>
<td>.22388</td>
<td>.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-evaluations used for part of the evaluation</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.61050(*)</td>
<td>.20024</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.35977</td>
<td>.21319</td>
<td>.213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05
Attributes of the extent of the formal and informal observations in the classroom.

Questions 41 through 44 of the TEP ask the respondents to describe the extent of the formal and informal observations in the classroom. As seen in Table 39, the number and length of formal observations was fairly consistent across all three levels. The differences occurred in the frequency and length of informal observations. The elementary group had a higher mean score for both the frequency and length of informal observations. The data indicates that informal observations occur approximately once per month in elementary classrooms and are rarely occurring in the middle and high school classrooms. Subsequently, the data also shows that elementary informal observations last approximately 10 to 15 minutes where the middle and high school informal observations last just a few minutes. The lack of informal observations at the middle and high school level is a weakness of the TAP.

The data is further supported in Table 40, where the ANOVA calculation for the attributes “frequency of informal observations” and “length of informal observations” was statistically significant. The attribute, “frequency of informal observations” was statistically significant for $F = 31.058$; $df = 2, 179$; and $p \leq .000$. Another attribute, “length of informal observations” was statistically significant for $F = 5.089$; $df = 2, 179$; and $p \leq .007$. 
Table 39

*Mean Scores of the Attributes of the Extent of the Observations of the Classroom Used by Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute on TEP (Question Number)</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of formal observations per year (41)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>1.5714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1.5345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1.6170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of informal observations (42)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2.0779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.7931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0.8723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of Formal Observation (43)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>4.4026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4.7368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4.4255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of informal observation (44)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2.0260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1.3448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1.7447</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 40

Analysis of Variance for Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers for Research

Questions 3 and 4: The Extent of Formal and Informal Observations in the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of formal observations per year</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.088</td>
<td>.155</td>
<td>.857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>102.395</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>.572</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>102.571</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of informal observations</td>
<td>69.502</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34.751</td>
<td>31.058</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>200.284</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.119</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>269.786</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of Formal Observation</td>
<td>4.154</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.077</td>
<td>2.042</td>
<td>.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>181.061</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>1.017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>185.215</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of informal observation</td>
<td>15.353</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.676</td>
<td>5.089</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>269.988</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.508</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>285.341</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: p ≤ .05.*
As seen in Table 41, the results of the post hoc test revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the middle school and high school teacher groups in the two attributes that were statistically significant in the ANOVA analysis. The attribute “frequency of informal observations” is statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at $p \leq .000$ and a mean difference of .128482. This attribute is also statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the high school teacher group at $p \leq .000$ and a mean difference of 1.20558. Finally, the attribute, “average length of informal observations” is statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at $p \leq .005$ and a mean difference of .68115. The results of the post hoc tests indicate that elementary teachers perceive that they have more frequent and longer informal observations or walkthroughs compared to middle school teachers and for some attributes, high school teachers. These walkthroughs are conducted by the building administrators and central office administrators.

*Attributes of the feedback received during the evaluation process.* Questions 45 through 53 of the TEP ask the respondents to describe the feedback they received during their last evaluation experience. As seen in Table 42, the elementary teacher mean score was consistently the highest score for each attribute and the middle school teacher mean score was consistently the lowest score for each attribute. Overall, the attributes associated with the type of information provided, such as amount of information received, depth of information provided, quality of the ideas and suggestions contained in the feedback, specificity of information provided, nature of information provided and
Table 41

Outcomes of the Tukey HSD post hoc Test for ANOVA TAP and the Extent of the Formal and Informal Observations in the Classroom by Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>(I) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>(J) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of informal observations</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>1.28482(*)</td>
<td>.18391</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>1.20558(*)</td>
<td>.19580</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of informal observation</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.68115(*)</td>
<td>.21353</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.28129</td>
<td>.22733</td>
<td>.433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: p ≤ .05.
feedback focused on the TAP standards had mean scores for all three levels above 3.0, indicating a strength of the TAP. However, the attributes associated with the frequency of both the informal and formal feedback were below the score of 3.0, indicating a weakness of the TAP. The timing of the feedback is a weakness for both the middle and high school, which scored lower than the elementary level.

As seen in Table 43, the ANOVA calculation for the attributes “frequency of formal feedback,” “frequency of informal feedback,” “depth of information provided,” “specificity of information provided,” “timing of feedback,” and “feedback focused on TAP standards” were all statistically significant at the a priori alpha = .05 level. The attribute, “frequency of formal feedback” was statistically significant for F = 6.388; df = 2, 179; and p ≤ .002. Another attribute, “frequency of informal feedback” was statistically significant for F = 4.943; df = 2, 179; and p ≤ .008. The attribute, “depth of information provided” was statistically significant for F = 5.200; df = 2, 179; and p ≤ .006. “Specificity of information provided” was statistically significant for F = 3.098; df = 2, 179; and p ≤ .048. Moreover, the attribute, “timing of feedback” was statistically significant for F = 8.832; df = 2, 178; and p ≤ .000. Finally, “feedback focused on TAP standards” was statistically significant for F = 5.469; df = 2, 173; and p ≤ .005.

As seen in Table 44, the results of the post hoc test revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the middle school and high school teacher groups in the attributes that were statistically significant in the ANOVA analysis. The attribute “frequency of formal feedback in evaluation process” is statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at p ≤ .002 and a mean difference of .67712. The attribute
### Table 43

**Analysis of Variance for Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers for Research**

**Questions 3 and 4: The Attributes of the Feedback Received**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of information received</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2.475</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.238</td>
<td>1.291</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>171.591</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>.959</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>174.066</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of formal feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>16.079</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.039</td>
<td>6.388</td>
<td>.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>225.284</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.259</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>241.363</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of informal feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>17.140</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.570</td>
<td>4.943</td>
<td>.008*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>310.355</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.734</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>327.495</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth of information provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>11.272</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.636</td>
<td>5.200</td>
<td>.006*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>194.030</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.084</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>205.302</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of ideas and suggestions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>7.405</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.703</td>
<td>3.036</td>
<td>.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>218.315</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.220</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>225.720</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity of information provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>7.610</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.805</td>
<td>3.098</td>
<td>.048*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>219.890</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.228</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>227.500</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of information provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3.835</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.918</td>
<td>1.816</td>
<td>.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>189.038</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.056</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>192.874</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing of feedback in evaluation process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>21.445</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.723</td>
<td>8.832</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>216.102</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>1.214</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>237.547</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback focused on TAP Standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>8.679</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.339</td>
<td>5.469</td>
<td>.005*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>137.270</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>145.949</td>
<td>175</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: p ≤ .05.*
Table 44

*Outcomes of the Tukey HSD post hoc Test for ANOVA TAP and the Attributes of the Feedback Received by Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>(I) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>(J) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of formal feedback in evaluation process</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.67712(*)</td>
<td>.19505</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.45261</td>
<td>.20766</td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of informal feedback in evaluation process</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.71966(*)</td>
<td>.22893</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.32274</td>
<td>.24374</td>
<td>.384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth of information provided in evaluation process</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.58061(*)</td>
<td>.18102</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.19066</td>
<td>.19272</td>
<td>.585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of ideas and suggestions in evaluation process</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.47246(*)</td>
<td>.19201</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.22741</td>
<td>.20442</td>
<td>.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity of information provided in evaluation process</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.46843(*)</td>
<td>.19270</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.10086</td>
<td>.20516</td>
<td>.875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing of feedback in evaluation process</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.80475(*)</td>
<td>.19157</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.32086</td>
<td>.20533</td>
<td>.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback focused on TAP Standards</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.19737</td>
<td>.15608</td>
<td>.417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.56212(*)</td>
<td>.16998</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: p ≤ .05.*
“frequency of informal feedback in evaluation process” is statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at \( p \leq .006 \) and a mean difference of .71966. The attribute “depth of information provided in evaluation process” is statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at \( p \leq .005 \) and a mean difference of .58061. The attribute “quality of ideas and suggestions contained in the feedback” is statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at \( p \leq .039 \) and a mean difference of .47246. The attribute “specificity of information provided” is statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at \( p \leq .042 \) and a mean difference of .46843. The attribute “timing of feedback” is statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at \( p \leq .000 \) and a mean difference of .80475. Finally, the attribute, “feedback focused on TAP standards” is statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the high school teacher group at \( p \leq .003 \) and a mean difference of .56212. The results of the post hoc tests indicate that elementary teachers perceive that they receive more frequent formal feedback, more frequent informal feedback, more in depth information, higher quality of ideas and suggestions, more specific information, and more immediate feedback when compared to middle school teachers. In addition, they perceive that their feedback is more focused on the TAP standards than high school teachers.

*Attributes of the evaluation context.* Questions 54 through 58 of the TEP ask the respondents to describe the attributes of the evaluation context, in particular, the amount of time spent on the evaluation process, time allotted during the school year for
professional development, availability of training programs and models of good practices, clarity of policy statements regarding the purpose of evaluation, and the intended role of evaluation. As seen in Table 45, the elementary teacher mean score was consistently the highest score for each attribute. Overall, the attributes associated with the amount of time spent on the evaluation process, the clarity of policy statements regarding the purpose of evaluation, and the intended role of evaluation had mean scores for all three levels above 3.0. One attribute that may be a weakness even though it is a score above 3.0 is the amount of time spent on the evaluation process, which may indicate that the process has too much paperwork and meeting time allotted to the process. Another weakness at the middle and high school levels may be the time allotted during the school year for professional development aligned with the TAP and the availability of training programs and models of good practices. Both areas were at or below 3.0 for middle school and high school mean scores.

As seen in Table 46, the ANOVA calculation for the attributes “amount of time spent on the evaluation process”, “time allotted during the school year for professional development”, “availability of training programs” and “intended role of evaluation”, were all statistically significant at the a priori alpha = .05 level. The attribute, “amount of time spent on the evaluation process” was statistically significant for $F = 7.421; \text{df} = 2, 176$; and $p \leq .001$. Another attribute, “time allotted during the school day for professional development aligned with standards” was statistically significant for $F = 4.727; \text{df} = 2, 176$; and $p \leq .010$. The attribute, “availability of training programs and models of good practices” was statistically significant for $F = 3.404; \text{df} = 2, 177$; and $p \leq .035$. Finally,
Table 45

*Mean Scores of the Attributes of the Evaluation Context by Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute on TEP (Question Number)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time spent on the evaluation process by teacher (54)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>4.0130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.4298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.8444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time allotted during the school year for pd aligned with standards (55)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.4805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2.8889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of training programs and models of good practices (56)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.5065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.2759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.0111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of policy statements regarding the purpose of evaluation (57)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3.8421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.5877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.5111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended role of evaluation (58)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>4.0130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.3860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.5111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 46

Analysis of Variance for Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers for Research

Questions 3 and 4: The Attributes of the Evaluation Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time spent on the evaluation process by teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>11.352</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.676</td>
<td>7.421</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>134.617</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>.765</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>145.969</td>
<td>178</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time allotted during the school year for pd aligned with standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>10.128</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.064</td>
<td>4.727</td>
<td>.010*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>188.542</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>1.071</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>198.670</td>
<td>178</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of training programs and models of good practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>7.060</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.530</td>
<td>3.404</td>
<td>.035*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>183.577</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>1.037</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>190.637</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of policy statements regarding the purpose of evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3.764</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.882</td>
<td>1.862</td>
<td>.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>176.911</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>1.011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>180.676</td>
<td>177</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended role of evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>14.740</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.370</td>
<td>6.695</td>
<td>.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>193.740</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>1.101</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>208.480</td>
<td>178</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: p ≤ .05.
“Intended role of evaluation” was statistically significant for \( F = 6.695; \text{df} = 2, 176; \) and \( p \leq .002 \).

As seen in Table 47, the results of the post hoc test revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the elementary teacher group and the middle school and high school teacher groups in the attributes that were statistically significant in the ANOVA analysis. The attribute “amount of time spent on the evaluation process” is statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at \( p \leq .001 \) and a mean difference of \( .58316 \). In addition, this attribute is statistically significant between the middle school teacher group and the high school teacher group at \( p \leq .048 \) and a mean difference of \( -.41462 \). The attribute “time allotted during the school year for professional development aligned with standards” is statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the high school teacher group at \( p \leq .007 \) and a mean difference of \( .59163 \). The attribute “availability of training programs and models of good practices” is statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the high school teacher group at \( p \leq .028 \) and a mean difference of \( .49538 \). Finally, the attribute “intended role of evaluation” is statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the middle school teacher group at \( p \leq .002 \) and a mean difference of \( .62702 \). It is also statistically significant between the elementary teacher group and the high school teacher group at \( p \leq .031 \) and a mean difference of \( .50188 \). The results of the post hoc tests indicate that elementary teachers perceive that they spend more time on the evaluation process, have more time allotted during the school year for professional development aligned with the standards, and have a greater availability of training programs and models of good practices than high school
Table 47

Outcomes of the Tukey HSD post hoc Test for ANOVA TAP and the Attributes of the Evaluation Context by Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>(I) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>(J) Elementary, Middle or HS</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time spent on the evaluation process by teacher</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.58316(*)</td>
<td>.15281</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.16854</td>
<td>.16411</td>
<td>.561</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Middle</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-.58316(*)</td>
<td>.15281</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>-.41462(*)</td>
<td>.17440</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-.16854</td>
<td>.16411</td>
<td>.561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.41462(*)</td>
<td>.17440</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time allotted during the school year for pd aligned with standards</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.28754</td>
<td>.18085</td>
<td>.253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.59163(*)</td>
<td>.19421</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of training programs and models of good practices</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.23063</td>
<td>.17706</td>
<td>.396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.49538(*)</td>
<td>.19110</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended role of evaluation</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>.62702(*)</td>
<td>.18333</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.50188(*)</td>
<td>.19687</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: p ≤ .05.
Table 48

*Mean TEP Scores for Questions 2 through 9 of Professional and Non-Professional Status*

**Teachers for Research Question 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute (TEP Question)</th>
<th>Component of Research Question 5</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Professional Practice (2)</td>
<td>Elevated professional growth</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.1429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Professional Growth (3)</td>
<td>Elevated professional growth</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.1491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Student Learning (4)</td>
<td>Increased student learning</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.1053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Student Achievement (5)</td>
<td>Increased student learning</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2.9298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on School Improvement (6)</td>
<td>Sustained school improvement</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.2105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on School Climate (7)</td>
<td>Sustained school improvement</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2.7895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Quality of Teachers (8)</td>
<td>Improved teacher instruction</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.2143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Goals Developed (9)</td>
<td>Improved teacher instruction</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.5088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.5315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
being the positive impact of TAP on teacher goals. The professional status teacher scores were similar to the non-professional status teacher scores and ranged from 2.7838 to 3.5315, with the lowest mean score being the positive impact of the TAP on school climate and the highest mean score being the positive impact of TAP on teacher goals. With the exception of the question that focused on the positive impact of TAP on teacher goals and the positive impact of TAP on school climate, the professional and non-professional status scores were at approximately 3.0 indicating that the teachers at those two levels felt that the TAP had little or no impact on the areas indicated in research question 5.

The data for research question 5 was analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) at an a priori alpha = .05. The two groups used for the ANOVA calculations were (a) non-professional status teachers and (b) professional status teachers. To analyze research question 5, one-way ANOVA calculations were performed to examine the differences in non-professional and professional status teachers’ perceptions regarding the impact of teacher evaluation on improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth between the three groups. Specifically, an ANOVA was performed with each group and TEP questions 2 through 9 as stated in Appendices A and B. A Tukey HSD (honestly significant difference) post hoc test was conducted when an ANOVA calculation yielded a statistically significant F-value at an a priori alpha = .05.

When the data was analyzed, there was no statistically significant difference between non-professional and professional status teachers and their responses to TEP questions 2 through 9 as stated in research question 5. Therefore, there is little or no variation in
perceptions related to the impact of TAP on improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth between non-professional and professional status teachers.

Research Questions 6 and 7

How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?

How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?

The quantitative data for this research question was derived from questions 1 and 30 through 58 in the TEP Questionnaire and analyzed by two groups; professional status and nonprofessional status teachers. These questions examined the quality of teacher evaluation, the attributes of the procedures used during evaluations, the sources of performance information used as part of the evaluation, the extent of the formal and informal, the attributes of the feedback received during the evaluation process, and the attributes of the evaluation context.

The data for research questions 6 and 7 was analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) at an a priori alpha = .05. The two groups used for the ANOVA calculations were (a) non-professional status teachers and (b) professional status teachers. To analyze research questions 6 and 7, one-way ANOVA calculations were performed to examine the differences in non-professional status and professional status teachers' perceptions regarding the quality of the TAP, attributes of the procedures used, the sources of performance information considered, the extent of the formal and informal observations performed, the attributes of the feedback received, and the attributes of the
evaluation context. These attributes were chosen to measure strengths and weaknesses of the TAP because teacher growth is influenced by the quality and perceived usefulness of the feedback they receive. The quality of the data is determined by the appropriateness of the procedures used to gather it. In addition, the context in which the teacher evaluation takes place is important. Every school and district has its own unique culture, norms, expectations and traditions which will affect the teacher evaluation process (Stiggins & Duke, 1988).

Specifically, an ANOVA was performed with each group and TEP questions 1 and 30 through 58 as stated in Appendices A and B. A Tukey HSD (honestly significant difference) post hoc test was conducted when an ANOVA calculation yielded a statistically significant F-value at an a priori alpha = .05. The data has been reported below in subsections.

The quality of teacher evaluation by status. Question 1 of the TEP asks the respondents to rate the overall quality of the TAP. As seen in Table 49, the mean scores between non-professional status and professional status teachers were similar. The scores were above 3.0 indicating that both groups perceive the TAP to be above average in overall quality.

Table 49

Mean Scores of the Quality of Teacher Evaluation by Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute on TEP (Question Number)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Evaluation Process (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.5789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.5766</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ANOVA calculation for this attribute was not statistically significant for the quality of evaluation process at the p = .05 level indicating that there was no difference in perceptions between non-professional status and professional status teachers on the quality of the evaluation process.

*Attributes of the standards used by status.* Questions 30 through 33 of the TEP ask the respondents to rate the procedures related to the standards of the TAP process. As seen in Table 50, the mean scores between non-professional status and professional status teachers were comparable. With the exception of the attribute, standards tailored for unique needs, both groups had mean scores above 3.5, indicating that the TAP standards are one of the strengths of the process. Scores were below 3.0 for the attribute, standards tailored for unique needs, indicating that this is weakness of the TAP. This weakness was evident in the quantitative data presented in research questions 3 and 4, as well as, the qualitative data presented as part of the focus group sessions. This indicates that differentiated standards for specialists such as special education teachers, guidance counselors, school psychologists, and library media specialists are absent in the district. In addition, it also indicates that there may need to be a differentiated set of standards between non-professional status and professional status teachers.

The ANOVA calculations for these attributes were not statistically significant at the p = .05 level indicating that there was no difference in perceptions between non-professional status and professional status teachers on the standards and procedures used.

*Attributes of the sources of performance information used by level.* Questions 34 through 40 of the TEP ask the respondents to rate the different sources of performance information that may or may not be used in the TAP process. This includes observations
Table 50

*Mean Scores of the Attributes of the TAP Standards Used by Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute on TEP (Question Number)</th>
<th>Non-Professional Status Teacher</th>
<th>Professional Status Teacher</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards communicated effectively (30)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>3.8246</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards clear (31)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>3.8246</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards appropriate for teaching assignment (32)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>3.5357</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards tailored for unique needs (33)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2.5088</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of classroom performance, meetings with evaluator, lesson plans, materials, home communication and other artifacts, student performance, student evaluations, peer evaluations, and self evaluations. The use of multiple sources of data is critical for a teacher evaluation system that is intended to focus on teacher growth. Any one used alone may be insufficient because it may fail to provide a complete picture of how a teacher prepares for, presents and evaluates the impact of instruction (Stiggins & Duke, 1988).

As seen in Table 51, the mean scores between non-professional status and professional status teachers were comparable. The data indicates that the primary sources
Table 51

*Mean Scores of the Attributes of the Sources of Performance Information Used by Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute on TEP (Question Number)</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observations used as part of evaluation (34)</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4.1161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>3.8864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with evaluators used as part of the evaluation (35)</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.7719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>3.5864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of Artifacts used as part of the evaluation (36)</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2.9825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.1081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of Student Performance used for part of the evaluation (37)</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2.6842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>2.9864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student evaluations used for part of the evaluation (38)</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1.8772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>1.9909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer evaluations used for part of the evaluation (39)</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2.0268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>1.7818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.8696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-evaluations used for part of the evaluation (40)</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.4649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.2973</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of information used in evaluations for both non-professional status and professional status teachers include observations, meetings with evaluators and self-evaluations. Student performances, student evaluations, peer evaluations, and artifacts are not
regularly used as part of a teacher's evaluation. This data is consistent with both the data collected in research questions 3 and 4, as well as, the focus group sessions.

The ANOVA calculations for these attributes were not statistically significant at the p = .05 level indicating that there was no difference in perceptions between non-professional status and professional status teachers on the sources of information used in the evaluation process.

*Attributes of the extent of the formal and informal observations in the classroom.*

Questions 41 through 44 of the TEP ask the respondents to describe the extent of the formal and informal observations in the classroom. The goal of observation is to obtain a representative sample of teacher performance from which to draw conclusions about a teacher's general performance. As stated by Stiggins and Duke (1988), "It is often difficult to draw confident generalizations from a sample of only one or two brief observations. An ongoing sequence of regular visits and discussions is optimal if time permits" (p. 87).

As seen in Table 52, there were some differences in mean scores between non-professional status and professional status teachers. As expected, the number of formal observations per year varies between professional status and non-professional status teachers. This is due to the fact that non-professional status teachers are formally observed a minimum of two times per year and professional status teachers are observed a minimum of once every two years. The attributes associated with the frequency of informal observations, the length of formal observations and the length of informal observations were comparable between professional status and non-professional status teachers. It is evident from the data that informal observations are not frequently done,
Table 52

*Mean Scores of the Attributes of the Extent of the Observations of the Classroom Used by Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute on TEP (Question Number)</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of formal observations per year  (41)</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1.9298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1.3604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of informal observations (42)</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1.3158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1.2883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of Formal Observation (43)</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4.5088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>4.4727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of informal observation (44)</td>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1.8246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1.6036</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

particularly with non-professional status teachers, who need that constant feedback from administrators in order to professionally grow. The lack of informal observations or walkthroughs is an attribute that was discussed in research questions 3 and 4, as well as, the qualititative data derived from the focus group sessions. This lack of informal observations is a weakness of the TAP.

As seen in Table 53, the ANOVA calculation for the attribute “number of formal observations per year” was statistically significant for $F = 12.886; df = 2, 179; and
Table 53

Analysis of Variance for Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers for Research

Questions 3 and 4: The Extent of Formal and Informal Observations in the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of formal observations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per year</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>12.909</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.455</td>
<td>12.886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>89.662</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>.501</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>102.571</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of informal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>observations</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>7.767</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.883</td>
<td>2.653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>262.019</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.464</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>269.786</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of Formal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.837</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.919</td>
<td>.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>183.378</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>1.030</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>185.215</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of informal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>observation</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>9.108</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.554</td>
<td>2.951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>276.233</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.543</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>285.341</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p* ≤ .05.

p ≤ .000. As seen in Table 54, the results of the post hoc test revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the non-professional status teacher group and the professional status teacher group for the attribute, “number of formal observations per year.” This attribute was statistically significant at *p* ≤ .000 and a mean difference of .56946. This analysis indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the
Table 54

*Outcomes of the Tukey HSD post hoc Test for ANOVA TAP and the Extent of the Formal and Informal Observations in the Classroom by Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>(I) Teaching Status</th>
<th>(J) Teaching Status</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Formal Observations per Year</td>
<td>Non-Professional</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>.56946 (*)</td>
<td>.11533</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Status</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: p≤.05.*

the number of formal observations per year between professional status and non-professional status teachers, which is consistent with the expectations in the TAP process.

*Attributes of the feedback received during the evaluation process.* Questions 45 through 53 of the TEP ask the respondents to describe the feedback they received during their last evaluation experience. A crucial interpersonal link between the teacher and the administrator occurs when the teacher is provided with information on his or her performance. In a teacher evaluation system that focuses on growth, this feedback is critical. As Stiggins and Duke (1988) state,

Successful evaluation for whatever purpose requires that feedback procedures be planned and executed carefully....The kind of feedback that is apt to encourage growth...comes from a credible source, describes specific aspects of their teaching along with ideas and suggestions for improvement that make sense in terms of the contexts, arrives with sufficient regularity to allow them to track their improvement, and is as often informal as formal. (pp. 89-90)
As seen in Table 55, the mean scores between the professional status and non-professional status teachers were comparable for each attribute. The attributes, “Amount of information received”, “Depth of information provided”, “Quality of ideas and suggestions”, “Specificity of information provided”, “Nature of information provided”, and “Feedback focused on TAP standards” had mean scores for both groups at 3.4 or above, indicating that these are strengths of the TAP. However, the attributes, “Frequency of formal feedback”, “Frequency of informal feedback”, and “Timing of feedback” were below a mean score of 3.4 for both groups. This indicates that both non-professional status and professional status teachers perceive these attributes as a weakness of the TAP. It is also worth noting that the attribute, “Timing of feedback in the evaluation process” had a lower mean score for non-professional status teachers than professional status teachers. This indicates that non-professional status teachers are receiving more delayed feedback on observations and evaluations than professional status teachers. The quantitative data analyzed from research questions 3 and 4, as well as, the qualitative data from the focus groups supports the findings in these research questions.

The ANOVA calculations for these attributes were not statistically significant at the p = .05 level indicating that there was no difference in perceptions between non-professional status and professional status teachers on the attributes of the feedback used in the evaluation process.

**Attributes of the evaluation context.** Questions 54 through 58 of the TEP ask the respondents to describe the attributes of the evaluation context, in particular, the amount of time spent on the evaluation process, time allotted during the school year for professional development, availability of training programs and models of good practices,
Table 55

Mean Scores of the Attributes of the Feedback Received During the Evaluation Process by Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute on TEP (Question Number)</th>
<th>Non-Professional Status Teacher</th>
<th>Professional Status Teacher</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of information received in evaluation process (45)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.9474</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.6757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of formal feedback in evaluation process (46)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2.8772</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2.6486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of informal feedback in evaluation process (47)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2.6491</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2.5405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth of information provided in evaluation process (48)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.4561</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.4234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of ideas and suggestions in evaluation process (49)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.4737</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.2973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity of information provided in evaluation process (50)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.5439</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.4144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of information provided in evaluation process (51)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.8246</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.8063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing of feedback in evaluation process (52)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.1518</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.4324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback focused on TAP Standards (53)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>4.1364</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>4.3037</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
clarity of policy statements regarding the purpose of evaluation, and the intended role of evaluation. Time is critical for such activities as designing and setting up an evaluation system; conducting goal-setting conferences, pre and post observation meetings, classroom observations, informal classroom visits and feedback sessions; and individualizing professional development. Resources available for growth include released time for peer observations, attending workshops, receiving technical assistance from instructional coaches, videotaping, staff development activities, professional library materials, and peer mentors. By providing these resources for teachers, the district makes a commitment to a more growth oriented evaluation process (Stiggins & Duke, 1988).

As seen in Table 56, all of the mean scores for professional status and non-professional status teachers were above 3.0, indicating that these attributes are recognized strengths of the TAP. The attributes that were stronger than others included, “Amount of time spent on the evaluation process”, “Clarity of policy statements regarding the purpose of evaluation”, and “Intended role of evaluation.” These attributes had mean scores of 3.5 or higher for both professional status and non-professional status teachers. The weaker attributes included, “Time allotted during the school year for professional development aligned with the standards”, and “Availability of training programs and models of good practices.” These attributes had mean scores lower than 3.3. One attribute that may be a weakness even though it is a score above 3.0 is the amount of time spent on the evaluation process, which may indicate that the process has too much paperwork and meeting time allotted to the process. This is an area that came up during the focus group sessions. The quantitative data analyzed from research questions 3 and 4,
Table 56

*Mean Scores of the Attributes of the Evaluation Context by Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute on TEP (Question Number)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time spent on the evaluation process by teacher (54)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.6339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>3.7706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time allotted during the school year for pd aligned with standards (55)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.2857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>3.1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of training programs and models of good practices (56)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.2946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>3.3500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of policy statements regarding the purpose of evaluation (57)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.7321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.6065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended role of evaluation (58)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.5614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Professional Status Teacher Professional Status Teacher</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.6852</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
as well as, the qualitative data from the focus groups supports the findings in these research questions.

The ANOVA calculations for these attributes were not statistically significant at the $p = .05$ level indicating that there was no difference in perceptions between non-professional status and professional status teachers on the attributes of the evaluation context.
Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to analyze the perceptions of teachers and building-level administrators in a Massachusetts suburban public school district, regarding the effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system that was designed from 2003-2006, and implemented during the 2006-08 school years. This study analyzes teacher and administrator perceptions in regards to improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated teacher professional growth. The study also analyzes the positive and negative impacts of implementing a standards-based teacher evaluation system. This Teacher Assessment Process (TAP) was a collaboratively designed, standards-based evaluation system developed by the teachers and administrators of this Massachusetts suburban school district. Chapter I presents the problem to be studied: What are the perceptions of school administrators and teachers regarding the effectiveness of a collaboratively designed, standards-based, teacher evaluation system that was implemented in a Massachusetts suburban school district during the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years. Chapter II contains a review of literature that focuses on the qualities of effective teachers, purpose of teacher evaluation, ineffective teacher evaluation systems, effective teacher evaluation systems, and the research on standards-based teacher evaluation systems. Chapter III contains a description of the qualitative and quantitative methodology used in this study
to evaluate the responses of the teachers and administrators. Chapter IV includes an analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected. Chapter V offers a summary, conclusions, recommendations for policy, practice, and future research, as well as, a reflection piece on what this study means.

Seven research questions were asked: (a) How do school administrators and teachers differ in their perceptions on the overall effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system in the following areas: improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth? (b) How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)? (c) How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)? (d) How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)? (e) How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by professional and non-professional status teachers? (f) How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers? (g) How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?

In order to address these research questions, a mixed method research study was conducted consisting of 10 focus group sessions and the administration of a written survey. The 10 focus group sessions were arranged by level (elementary, middle, high
school), position (teacher, administrator), and status (professional status, non-professional status). Overall, 18 administrators and 23 teachers participated in the focus group sessions at the district office. The written survey was distributed to all teachers and administrators in the district. Overall, 14 administrators and 168 teachers participated in the quantitative segment of the study.

Summary of Research

Research Question 1 was How do school administrators and teachers differ in their perceptions on the overall effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system in the following areas: improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth? In order to elicit these perceptions, focus group participants were asked five questions: In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP used in your school? What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed teaching in your school? What effect do you think the current teacher evaluation process has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school? What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your school? In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school?

Howard and Harman (2007) describe a school district that uses a standards-based evaluation system to have the following purposes for evaluation (p. 47):

1. To promote achievement and growth in every student
2. To ensure a competent staff member in every certified position
3. To increase professional competency of staff in every certified position
4. To provide feedback to every staff member
5. To recognize outstanding staff
6. To identify staff development needs
7. To identify staff in need of remediation and possible termination
8. To assist in the assignment of staff

When administrators were asked: *In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP used in your school?* All 4 focus groups answered that the purpose of teacher evaluation is to help teachers make continuous progress. Three of the 4 groups also stated that the purpose is to provide a common language for teachers and administrators throughout the school district. Two administrator focus groups mentioned that the process could be used for employment decisions, if necessary, however, with a focus on exhausting all options of working with that teacher before making the employment decision. The theme expressed in the sessions was teacher growth being the priority, rather than employment decisions being the priority.

When teachers were asked the above focus group question, their answers emphasized the purpose of the TAP being to identify strengths and weaknesses and develop goals to address those strengths and weaknesses. All 6 teacher focus groups discussed the purpose of teacher evaluation was to establish annual goals to address weaknesses. Three of the 6 teacher focus group sessions continued along the theme of strengths and weaknesses and discussed the purpose of teacher evaluation to include reflection and self-evaluation. This is consistent with Stark and Lowther (1984) who reported the results of a study of teacher evaluation procedures where self-assessment
clearly was viewed by the teacher subjects as the most appropriate method of evaluation (p. 97).

The role of the evaluator is a critical factor in determining the success of an effective teacher evaluation system. Reviews of the research literature of the past 25 years highlight the principal as playing a strong positive role in successful evaluation systems (Colby, Bradshaw & Joyner, 2002). In contrast, research has also found that ineffective systems rely heavily on the principal or another administrator as the primary evaluator, creating more of an emphasis on summative, rather than formative. In five of the 6 teacher focus groups, the role of administration was discussed. Only 1 of the 5 focus groups discussed the role of administration to be a partner in the process. The other 4 teacher focus groups discussed administrators more as the "boss" in the process and not a collaborative partner. However, only 1 teacher focus group discussed the purpose of teacher evaluation as a tool to make employment decisions.

The quantitative data from the TEP survey regarding the purpose of teacher evaluation triangulates with the data reported in the focus group sessions. TEP survey question number 58, which asks the respondent the intended role of evaluation, received an overall teacher mean score of 3.624 and an administrator mean score of 4.2143, indicating that both groups perceive that the TAP is focused more on teacher growth than on teacher accountability. In addition, as seen in Table 13, TEP survey questions 19 through 29, which focused on the attributes of the TAP evaluator, received mean scores of 3.6 and above from both the teacher and administrator groups for each of the attributes. This indicates that there is a high level of trust and a strong working relationship between teachers and administrators.
Colby (2001) concluded that (a) teacher evaluation can have a strong impact on school improvement, professional development and student learning; (b) the strength of these connections was often a function of the effectiveness of the district and school leadership; and (c) locally developed teacher evaluation systems had a positive effect on other teaching and learning functions. Therefore, if a teacher evaluation system is implemented correctly, it can have a positive impact on a school. When the assistant researcher asked the administrator focus groups: What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed teaching in your school? All 4 administrator focus groups identified ways that TAP has changed teaching in a positive manner in their schools. They agreed that the common language established by the TAP has led to improved teacher instruction. Three of the 4 groups indicated that new teachers have benefitted from the TAP, providing a clear and concise set of expectations. Some of the examples given by the administrator focus groups on how the TAP has changed teaching include the increased use of technology as a teaching tool and the increased use of educational objectives for student learning. However, there were administrators in 2 of the focus groups that did not feel that the TAP improved teacher instruction. These administrators viewed the TAP as a document, rather than a process.

When the teacher focus groups were asked the same question, there were mixed perceptions. Three of the 6 teacher focus groups had teachers that did not feel that the TAP has changed their teaching. Five of the 6 teacher focus groups felt that the self-evaluation, goal setting and accomplishment of those goals were the parts of the TAP that helped them change their instructional practices. McGreal (1986) identified self-evaluation and goal setting as some of the best practices when constructing a teacher
evaluation system that focuses on growth. Three of the 6 teacher focus groups concurred with the administrator focus groups that the TAP process has led to an increased use of technology in the classroom.

The quantitative data from the TEP survey regarding improved teacher instruction triangulates with the data reported in the focus group sessions. The mixed results expressed in the focus group sessions were also evident in the TEP survey questions that aligned with this focus group question. The results of TEP question 2, which is the impact of the TAP on professional practices, revealed a teacher mean score of 3.1168 and an administrator mean score of 3.6429. Therefore, teachers overall perceive that the TAP has little or no overall impact on professional practices, where administrators perceive that there is a little more impact, although not a statistically significant impact from the teachers. The results of TEP question 8, the positive impact of TAP on improving teacher quality, yielded a teacher mean score of 3.2964 and an administrator mean score of 3.9286. This indicated that both teachers and administrators perceive that the TAP has some effect on improving teacher quality. Finally, the results of TEP question 9, the impact of TAP on the development of teacher goals, were the highest scores with a teacher mean score of 3.5238 and an administrator mean score of 4.2857. The difference between these two scores is statistically significant at \( p \leq .05 \). These scores indicate that both teachers and administrators perceive the TAP to have a positive impact on the goals that are developed each year. However, administrators perceive the impact to be more significantly positive than the teachers.

When the assistant researcher asked the administrator focus group, *What effect do you think the current teacher evaluation process has had on the professional growth of*
teachers in your school? Two of the 4 administrator focus groups indicated that it was more federal and state regulations, along with contractual incentives that were more of the reason for increased professional growth than the TAP. The other 2 administrator focus groups felt that the TAP was not the sole reason, however, it was part of the reason for increased professional growth. Two of the 4 administrator focus groups also reemphasized the impact that the TAP has had on the increased use of technology in the district by teachers.

When teachers were asked the same focus group question, similar results were reported. One of the 6 focus groups emphasized that it was federal and state regulations and the contractual incentive to move to a higher pay scale that increased professional growth. Four of the 6 focus groups also emphasized the impact that the TAP has had on use of technology because it is an indicator on the rubrics. Overall, there seems to be similarities between teachers and administrators on the impact that TAP has had on the professional growth of teachers. High school teachers and administrators tend to perceive state and federal recertification laws and collective bargaining agreement incentives as the reason for the increase in professional growth. Other levels see the TAP as a process that helps contribute to the professional growth culture of the school district, particularly in the area of technology integration. The data from the elementary and middle school focus groups indicate that TAP has become the basis for goal setting, staff conversations, and other professional learning community conversations. The data collected from administrative and teacher elementary and middle school focus groups align with the research of Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Pease (1983). They identified five minimal conditions for a successful teacher evaluation system. These conditions
include that (a) teachers and administrators understand the criteria and process for evaluation; (b) teachers and administrators understand how these criteria and processes relate to the basic goals of the organization; (c) teachers perceive that the evaluation procedure are intended to enable and motivate them to improve their performance; (d) principals perceive that it enables them to provide instructional leadership; (e) participants understand that the evaluation process allows them to achieve a balance between control and autonomy (p. 320).

The results of the TEP for this section yielded similar results. The overall mean teacher score for TEP question 3, the overall impact of TAP on the professional growth as an educator, was 3.1280, slightly above the neutral score of 3.0. Administrators were slightly higher with a mean score of 3.4286.

When the assistant researcher asked the administrator focus group, *What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your school?* All 4 administrator focus groups indicated that the TAP does not directly change student achievement, however, 2 of the 4 groups feel that the consistent use of TAP from teacher to teacher will indirectly change student achievement in each school. They feel that the TAP will standardize the classroom experiences that the students will receive. This is consistent with Odden (2004) who posits that if teaching standards describe effective instructional strategies, then when they are implemented in the classroom, student achievement should increase. However, the 2 high school administrator focus group sessions did not perceive that the TAP could indirectly change student achievement in a school.
When the teacher focus groups were asked the same focus group question, 5 of the 6 groups indicated that the TAP indirectly seemed to have a positive impact on student achievement. They concurred with Odden (2004) in that the quality of effective instructional strategies found in the TAP standards eventually benefits students because teachers implement those instructional strategies in the classroom. One of the 6 focus groups, the high school PTS group, did not feel that the TAP has an effect on student achievement. The thoughts expressed by this focus group reflect more of a teacher evaluation process that is summative, where information is provided only to make personnel management decisions such as promotion, dismissal, and salary increases. (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Kleinhenz, Ingvarson, & Chadbourne, 2002; Scriven, 1988; Stiggins & Duke, 1988). This focus group perceives teacher evaluation as an event, rather than process, which is referred to by Toch and Rothman (2008) as “drive-by” evaluations.

The TEP scores for this section show mixed results in comparison with the focus group data. The teacher mean score for TEP question 4, which is the impact that the TAP has on the quality of student learning, was 3.0833 and the administrator mean score was 3.6071. Subsequently, the teacher mean score for TEP question 5, the impact of TAP on student achievement or student performance on standardized tests was 2.9107 and the administrator mean score of 3.1429. Both sets of scores indicate that administrators and teachers perceive that the TAP has little or no impact on student learning, however, even less so on a student’s performance on standardized tests.

When the assistant researcher asked the administrator focus group, *In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on*
school improvement in your school? Two of the 4 focus groups discussed that the TAP helped create a consistency across the school. One of the 4 focus groups indicated that there have been more professional development opportunities that are tied into the TAP. One of the 4 focus groups indicated how faculty discussions focused on the TAP standards have changed the climate of the school, which has led to school improvement.

When the teacher focus groups were also asked about the evaluation impact on school improvement, the results were similar. Like the administrator focus groups, 4 of the 6 teacher focus groups discussed the consistency that the TAP provides and how that consistency allows for groups of teachers to all focus on similar topics. One focus group discussed the alignment of the TAP to the school improvement plan. This is consistent with Colby (2001) who emphasizes that the teacher evaluation process needs to be tightly connected to the district priorities and school functions (p. 16). Moreover, 4 of the 6 focus groups again connected the TAP to the increased use of technology in the school district. However, 2 of the 6 focus groups, the high school teacher focus groups, did not perceive the TAP to have an effect on school improvement. These perceptions are similar to the perceptions of the 2 administrator focus groups.

The TEP mean scores for this section again showed mixed results. TEP question 6, which gauged the impact of the TAP on school improvement, yielded a teacher mean score of 3.231 and an administrator mean score of 3.787. This data indicated that both groups perceived the TAP to have some positive impact on school improvement. In contrast, TEP question 7, which gauged the impact of TAP on school climate and culture, produced a teacher mean score of 2.7857 and an administrator mean score of 3.5714. There is a statistically significant difference at p ≤ .043 between the administrator and
teacher mean score on the impact of the TAP on school climate and culture. This indicates that although teachers perceive the TAP to have a positive impact on school improvement, they feel that it has a slightly negative impact on school climate and culture.

Research question 2 was: *How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?* In order to elicit these perceptions, focus group participants were asked six questions: *In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP used in your school? What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed teaching in your school? What effect do you think the current teacher evaluation process has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school? What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your school? In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school? From your perspective, how has the TAP process seemed to improve your effectiveness as a teacher?*

Researchers describe the two main purposes of teacher evaluation to be summative and formative. Summative evaluations provide information to make personnel management decisions such as promotion, dismissal, and salary increase; while formative evaluations promote the professional growth of teachers (Danielson & Mcgrcal, 2000; Kcleinhenz, Ingvarson, & Chadbourne, 2002; Scriven, 1988; Stiggins & Duke, 1988). When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP used in your
school? All 6 focus groups indicated that the purpose of the TAP is to focus on the goal setting process. The elementary and middle school teacher focus groups indicated that the purpose of the TAP was for self-reflection and improvement. Elementary teacher focus groups saw the purpose of the TAP as a tool for improvement by using the goal setting process, the professional development provided and the conversations with administrators. Middle school teacher focus groups indicated that the purpose of the TAP was tied in more to the goal setting process which is also connected to the evaluation. High school teachers saw the purpose of the TAP as an opportunity for administrators to come into the classroom. They also indicated that the TAP is used to make employment decisions.

The results of the TEP score for this section showed similar results. The mean scores for TEP question 58, the intended role of evaluation, indicated that elementary had the highest mean score at 4.0130, followed by high school at 3.5111, and then middle school at 3.3860. There is a statistically significant difference between the elementary and middle school scores and the elementary and high school scores. The data from both the focus groups and the TEP survey indicate that elementary teachers perceive that the intended purpose of the TAP is teacher growth.

The literature on teacher evaluation systems over the last 40 years has consistently supported two significant findings. The first conclusion is that teachers and administrators have always recognized the importance and necessity for evaluation, even though they have had serious concerns about its implementation and the lack of effect that the results had on teachers, their classrooms, and their students. The second conclusion from the research is that evaluation systems designed to support teacher
growth and development using a formative evaluation approach resulted in higher levels of teacher efficacy and more thoughtful and reflective practices, while still being able to sustain a high level of accountability and expectations (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed teaching in your school?* Both elementary teacher focus groups expressed that the TAP indicators allow for clear expectations, goal setting across a wider range of areas and a reflection piece associated which has changed their teaching. This is consistent with the second conclusion stated by Danielson and McGreal (2000). Middle school teacher focus groups looked at the TAP as a list of what should be happening in an excellent classroom. High school teachers had mixed perceptions about the way that TAP has changed their teaching. Some high school teachers did not feel that the TAP has changed their teaching, while others discussed how the goal setting piece has changed their teaching.

When examining the mean scores for TEP questions 8, impact on quality of teachers, and 9, impact on goals developed, the elementary scores were consistently higher, triangulating with the focus group data. For TEP question 8, the elementary mean score was 3.6883, followed by the high school mean score of 3.1915, then the middle school mean score of 3.0088. There was a statistically significant difference between the elementary and middle school mean scores and the elementary and high school mean scores for TEP question 8. For TEP question 9, the elementary mean score was 3.7987, followed by the middle school mean score of 3.4397, and finally, the high school mean score of 3.4043. The data indicates that elementary teachers perceive that the TAP has a statistically significant more positive impact on improving teacher quality than the
middle and high school focus groups. In addition, elementary teachers also perceive that the TAP has a more positive impact on the goals developed than the middle and high school focus groups.

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *What effect do you think the current teacher evaluation process has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school?* Elementary teachers indicated that there has been significant professional growth in the area of technology. Middle school teachers felt that the TAP has led to an increase in professional development offerings in the district, leading to the increased professional growth of teachers. However, the high school teacher focus groups did not feel that people were motivated to participate in professional growth opportunities because of the TAP. Compared to the other two levels, the high school teachers did not perceive the TAP as a process to foster professional growth, rather it was other external factors such as district professional development offerings, state and federal certification requirements, and contractual salary incentives that enticed teachers to participate in professional development activities, and subsequently, grow as a professional. In addition, all of the focus groups perceived professional growth as more of an external function where teachers were taking courses or workshops, rather than as the type of professional learning communities that can occur within a school.

When examining the mean scores for TEP questions 2, impact on professional practice, and 3, impact on professional growth, the elementary scores were consistently higher than the middle and high school scores, triangulating with the focus group data. For TEP question 2, the elementary mean score was 3.3896, followed by the high school mean score of 3.0870, then the middle school mean score of 2.9052. The difference in
mean scores between the elementary and middle school were statistically significant. TEP question 3 produced similar results with an elementary mean score of 3.4935, a high school mean score of 3.0000, and a middle score mean score of 2.8190. The difference in mean scores between the elementary and middle school and the elementary and high school were statistically significant. The data from both the survey and the focus group sessions for this section indicate that elementary teachers perceive that the TAP has a significantly stronger positive impact on professional practices and professional growth than the middle and high school teachers. In addition, the data from the middle school focus group sessions do not seem to triangulate with the middle school mean scores from the TEP survey, indicating that the results at the middle school are inconclusive.

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your school?* The elementary focus group sessions emphasized instruction and assessment, explaining that the TAP has helped guide them to implement good teaching practices such as using activators, summarizers, formative and summative assessments, and differentiating and scaffolding instruction. Middle school teachers had mixed perceptions. Some agreed with the responses given in the elementary teacher focus groups, while others felt that teachers were intrinsically motivated to help students achieve, whether the TAP existed or not. High school teachers did not link the TAP to student achievement, rather, they looked at their own goal-setting, professional development workshops that they have attended, and collaboration with colleagues as the mechanisms that increase student achievement.
When examining the mean scores for TEP questions 4, impact on student learning, and 5, impact on student achievement, the elementary scores were consistently higher than the middle and high school scores, triangulating with the focus group data. For TEP question 4, the elementary mean score was 3.4805, the high school mean score was 2.8936, and the middle school mean score was 2.8362. There was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of elementary and middle school teachers and between the mean scores of elementary and high school teachers. For TEP question 5, there were similar results. The elementary mean score was 3.3247, the high school mean score was 2.7234, and the middle school mean score was 2.55690. There was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of elementary and middle school teachers and between the mean scores of elementary and high school teachers. The data from both the survey and the focus group sessions for this section indicate that elementary teachers perceive that the TAP has a more significant strong positive impact on student learning and student achievement than the middle and high school teachers.

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school?* Two themes emerged at the elementary level. The first theme is one that has been repeated many times throughout the focus group sessions in that the TAP has had an effect in improving the use of technology in the schools. The other theme that emerged is the impact the goal-setting process has had on school improvement. Middle school teachers also focused on the goal setting process, citing the consistency in alignment between the TAP, teacher goals, the school improvement plans, and the district improvement plans. They felt that this consistency led to greater school
improvement. High school teachers had a different perspective than the elementary and middle school teachers in that the TAP is more beneficial to the growth of new teachers, but not necessarily for a veteran teacher. This perception is consistent with schools that have teacher evaluation systems that lack differentiation between novice and experienced practitioners. In most systems, the teacher evaluation process, the standards used and the level of expectation are similar for both first year and veteran teachers. This type of structure can lead to different types of attitudes of evaluation by teachers in different stages of their careers. Peterson (2004) illustrates that beginning teachers expect and solicit evaluation, because it reinforces what they are doing in the classroom. On the other hand, veteran teachers are much less positive about teacher evaluation because the process and standards used are too vague and ambiguous. They perceive their final evaluation rating as depending more on the qualities of the evaluator than how they teach. As a result, veteran teachers view evaluation as unimportant (pp. 72-73). The data from the high school PTS focus group session supported Peterson's findings.

When examining the mean scores for TEP questions 6, impact on school improvement, and 7, impact on school climate and culture, the elementary scores were again consistently higher than the middle and high school scores, triangulating with the focus group data. For TEP question 6, the elementary mean score was 3.6104, followed by the middle school mean score of 3.1034, then the high school mean score of 2.9362. The difference in mean scores between the elementary and middle school and the elementary and high school focus groups were statistically significant. For TEP question 7, the elementary mean score was 3.2078, the high school mean score is 2.7660, and the middle school mean score is 2.4310. The difference in mean scores between the
elementary and middle schools was statistically significant. The data from both the TEP survey and the focus group sessions indicate that elementary teachers perceive that the TAP has a significantly stronger positive impact on school improvement than middle and high school teachers and a significantly stronger positive impact on school climate than middle school teachers.

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *From your perspective, how has the TAP process seemed to improve your effectiveness as a teacher?* Elementary teachers focused on the whole continuum of improvement, including self-reflection, the goal setting process, monitoring the goals for effectiveness, and constantly self-evaluating. Middle school teachers had similar responses as the elementary teachers. However, high school focus groups did not feel that the TAP improved their effectiveness as a teacher.

The TEP questions that aligned with the focus group questions were discussed in an earlier section.

Research question 3 was *How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?* In order to elicit these perceptions, elementary, middle, and high school focus group participants were asked two questions: *The current TAP process has been in place for 2 years. During that time, what have you noticed are some of the positive aspects of the program? For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare?*

Stiggins and Duke (1988) identified components to an effective evaluation system. These include: select methods to match the evaluation purpose, involve teachers
in all phases of the evaluation process, provide relevant training for all evaluators and staff members, increase sources of evaluation data, use meaningful performance criteria and relate results to organizational goals (pp. 23 and 24). This research question looks at the teachers’ perceptions by level of the effective components of a teacher evaluation system. When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *The current TAP process has been in place for 2 years. During that time, what have you noticed are some of the positive aspects of the program?* Elementary teachers commented on the positive collaboration between a teacher and the administrator during the process. It is evident from other data that this is a key piece to the successful implementation of the TAP at the elementary level. Middle school teachers focused more on the comprehensive standards of the rubric and how the process is the same for everybody. High school teachers also emphasized the standards and how the scope of the process is broad enough to cover all aspects of teaching.

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare?* Only professional status teachers at each level could answer this question because non-professional status teachers were not all in the district when the old TAP process was in place. Elementary teachers stated that the current TAP process was much more collaborative than the old TAP. Middle school teachers also spoke to the collaboration as being a positive aspect of the TAP. High school teachers indicated that the old system had a narrative that did not make sense and that the current process, which contains a rubric is better. Overall the perception of the teachers who have experienced
both TAP systems is that the new TAP is a better process because it has well defined standards in a more structured format.

This research question was linked to TEP questions 1, and 30-58. As indicated in Tables 30 through 46, there were several positive attributes indicated by a mean score of 3.5000 or above for all three levels. These attributes included standards communicated effectively, standards clear, observations used as part of the evaluation, average length of formal observations, amount of information received in the evaluation process, nature of information provided in the evaluation process, feedback focused on TAP standards, and clarity of policy statements regarding the purpose of evaluation. These mean scores indicate that all three levels perceive these attributes to be strengths of the TAP. This data is consistent with the data collected during the focus group sessions.

Several attributes displayed a statistically significant difference in the mean scores between elementary teachers and middle school teachers. These included the quality of the TAP process, the standards tailored for unique needs, the observations used as part of the evaluation, the meetings with evaluators used as part of the evaluation, the examination of artifacts used as part of the evaluation, the examination of student performance used for part of the evaluation, the use of self evaluations as part of the evaluations, the frequency of informal observations, the average length of informal observations, the frequency of formal feedback in the evaluation process, the frequency of informal feedback in the evaluation process, the quality of ideas and suggestions in the evaluation process, the specificity of information provided in the evaluation process, the timing of feedback in the evaluation process, the amount of time spent on the evaluation process, and the intended role of evaluation. The data from both the TEP survey and the
focus group sessions indicate that elementary teachers perceive that the above attributes are more a strength of the TAP than do middle school teachers.

Moreover, there were several attributes that displayed a statistically significant difference in the mean scores between elementary teachers and high school teachers. These included examination of artifacts used as part of the evaluation, frequency of informal observations, feedback focused on TAP standards, amount of time spent on the evaluation process, time allotted during the school year for professional development aligned with standards, availability of training programs and models of good practices, and the intended role of evaluation. The data from both the TEP survey and the focus group sessions indicate that elementary teachers perceive that the above attributes are more a strength of the TAP than do high school teachers.

Research Question 4 was How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)? In order to elicit these perceptions, elementary, middle, and high school focus group participants were asked five focus group questions: Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process? For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare? If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say? What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process? How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?
Heneman and Milanowski (2003) used a mixed method approach to describe and evaluate the first two years of a district-wide implementation of a standards-based teacher evaluation system using the Danielson (1996, 2007) model in the Cincinnati public schools. Both studies examined K-12 teachers and did not differentiate the results by level. During the first year of implementation there was a mixture of problems and successes. On the success side, teachers and administrators appeared to understand the teaching standards and accepted them as representation of good teaching. Many teachers saw the potential of the new system for helping them improve their performance.

Unfortunately, there were also many problems during the first year of implementation. The most significant was the increased workload that the system imposed on the evaluators, resulting in many of the administrators unable to complete their teacher evaluation assignments in a timely fashion. Teachers were concerned about the additional workload of the portfolio, uncertainty about how to create the portfolio, and a lack of feedback from administrators. Other issues included concerns about the expertise level of the evaluators for some of the content areas, consistency of evaluation decisions across schools, and differences in the interpretation of the rubrics across evaluators.

For this research question, the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process?* Elementary teachers felt that the TAP process forms were too time consuming to complete for a teacher, particularly the self-assessment, pre-observation form, and evaluation form. Some commented that the information from the paperwork is copied as part of their evaluation, creating the
perception that they write their own evaluation. Middle school teachers also spoke to the amount of paperwork, but commented on the overwhelming number of indicators and the level of attainability of some of the standards. High school teachers also spoke to the number of standards and the wording of some of those standards. They also felt that the rubrics should be more specific to the teaching position and stage of a teacher’s career.

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare?* Only the professional status teachers at each level were able to answer this question because non professional status teachers were not in the district when the old TAP was in effect. Elementary and middle school teachers reiterated that there should be an alternative evaluation component, which did exist in the old TAP system, but was not included in the beginning implementation of the new TAP system. High school teachers also spoke about the concept of an alternative evaluation for veteran teachers where the teacher is allowed to choose the standards that are observed and evaluated.

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say?* Elementary and middle school teacher focus groups had different suggestions by status, which will be described in research question 7, which compares the perceptions of professional status and non-professional status teachers. High school teachers indicated the need to have more frequent observations, consistent feedback, peer observations, and walkthroughs. This agrees with the findings of Stiggins and Duke (1988) who researched several school districts that used high-quality teacher
evaluation systems. They determined that "it is difficult to draw confident
generalizations from a sample of only one or two brief observations. An ongoing
sequence of regular visits and discussions is optimal..." (p. 87).

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, What changes, if
any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process? Elementary teachers and
high school teachers did not have any common changes that they would make to the
TAP, however, they suggested changes as professional status and non-professional status
teachers which will be addressed in research question 7. Middle school teachers
discussed the four levels of each standard (Exceeding the standard, Meeting the Standard,
Progressing toward the Standard and Does not meet the Standard) and how the difference
between an exceeding the standard and meeting the standard is insignificant for some of
the indicators.

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, How would you
improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in
strengthening instruction? Elementary teachers felt that it would be helpful if a peer
observation component was put in place as either part of the TAP process or as a regular
part of the school culture. Middle school teachers also discussed peer coaching and
emphasized the need to have conversations about the teaching standards at faculty
meetings and team meetings. Non-PTS high school teachers also discussed the
importance of peer evaluation and visiting each other's classrooms, however, high school
PTS teachers did not offer any additional ideas on how to improve teacher evaluation so
that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction.
This research question was linked to TEP questions 1, and 30-58. As indicated in Tables 30 through 46, there were some common weak attributes indicated by a mean score of 3.0000 or below for all three levels. These attributes include standards tailored for unique needs, student evaluations used for part of the evaluation, peer evaluations used for part of the evaluation, frequency of informal observations, average length of informal observations, and frequency of informal feedback in evaluation process. These mean scores indicate that all three levels perceive these attributes to be weaknesses of the TAP. This data is consistent with the data collected during the focus group sessions.

It is evident from the focus group data and the TEP data aligned with this research question that the weaknesses of the TAP include the lack of multiple data sources, an absence of a peer observation or peer evaluation component, no differentiation between veteran and novice teachers, the amount of paperwork and time allocated to the TAP, and further clarification of the standards and indicators. Odden (2004) specifies that a standards-based teacher evaluation system must include a set of teaching standards that describes in detail what teachers need to know and be able to do; a set of procedures for collecting multiple forms of data on teacher’s performance for each of the standards; and a related set of scoring rubrics that provide guidance to assessors or evaluators on how to score the various pieces of data to various performance levels (p. 127). Peterson (2004) describes multiple data systems to include not only administrator visits, conferences and teacher rating forms, but pupil achievement data, student and parent surveys, peer review of materials, documentation of professional activity, teacher test scores, National Board Certification, action research projects, school improvement participation, and information unique to the individual teacher (p. 63).
Research Question 5 was *How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by professional and non-professional status teachers.* In order to elicit these perceptions, professional status and non-professional status focus group participants were asked five focus group questions: *In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP used in your school? What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed your teaching? What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school? What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your classroom? What effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school? From your perspective, how has the TAP process seem to improve your effectiveness as a teacher?*

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP used in your school?* Professional status teachers (PTS) saw the purpose of TAP as a tool for improvement, by identifying strengths and weaknesses, and establishing goals to strengthen those weaknesses. Non-professional status teachers (Non-PTS) saw a similar purpose to the TAP process and also emphasized the importance of the self-reflection piece.

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed your teaching?* PTS teachers did not perceive that the TAP has changed their teaching. However, they indicated that the goal setting process has changed their teaching, but also emphasized that goal setting
has always been part of the teacher evaluation process in the district. Non-PTS teachers discussed how the reflective piece of the TAP has helped them change their teaching.

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school?* Non-PTS teachers indicated that the TAP does directly or indirectly contribute to professional growth. Most PTS teachers felt that the district has done an excellent job of linking professional development opportunities to the standards of the TAP, particularly in the areas of technology integration, differentiated instruction, and skillful teaching. However, some PTS teachers feel that the professional growth of teachers is linked more to state recertification requirements and contractual incentives, rather than the TAP.

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your classroom?* Non-PTS teachers had mixed perceptions about the connection between TAP and student achievement. In all 3 non-PTS focus group sessions there were teachers who felt that the TAP either directly or indirectly affected student achievement, while others felt that it is just good teaching practices, not the TAP that affected student achievement. Most PTS teachers saw a direct or indirect connection between TAP and student achievement. Only one PTS teacher felt that there is no connection between the TAP and student achievement.

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *What effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school?* Non-PTS teachers commented how there are more teachers focused on
particular goals that are linked to the TAP, such as technology and literacy. Because
more are focused on the same common goals, the school is able to improve more
effectively. PTS teachers also commented on the consistency of the process and how
common goals such as family and community outreach, technology, and communication
have become school wide goals, which are linked to individual teacher’s TAP goals.

Davis, Ellett, and Annunziata (2002) described a case study where the principal
used a new teacher assessment and evaluation system for the improvement of teaching
and learning. Professional educators collaborated together towards the goal of quality
teaching and learning. Each staff member took part in the leadership necessary to
implement change. Regular meetings were held to discuss the progress of the new
system in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Teachers believed
that they had the capacity to be successful in the new teacher evaluation system. When
the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, From your perspective, how has
the TAP process seemed to improve your effectiveness as a teacher? Non-PTS teachers
discussed how the reflection piece and the conversations with administrators helped
improve their effectiveness as a teacher. PTS teachers felt the same way as non-PTS
teachers in that the reflection piece, the monitoring of the goals and the conversations
were critical to the process. The only exception was the high school PTS focus group
that passed on the question because they did not feel that the TAP improved their
effectiveness as a teacher.

This research question was linked to TEP questions 2 through 9. As seen in Table
47, the mean scores were comparable between professional status and non-professional
status teachers and none of the mean differences between PTS and non-PTS teachers
were statistically significant. Mean scores that were higher than 3.0 for both PTS and non-PTS teachers included impact on professional practice, impact on professional growth, impact on student learning, impact on school improvement, impact on quality of teachers, and the impact on the goals developed. The mean scores of these attributes indicated that PTS and non-PTS teachers perceived an above average impact of the TAP on these attributes, which are directly linked to elevated professional growth, increased student learning, sustained school improvement, and improved teacher instruction. Mean attribute scores below 3.0 include impact on student achievement, and impact on school climate. The mean scores of these attributes indicate that PTS and non-PTS teachers perceived a below average impact of the TAP on these attributes. This data is consistent with the data collected during the focus group sessions.

Research Question 6 was *How do the perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?* In order to elicit these perceptions, professional status and non-professional status focus group participants answered one focus group question: *The current TAP process has been in place for 2 years. During that time, what have you noticed are some of the positive aspects of the program?*

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *The current TAP process has been in place for 2 years. During that time, what have you noticed are some of the positive aspects of the program?* With non-PTS teachers, two common themes emerged; the self-reflection and evaluation associated with the process and the level of detail and clarity of the indicators and standards. They emphasized that it is this detail that clearly spells out what is expected of teachers in the school district. PTS teachers
gave several positive comments about the TAP, some different from non-PTS teachers. Where non-PTS teachers focused on the reflection piece and the level of detail and clarity of the indicators and standards, PTS teachers felt that the consistency of the process for all teachers, the quality of standards, and the conversations that have occurred with staff are positive aspects of the TAP.

This research question was linked to TEP questions 1, and 30-58. As indicated in Tables 48 through 55, there were several positive attributes indicated by a mean score of 3.5000 or above for both PTS and non-PTS teachers. These attributes included quality of the evaluation process, standards communicated effectively, standards clear, standards appropriate for teaching assignment, observations used as part of the evaluation, meetings with evaluators used as part of the evaluation, average length of formal observation, amount of information received in the evaluation process, nature of information provided in the evaluation process, feedback focused on TAP standards, amount of time spent on the evaluation process by teacher, clarity of policy statements regarding the purpose of teacher evaluation, and the intended role of evaluation. These mean scores indicate that both groups perceive these attributes to be strengths of the TAP. This data is consistent with the data collected during the focus group sessions.

Only one attribute displayed a statistically significant difference in the mean scores between PTS and non-PTS teachers; the number of formal observations per year. This data is consistent with the district TAP guidelines which state that non-PTS teachers are formally observed a minimum of two times per year and PTS teachers are formally observed a minimum of once every 2 years.
Research Question 7 was *How do the perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?* In order to elicit these perceptions, professional status and non-professional status focus group participants were asked the question: *Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process?* If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say? *What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process?* How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process?* Several emerging themes came from the non-PTS focus group. First they felt that the process is too detailed and overwhelming for a new teacher coming into the school district. Another theme that emerged is that they normally do not receive a higher rating of “meeting the standard” or “exceeding the standard” in the first few years as a teacher. They also felt that there is very little difference in some of the indicators for “meeting the standard” or “exceeding the standard.” They perceived some of these standards to be unattainable. Finally, non-PTS teachers discussed the need to have a differentiated set of rubrics or expectations for beginning teachers that is different from veteran teachers. PTS teachers agreed with non-PTS teachers in several areas including the overwhelming nature of the process and the level of attainability for some standards.
When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say?*, non-PTS teachers continued to identify weaknesses in the current TAP with themes similar to the previous focus group question. They again offered the suggestion that there should be a differentiated document for teachers depending upon your level of experience. This differentiation should include a more streamlined process the first few years of teaching to reduce the level of paperwork involved in the process. They also felt that they would benefit from more frequent feedback throughout the year by both administrators and teachers. These suggestions included the use of walkthroughs by administrators and peer observations. PTS teachers echoed the use of walkthroughs and informal observations as a way to improve the current TAP.

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process?*, non-PTS teachers continued with the theme of receiving consistent feedback from administrators on a timely basis. This included having a midyear meeting with their administrator where they can discuss progress on their goals and other areas; some schools had midyear meetings, while others did not. PTS teachers discussed the need to reexamine the four levels of standards and to continue to clarify and strengthen them.

When the assistant researcher asked the teacher focus groups, *How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?*, non-PTS teachers felt that the TAP process overall was a time consuming process and that time should be set aside for the different administrator
meetings. In addition, they felt that the different forms need to be streamlined with the ability to complete them online. PTS teachers did not focus on the time involved with the TAP, rather, they continued on the theme of peer coaching and using colleagues, not just administrators, as part of the TAP process. They also felt that there needed to be more frequent observations and not just one observation every 2 years.

This research question was linked to TEP questions 1 and 30 through 58. As seen in Tables 48 through 55, there were several mean scores below 3.0 that indicated weaknesses with the current TAP process for non-PTS and PTS teachers. One area of weakness that was consistent in both the focus group sessions and the TEP survey was the lack of standards tailored to the unique needs of teachers. This includes both specialists and differentiation between non-PTS and PTS teachers. Another area of weakness is the lack of multiple sources of data for teacher evaluation. The current TAP relies primarily on formal observations, meetings with evaluators, and self-evaluations. The use of informal observations, walkthroughs, peer coaching, artifacts, student performance data, student evaluations, midyear meetings and peer evaluations are not commonly used at this time. In addition, the feedback provided by administrators is infrequent and delayed. Finally, the process is time consuming and overwhelming for some teachers, particularly non-PTS teachers.

Conclusions

Several conclusions were drawn regarding the results of this study. These conclusions are presented below and organized by research question.
Research Question 1

How do school administrators and teachers differ in their perceptions on the overall effectiveness of a standards-based teacher evaluation system in the following areas: improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth?

Administrators saw the focus of the standards-based teacher evaluation system as a process to help all teachers grow professionally and relegating the use of the process for employment decisions once all other options for growth have been exhausted. Teachers saw the teacher evaluation system as a tool for self-reflection, to identify strengths and weaknesses, and to establish annual goals to address those strengths and weaknesses.

Most administrators viewed the standards-based teacher evaluation system as a process that has positively changed teaching in their school, especially in the areas of technology, the use of educational objectives, and as a tool for new teachers. Teachers had mixed perceptions and felt that the self-evaluation, goal setting, and accomplishment of those goals changed their teaching, not necessarily the standards-based teacher evaluation system.

Administrators had mixed views about the effect of the teacher evaluation system on professional growth. High school administrators felt that professional growth is driven by federal and state recertification requirements, as well as contractual incentives. Others felt that the rubrics, self-reflection, and goal setting components of the system were a key component to the professional growth of teachers. Teachers had similar views as the administrators. High school teachers supported the perceptions of high school administrators by stating that professional growth is driven more by federal and
state recertification requirements and contractual incentives. Other teachers indicated that goal setting, staff conversations, and professional learning community conversations were major contributors to professional growth.

Administrators also had mixed views about the effect that a standards-based teacher evaluation system has on student achievement. All administrators indicated that the teacher evaluation system does not directly affect student achievement. However, elementary and middle school administrators indicated that the consistency of the process throughout the school district will indirectly affect student achievement. Most teachers also felt that the teacher evaluations system can indirectly affect student achievement.

Administrators indicated that the consistency of the teacher evaluation process, the increase in professional development opportunities, and the focused conversations on the standards has had a positive effect on school improvement. Elementary and middle school teachers did perceive the teacher evaluation process to have an effect on school improvement, particularly in the areas of technology integration, whereas, high school teachers did not. Teachers overall also felt that the teacher evaluation system had minimal impact on the climate and culture of a school, whereas administrators did feel it had a positive impact.

Research Question 2

How do perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

Overall, elementary teachers perceived the teacher evaluation system to have more of a positive impact on improved teacher instruction, sustained school
improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth than middle school and high school teachers. In several attributes on the TEP survey, the mean score difference between elementary teachers and middle school teachers and elementary teachers and high school teachers was statistically significant.

Elementary teachers felt that the teacher evaluation system has changed their teaching by focusing on clear expectations, goal setting across a wider range of areas, and a reflection piece connected to the standards. Middle school teachers perceived the teacher evaluation system as a list of exemplary teaching practices. High school teachers had mixed perceptions about the impact that the teacher evaluation system has had on changing teaching practices. Some did not feel that the teacher evaluation system has changed their teaching, while others felt that the goal setting process has led to positive changes in teaching practices.

Elementary teachers indicated that the teacher evaluation system has had a positive effect on teacher growth, particularly in the area of technology integration. Middle school teachers saw the teacher evaluation system as a catalyst for additional professional development opportunities, which has led to an increase in professional growth. High school teachers did not see the teacher evaluation system as having an effect on professional growth; rather it was other external factors such as district professional development offerings, state and federal certification requirements, and contractual salary incentives. All of the focus groups examined professional growth more of an external function where teachers were taking courses or workshops, rather than as school based professional learning communities. Some focus groups did mention
that a few faculty meeting discussions focused on the TAP, which is an early indicator of a school-based professional learning community.

When referencing the effect that the teacher evaluation system has had on student achievement, there were mixed perceptions. Elementary teachers indicated that the teacher evaluation system has had an indirect effect on student achievement by creating a guide to help them implement good teaching practices. Middle school teachers had mixed perceptions where some agreed with elementary teachers, and others felt that teachers are intrinsically motivated to help students achieve. High school teachers did not feel that the teacher evaluation system had an effect on student achievement; rather it was goal setting, professional development workshops, and collaboration with colleagues that had an effect on student achievement.

Teachers also had mixed perceptions about the effect that the teacher evaluation system had on school improvement. Elementary teachers indicated that the teacher evaluation process has had a positive effect on school improvement and referred to the increase in technology integration and consistency of goal-setting as evidence. Middle school teachers felt that the teacher evaluation system has created opportunities for alignment between teacher goals, school improvement goals, and district goals, which results in an impact on school improvement. High school teachers felt that the teacher evaluation system was more beneficial to the growth of new teachers, but not necessarily a veteran teacher and did not have an effect on school improvement.

Research Question 3

How do perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?
Overall, teachers felt that the rubric standards, the way that the standards have been communicated, the nature and amount of information received during the evaluation process, and the clarity of the purpose of teacher evaluation have had a positive impact in the school district. Elementary teachers overall had more positive perceptions about the impact that the evaluation system has had the school district than middle school and high school teachers in several of the attributes on the TEP survey.

Elementary teachers perceived a positive aspect of the teacher evaluation system to be the collaboration between teachers and administrators throughout the entire process. Middle school and high school teachers focused more on the comprehensive standards of the rubric and the consistency of the process.

Research Question 4

How do perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary by school level (elementary, middle, and high school)?

Elementary and middle school teachers perceived the teacher evaluation system to be too time consuming with additional paperwork and meetings. Middle school and high school teachers felt that there are too many indicators to be evaluated at one time. They also indicated that the level of specificity between some of the standard levels was minimal. High school teachers commented that the rubrics should be more differentiated to specific teaching positions and stages of a teacher’s career. They indicated that an alternative evaluation for veteran teachers would be an important addition to the process. In addition, all three levels spoke to the need for more frequent observations, consistent feedback, peer observations, peer evaluations and walkthroughs as additional components that would enhance the current teacher evaluation system. Quantitative data supported
the need to have multiple sources of data for the current teacher evaluation system, differentiated evaluation standards, student evaluations, peer evaluations, and more frequent informal observations.

Research Question 5

How do the perceptions of improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth using the teacher evaluation system vary by professional and non-professional status teachers?

The quantitative data indicated that statistically there was very little difference in perceptions between professional and non-professional status teachers on the impact that the teacher evaluation system has on improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning, and elevated professional growth. Several positive attributes emerged including the impact that the teacher evaluation system had on professional practice, professional growth, student learning, school improvement, quality of teachers, and goals developed.

Professional status teachers overall perceived that the teacher evaluation system did not directly improve teacher instruction. They indicated that the goal setting has changed their teaching, which has always been a component of teacher evaluation. Non-professional status teachers felt differently in that the reflective piece of the teacher evaluation system had changed their teaching.

Professional status teachers had mixed perceptions about the effect of the teacher evaluation system on professional growth. Some felt that the district has linked the teacher evaluation system to multiple professional development opportunities such as technology integration, differentiated instruction, and skillful teaching which has led to a
positive impact on professional growth. Other professional status teachers felt that professional growth is linked to state recertification requirements and contractual incentives; rather than the teacher evaluation system. Non-professional status teachers indicated that the teacher assessment process does either directly or indirectly contribute to professional growth.

Overall, professional status teachers saw a direct or indirect connection between the teacher evaluation system and student achievement. Only one focus group, the high school PTS group, indicated that there is not a connection. Non-professional status teachers had mixed perceptions about the connection between the teacher evaluation and student achievement.

Professional status teachers overall felt that the teacher evaluation process had a positive effect on school improvement. Their rationale focused on the consistency of the process, and the alignment of the process with individual, school and district goals. Non-professional status teachers also indicated that the teacher evaluation system has had a positive impact on school improvement because teachers are more focused on common goals such as technology and literacy instruction.

Research Question 6

How do the perceptions of the positive impact of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?

The quantitative data indicated that statistically there was very little difference in perceptions between professional and non-professional status teachers on the positive impact of the teacher evaluation system, as indicated by the attributes on the TEP survey. Several positive indicators emerged, including the quality of the evaluation process, the
effectiveness of the standards, the formal observation information, and the intended role of evaluation.

Professional status teachers indicated that the consistency of the process for all teachers, the quality of the standards, and the conversations that have occurred between administration and staff have all had a positive impact on the school district. Non-professional status teachers also commented on the quality of the standards, as well as, the self-reflection and evaluation process itself as having a positive impact on the district.

Research Question 7

How do the perceptions of the weaknesses of the evaluation system vary between professional status and non-professional status teachers?

The quantitative data indicated that statistically there was very little difference in perceptions between professional and non-professional status teachers on the weaknesses of the teacher evaluation system as indicated by the attributes on the TEP survey. Several weaknesses emerged, including the lack of standards tailored to the unique needs of teachers, the lack of multiple sources of data for teacher evaluation, the infrequency and delay of feedback, and the amount of time dedicated to the process.

Qualitative data collected from the focus group sessions indicated that professional status teachers described several weaknesses in the current teacher evaluation system including the overwhelming nature of the process, the level of attainability for some standards, the lack of clarity of some of the standards, the need to include walkthroughs and informal observations, the need to include a peer observation or peer coaching component to the process, and to increase the number of observations throughout the school year. Non-professional status teachers echoed some of the data
collected from the professional status teacher focus groups and indicated that the process is too detailed and overwhelming for a new teacher entering the school district. In addition, several other themes emerged including the lack of clarity of some of the standards, the perception that they do not receive higher ratings on the rubrics because they are beginning teachers, the need to have a differentiated set of rubrics and expectations that is different from veteran teachers, and the need to have more frequent feedback throughout the school year.

Recommendations for Further Research

Research Recommendations

1) Replicate this study in the same Massachusetts suburban school district three years from now to see if the additional time allocated to implementation has changed the current perceptions of teachers and administrators.

2) Replicate this study in the same Massachusetts suburban school district by school to gauge the effect that school climate and culture have on the perceptions of teachers and administrators.

3) Replicate this study in other Massachusetts suburban school districts that use a standards-based teacher evaluation system.

4) Replicate this study in other Massachusetts urban and rural school districts that use a standards-based teacher evaluation system to see if there is a difference in perceptions based upon different types of school districts.

5) Replicate this study in other school districts that use a standards-based teacher evaluation system in other regions of the country to see if there is a difference in perceptions based upon regions and differences in state teacher evaluation regulations.
6) Design a comparison study that measures the perceptions of teachers and administrators in school districts that use a standards-based teacher evaluation system versus a non-standard based teacher evaluation system.

7) Design a study that examines the differences in the five factors that contribute to the quality and impact of a teacher evaluation experience (teacher, evaluators, procedures, feedback, and context) by level (elementary, middle, and high school).

Practice Recommendations

8) Design a quantitative study using the TEP of several local school districts that use a standard-based teacher evaluation system to diagnose particular problems associated with teacher evaluation. The results could lead to specific decisions regarding where to begin to revise evaluation procedures in those districts.

9) Design a pre-post evaluation quantitative study, using the TEP, which evaluates the impact of changes in a teacher evaluation system over time.

10) Design a quantitative study, using the TEP which compares schools that have different evaluation environments at the same level.

11) Design a study that evaluates the effects of peer observation and peer evaluation on professional growth.

12) Design a study that examines the effects of the use of multiple and diverse data sources for teacher evaluation such as artifacts, peer evaluations, informal observations, student evaluations, student performance has on professional growth.

13) Design a study that researches the effect of school culture on supporting and sustaining teacher growth.
Policy Recommendations

14) Design a study that evaluates the effects of a differentiated teacher evaluation system on professional growth. This evaluation system would include separate systems for new teachers, teachers in need of remediation, and veteran teachers who are competent and in pursuit of excellence in selected areas of the teaching standards.

15) Design a study that examines the specific training and preparation required for teachers and administrators in order to promote growth-oriented teacher evaluation systems.

16) Conduct studies that add to the understanding of criteria needed for effective teacher evaluation systems.

17) Conduct studies that examine the impact of teacher evaluation on improved teacher instruction, school improvement, sustained professional growth, and student achievement.

District Recommendations

18) Develop and implement specialized rubrics for non-classroom teachers, including special education teachers, school psychologists, library media specialists, instructional technology specialists, and guidance counselors.

19) Develop and implement a differentiated teacher evaluation system which includes separate processes for first year teachers, non-professional status teachers with teaching experience, professional status teachers in good standing, and professional status teachers who need remediation and additional support. As part of this differentiated system, an alternative evaluation system should be developed which allows professional
status teachers in good standing to focus on one or two standards, rather than all six standards. This alternative evaluation system could include an action research component, professional growth portfolio, or a formalized growth program such as an advanced graduate level program or National Board Certification.

20) Create a joint committee consisting of teachers and administrators which will meet on a regular basis to review the TAP process and make any recommendations for change. These recommendations could include ways to streamline the paperwork currently completed as part of the process.

21) In addition to formal observations and self-evaluations, develop multiple data sources for the TAP, including, but not limited to, peer evaluations, student evaluations, student performance, lesson plans, informal observations, walkthroughs and artifacts.

22) Develop and implement a peer evaluation or peer coaching component to the current TAP process.

23) Develop and implement a training program for both teachers and administrators on proper implementation of the TAP. This training program should include how to conduct frequent walkthroughs, provide peer coaching opportunities, develop alternative evaluations, and engage in frequent conversations about teaching and learning.

24) Examine ways to provide additional time for administrators to conduct walkthroughs, provide more timely feedback to teachers on formal classroom observations, and have more frequent conversations with teachers about teaching and learning practices.
25) Create opportunities at the middle school and high school level where professional learning communities are nurtured and developed so that conversations can occur about best practices in teaching and learning.

Concluding Remarks

Stiggins and Duke (1988) posit that "the paradox of teacher evaluation is that it holds the potential to help nearly every teacher improve, yet in actual practice, it helps almost no one" (p. 1). As school districts search endlessly for the formula that will create sustainable schools that help students achieve at their highest level, they sometimes overlook the power that a teacher evaluation system can have on making that vision a reality. Teachers play a critical role in the academic, social, and emotional development of students. However, in order for them to succeed, they need the support to professionally grow as educators and to be able to deal with the challenges that our students bring to the classroom today. In most school districts, teacher evaluation continues to be a traditional and outdated process that focuses on weeding out the poor teacher and ignores others. No one benefits when teacher-administrator conferences, formal observations, goal setting, stand-alone professional development workshops, and summative evaluations degenerate into meaningless rituals and drive by events. Teacher evaluation systems that are formative in nature and include differentiated evaluation options, a set of clearly defined standards, meaningful training of administrators and teachers, multiple sources of data, a supportive cultural context and adequate resources can be an untapped asset that has the potential to make substantial contributions to school and district improvement initiatives, the continuous professional growth of educators, and student learning. If along the journey of school improvement, teacher evaluation is
executed as a separate entity, the journey will lead to a dead end. However, if teacher evaluation is executed as a compass for school improvement efforts and professional growth, the journey will lead to greater student learning and successful schools. Ergo, the potential that a teacher evaluation system can have on the quality of education will be realized.
REFERENCES


http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/perception


Appendix A

Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) for Teachers
Appendix A

Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) for Teachers

A Study of the Implementation of the TAP Process

For the last two years, the teachers and administrators of this school district have been implementing the revised version of the Teacher Assessment Process (TAP). This spring, a doctoral student from Seton Hall University will be conducting a study to measure the perceptions of teachers and administrators in the implementation of the TAP. The results from this study will help to assess and improve the TAP system that is currently being used in this school district.

We will be using the Teacher Evaluation Profile (Stiggins & Duke, 1988) with some additional questions to provide some of the data for the study.

Overview

This form has been designed to allow you to describe in some detail your most recent experience with teacher evaluation in the Reading Public Schools. Your responses will be combined with those of other teachers to yield a picture of the key components in the teacher evaluation experience in this school district. The goal of this survey is determine how the evaluation process can be revised to help it serve relevant and useful purposes. Your frank and honest responses are important to reach this goal and will remain anonymous.

While this questionnaire is designed to be comprehensive in scope, it will take only a short time to complete. Please follow the instructions carefully and set aside about 15 uninterrupted minutes to provide thoughtful responses.

The Definition of Teacher Evaluation

Teacher evaluation takes different forms in different school districts. For the purpose of this study, teacher evaluation procedures may include all or some of the following:

- Goal Setting
- Formal and informal classroom observations
- Pre/Post observation meetings with Teacher Evaluator
- Examination of lesson plans, materials or other artifacts
- Self-Evaluation
- Final Written Summative Evaluation

When reference is made in this questionnaire to teacher evaluation, it should be understood to encompass any of these procedures that are followed in the evaluation program within this school district.

Instructions

Please use the scales provided on the following pages to describe yourself and the nature of your most recent teacher evaluation experience in the Reading Public Schools. Do this by:

- Considering each of the items carefully,
- Studying the scale to be used to describe each,
- Circling the number on the scale that best represents your response.

Thank you for your participation.
Section 1: Demographic Information

I. Including the current year, how many years have you taught in this school district?
   a. 1-3 years
   b. 4-7 years
   c. 8-12 years
   d. 13 or more years

II. If you have taught in multiple school districts, including the current year, how many total years have you taught?
   a. 1-3 years
   b. 4-7 years
   c. 8-12 years
   d. 13 or more years
   e. I have only taught in this school district

III. Your current teaching assignment grade level (select the answer that best describes your current position).
   a. Grades PreK-5
   b. Grades 6-8
   c. Grades 9-12

IV. Your gender
   a. Female
   b. Male

V. Date of most recent evaluation
   a. During the 2006-07 academic year
   b. During the 2007-08 academic year
   c. Before the 2006-07 academic year

Section 2: Overall Rating

Please reflect on your most recent experience with the evaluation process in your school. Consider the entire evaluation process including goal setting, self assessment, meetings with your evaluator, planning for evaluation, formal and informal observations, or other procedures and feedback.

1. Rate the overall quality of the evaluation process.

   Very poor quality  1  2  3  4  5  Very high quality
2. Rate the overall impact of the evaluation process on your professional practices. (Note: A rating of 5 would reflect a strong impact leading to profound changes in your teaching practices, attitudes about teaching, and/or understanding of the teaching profession. A rating of 1 would reflect no impact at all and not changes in your practices, attitudes, and/or understanding.)

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact

3. Rate the overall impact of the evaluation process on your professional growth as an educator. (Note: A rating of 5 would reflect a strong impact in your professional growth. A rating of 1 would reflect no impact at all in your professional growth.)

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact

Next, please rate your perception of the impact of the teacher evaluation process on the school, district, and state goals. Use the scales provided to indicate impact, from 1 meaning no impact to 5 meaning strong impact.

4. Rate the positive impact on student learning: A strong impact rating (5) would indicate that the evaluation system improves the quality of student learning.

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact

5. Rate the positive impact on student achievement: A strong impact rating (5) would indicate that the evaluation system improves student performance on standardized tests.

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact

6. Rate the positive impact on school improvement goals: A strong impact rating (5) would indicate that the evaluation system helps the faculty achieve school improvement goals.

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact

7. Rate the positive impact on school climate and culture: A strong impact rating (5) would indicate that the evaluation system supports and helps foster a positive school culture and climate that supports learning.

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact
8. Rate the positive impact on quality of teachers: A strong impact rating (5) would indicate that the evaluation system improves teaching quality.

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact

9. Rate the positive impact on your goals that you develop each year. A strong impact rating (5) would indicate that the evaluation system supports and links to the development of your goals.

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact

Section 3: Rating Attributes of Evaluation

Please use the scales provided below (1 through 5) to describe yourself and the nature of your most recent teacher evaluation experience. Do this by:

- Considering the attribute to be described
- Studying the scale to be used to describe it
- Selecting the number that represents the point you select on each continuum
- Marking the answer sheet accordingly

Part A-Describe yourself in relation to the following attributes:

10. Your overall performance on the TAP

Does not meet standard 1 2 3 4 5 Exceeding the standard

11. The strength of your professional expectations of yourself

I demand little 1 2 3 4 5 I demand a great deal

12. Orientation to risk taking

I avoid risks 1 2 3 4 5 I take risks

13. Orientation to change

I am relatively slow to change 1 2 3 4 5 I am relatively flexible

14. Orientation to experimentation in your classroom

I don’t experiment 1 2 3 4 5 I experiment frequently
15. Openness to Criticism

I am relatively closed 1 2 3 4 5 I am relatively open

16. Knowledge of technical aspects of teaching

I know a little 1 2 3 4 5 I know a great deal

17. Knowledge of curriculum content for what you teach

I know a little 1 2 3 4 5 I know a great deal

18. Experience with teacher evaluation prior to most recent experience

Waste of time 1 2 3 4 5 Very helpful

Part B-Describe your perceptions of the person who most recently evaluated your performance:

19. Credibility as a source of feedback

Not credible 1 2 3 4 5 Very Credible

20. Working relationship with you

Adversary 1 2 3 4 5 Helper

21. Level of Trust

Not trustworthy 1 2 3 4 5 Trustworthy

22. Interpersonal Manner

Threatening 1 2 3 4 5 Not threatening

23. Temperament

Impatient 1 2 3 4 5 Patient

24. Flexibility

Rigid 1 2 3 4 5 Flexibility
25. Knowledge of technical aspects of teaching

Not knowledgeable  1  2  3  4  5  Very knowledgeable

26. Capacity to model or demonstrate needed improvements

Low  1  2  3  4  5  High

27. Familiarity with your particular teaching assignment

Unfamiliar  1  2  3  4  5  Very familiar

28. Usefulness of suggestions for improvement

Useless  1  2  3  4  5  Very Useful

29. Persuasiveness of rational for suggestions

Not persuasive  1  2  3  4  5  Strong impact

Part C-Describe the attributes of the procedures used during your most recent evaluation:

Standards are the criteria used in the TAP process to evaluate your teaching. Describe the procedures related to standards in the items below:

30. Were standards communicated to you?

Not at all  1  2  3  4  5  In great detail

31. Were the standards clear to you?

Vague  1  2  3  4  5  Very clear

32. Were the standards endorsed by you as appropriate for your teaching assignment?

Not endorsed  1  2  3  4  5  Highly endorsed

33. Were the standards...

The same for all teachers?  1  2  3  4  5  Tailored for your unique needs?

To what extent were the following sources of performance information considered as part of the evaluation?
34. Observation of your classroom performance
   Not considered 1 2 3 4 5 Used extensively

35. Meetings with evaluator
   Not considered 1 2 3 4 5 Used extensively

36. Examination of artifacts (lesson plans, materials, home/school communication, etc.)
   Not considered 1 2 3 4 5 Used extensively

37. Examination of student performance
   Not considered 1 2 3 4 5 Used extensively

38. Student evaluations
   Not considered 1 2 3 4 5 Used extensively

39. Peer evaluations
   Not considered 1 2 3 4 5 Used extensively

40. Self-evaluations
   Not considered 1 2 3 4 5 Used extensively

Describe the extent of the observations of your classroom, based on your most recent evaluation experience. (Note: In these items, formal refers to observations that were pre-announced and/or were accompanied by a pre- or post-conference with the evaluator; informal refers to unannounced drop-in visits.)

41. Number of formal observations per year
   a. 0 observations
   b. 1 observation
   c. 2 observations
   d. 3 observations
   e. 4 or more observations

42. Approximate frequency of informal observations (most recent experience)
   a. None
   b. Less than 1 per month
   c. Once per month
   d. Once per week
   e. Daily
43. Average length of FORMAL observation (most recent experience)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brief (few minutes)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Extended (40 minutes or more)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

44. Average length of INFORMAL observation (most recent experience)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brief (few minutes)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Extended (40 minutes or more)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Part D-Please describe the attributes of the feedback you received during your last evaluation experience:

45. Amount of information received

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Great Deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

46. Frequency of formal feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrequent</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Frequent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

47. Frequency of informal feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrequent</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Frequent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

48. Depth of information provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shallow</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>In depth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

49. Quality of the ideas and suggestions contained in the feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
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</table>

50. Specificity of information provided

<table>
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<tr>
<th>General</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Specific</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

51. Nature of information provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgmental</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Descriptive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

52. Timing of feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delayed</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Immediate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
53. Feedback focused on the TAP standards

Ignored the TAP standards 1 2 3 4 5 Reflected the TAP standards

Part E-Please describe these attributes of the evaluation context:

Resources available for evaluation

54. Amount of time spend on the evaluation process, including your time and that of all other participants.

None 1 2 3 4 5 Great Deal

55. Time allotted during the school year for professional development aligned with standards.

None 1 2 3 4 5 Great Deal

56. Availability of training programs and models of good practices

None 1 2 3 4 5 Great Deal

District values and policies in evaluation

57. Clarity of policy statements regarding the purpose of evaluation

Vague 1 2 3 4 5 Very clear

58. Intended role of evaluation

Teacher accountability 1 2 3 4 5 Teacher growth

******THANK YOU******
Appendix B

Teacher Evaluation Profile for Administrators
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Teacher Evaluation Profile for Administrators

A Study of the Implementation of the TAP Process
For the last two years, the teachers and administrators of this school district have been implementing the revised version of the Teacher Assessment Process (TAP). This spring, a doctoral student from Seton Hall University will be conducting a study to measure the perceptions of teachers and administrators in the implementation of the TAP. The results from this study will help to assess and improve the TAP system that is currently being used in this school district.

We will be using the Teacher Evaluation Profile (Stiggins & Duke, 1988) with some additional questions to provide some of the data for the study.

Overview
This form has been designed to allow you to describe in some detail your most recent experience with teacher evaluation in this school district. Your responses will be combined with those of other administrators to yield a picture of the key components in the teacher evaluation experience in this school district. The goal of this survey is determine how the evaluation process can be revised to help it serve relevant and useful purposes. Your frank and honest responses are important to reach this goal and will remain anonymous.

While this questionnaire is designed to be comprehensive in scope, it will take only a short time to complete. Please follow the instructions carefully and set aside about 15 uninterrupted minutes to provide thoughtful responses.

The Definition of Teacher Evaluation
Teacher evaluation takes different forms in different school districts. For the purpose of this study, teacher evaluation procedures may include all or some of the following:

- Goal Setting
- Formal and informal classroom observations
- Pre/Post observation meetings with Teacher Evaluator
- Examination of lesson plans, materials or other artifacts
- Self-Evaluation
- Final Written Summative Evaluation

When reference is made in this questionnaire to teacher evaluation, it should be understood to encompass any of these procedures that are followed in the evaluation program within this school district.

Instructions
Please use the scales provided on the following pages to describe yourself and the nature of your teacher evaluation experience this year in this school district. Do this by:

- Considering each of the items carefully,
- Studying the scale to be used to describe each,
- Circling the number on the scale that best represents your response.

Thank you for your participation.
Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Including the current year, how many years have you been an administrator in this school district?
   d. 1-3 years
   e. 4-7 years
   f. 8-12 years
   g. 13 or more years

2. If you have been an administrator in multiple school districts, including the current year, how many total years have you been an administrator?
   a. 1-3 years
   b. 4-7 years
   c. 8-12 years
   d. 13 or more years
   e. I have only been an administrator in Reading

3. Your current assignment grade level (select the answer that best describes your current position.
   a. Grades PreK-5
   b. Grades 6-8
   c. Grades 9-12

4. Your gender
   a. Female
   b. Male

Section 2: Overall Rating

Please reflect on the evaluation process in your school for this current school year. Consider the entire evaluation process including goal setting, self assessment, meetings with individual teachers, planning for evaluation, formal and informal observations, or other procedures and feedback.

5. Rate the overall quality of the evaluation process.

   Very poor quality 1 2 3 4 5 Very high quality

6. Rate the overall impact of the evaluation process on a teacher’s professional practices. (Note: A rating of 5 would reflect a strong impact leading to profound changes in teaching practices, attitudes about teaching, and/or understanding of the teaching profession. A rating of 1 would reflect no impact at all and changes in practices, attitudes, and/or understanding.)

   No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact
7. Rate the overall impact of the evaluation process teacher professional growth. (Note: A rating of 5 would reflect a strong impact on teacher professional growth. A rating of 1 would reflect no impact at all in teacher professional growth.

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact

Next, please rate your perception of the impact of the teacher evaluation process on the school, district, and state goals. Use the scales provided to indicate impact, from 1 meaning no impact to 5 meaning strong impact.

8. Rate the positive impact on student learning: A strong impact rating (5) would indicate that the evaluation system improves the quality of student learning.

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact

9. Rate the positive impact on student achievement: A strong impact rating (5) would indicate that the evaluation system improves student performance on standardized tests.

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact

10. Rate the positive impact on school improvement goals: A strong impact rating (5) would indicate that the evaluation system helps the faculty achieve school improvement goals.

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact

11. Rate the positive impact on school climate and culture: A strong impact rating (5) would indicate that the evaluation system supports and helps foster a positive school culture and climate that supports learning.

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact

12. Rate the positive impact on quality of teachers: A strong impact rating (5) would indicate that the evaluation system improves teaching quality.

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact

13. Rate the positive impact on the goals that you develop with teachers each year. A strong impact rating (5) would indicate that the evaluation system supports and links to the development of teacher goals.

No impact 1 2 3 4 5 Strong impact
Section 3: Rating Attributes of Evaluation

Please use the scales provided below (1 through 5) to describe yourself and the nature of your implementation of the TAP. Do this by:

- Considering the attribute to be described
- Studying the scale to be used to describe it
- Selecting the number that represents the point you select on each continuum
- Marking the answer sheet accordingly

Part A—Describe yourself in relation to the following attributes:

14. Your overall performance in implementing the TAP

Does not meet standard 1 2 3 4 5 Exceeding the standard

15. The strength of your professional expectations of yourself

I demand little 1 2 3 4 5 I demand a great deal

16. Orientation to risk taking

I avoid risks 1 2 3 4 5 I take risks

17. Orientation to change

I am relatively slow to change 1 2 3 4 5 I am relatively flexible

18. Orientation to experimentation in your school

I don’t experiment 1 2 3 4 5 I experiment frequently

19. Openness to Criticism

I am relatively closed 1 2 3 4 5 I am relatively open

20. Knowledge of technical aspects of teaching

I know a little 1 2 3 4 5 I know a great deal

21. Knowledge of curriculum content

I know a little 1 2 3 4 5 I know a great deal
22. Experience with the teacher evaluation process prior to the past two years.
   Waste of time  1   2   3   4   5 Very helpful

Part B-Describe your perceptions of yourself as an evaluator:

23. Credibility as a source of feedback
   Not credible  1   2   3   4   5 Very Credible

24. Working relationship with teachers that you evaluate
   Adversary  1   2   3   4   5 Helper

25. Level of Trust with teachers that you evaluate
   Not trustworthy  1   2   3   4   5 Trustworthy

26. Interpersonal Manner with teachers that you evaluate
   Threatening  1   2   3   4   5 Not threatening

27. Temperament with teachers that you evaluate
   Impatient  1   2   3   4   5 Patient

28. Flexibility with teachers that you evaluate
   Rigid  1   2   3   4   5 Flexible

29. Knowledge of technical aspects of teaching
   Not knowledgeable  1   2   3   4   5 Very knowledgeable

30. Capacity to model or demonstrate needed improvements
   Low  1   2   3   4   5 High

31. Familiarity with the various teaching assignments that you evaluate
   Unfamiliar  1   2   3   4   5 Very familiar
32. Usefulness of suggestions for improvement that you give to teachers
   Useless  1  2  3  4  5  Very Useful

33. Persuasiveness of rational for suggestions that you give to teachers
   Not persuasive  1  2  3  4  5  Strong impact

Part C - Describe the attributes of the procedures that you use with teachers during the evaluation process. Remember, the evaluation process includes goal setting, observations, meetings, and evaluation writeup.

Standards are the criteria used in the TAP process to evaluate teaching. Describe the procedures related to standards in the items below:

34. Did you communicate the standards to teachers?
   Not at all  1  2  3  4  5  In great detail

35. Were the standards clear to teachers?
   Vague  1  2  3  4  5  Very clear

36. Were the standards appropriate for each teacher’s assignment?
   Not appropriate  1  2  3  4  5  Very appropriate

37. Were the standards...
   The same for all teachers?  1  2  3  4  5  Tailored for their unique needs?

To what extent were the following sources of performance information considered as part of the evaluation process?

38. Observation of a teacher’s classroom performance
   Not considered  1  2  3  4  5  Used extensively

39. Meetings with you
   Not considered  1  2  3  4  5  Used extensively
40. Examination of artifacts (lesson plans, materials, home/school communication, etc.)
   Not considered 1 2 3 4 5 Used extensively

41. Examination of student performance
   Not considered 1 2 3 4 5 Used extensively

42. Student evaluations
   Not considered 1 2 3 4 5 Used extensively

43. Peer evaluations
   Not considered 1 2 3 4 5 Used extensively

44. Self-evaluations
   Not considered 1 2 3 4 5 Used extensively

Describe the extent of the observations that you have done for professional status and non-professional status teachers for the 2007-08 school year. (Note: In these items, formal refers to observations that were pre-announced and/or were accompanied by a pre- or post- conference with the evaluator; informal refers to unannounced drop-in visits.)

45. Number of formal observations for a professional status teacher being evaluated
   a. 0 observations
   b. 1 observation
   c. 2 observations
   d. 3 observations
   e. 4 or more observations

46. Number of formal observations for a non-professional status teacher being evaluated
   a. 0 observations
   b. 1 observation
   c. 2 observations
   d. 3 observations
   e. 4 or more observations
47. **Approximate frequency of informal observations for all professional status teachers**
   a. None
   b. Less than 1 per month
   c. Once per month
   d. Once per week
   e. Daily

48. **Approximate frequency of informal observations for all non-professional status teachers**
   a. None
   b. Less than 1 per month
   c. Once per month
   d. Once per week
   e. Daily

49. **Average length of FORMAL observations**
   Brief (few minutes)  1  2  3  4  5  Extended (40 minutes or more)

50. **Average length of INFORMAL observations**
   Brief (few minutes)  1  2  3  4  5  Extended (40 minutes or more)

**Part D-Please describe the attributes of the feedback you typically gave to teachers during the evaluation process throughout the 2007-08 school year:**

51. **Amount of information given**
   None  1  2  3  4  5  Great Deal

52. **Frequency of formal feedback**
   Infrequent  1  2  3  4  5  Frequent

53. **Frequency of informal feedback**
   Infrequent  1  2  3  4  5  Frequent

54. **Depth of information provided**
   Shallow  1  2  3  4  5  In depth

55. **Quality of the ideas and suggestions contained in the feedback**
   Low  1  2  3  4  5  High
56. Specificity of information provided

General 1 2 3 4 5 Specific

57. Nature of information provided

Judgmental 1 2 3 4 5 Descriptive

58. Timing of feedback

Delayed 1 2 3 4 5 Immediate

59. Feedback focused on the TAP standards

Ignored the TAP standards 1 2 3 4 5 Reflected the TAP standards

Part E—Please describe these attributes of the evaluation context:

Resources available for evaluation

60. Amount of time spent on the evaluation process, including your time and that of all other participants.

None 1 2 3 4 5 Great Deal

61. Time allotted during the school year for professional development for teachers aligned with standards.

None 1 2 3 4 5 Great Deal

62. Time allotted during the school year for professional development for administrators aligned with the implementation of the evaluation process.

None 1 2 3 4 5 Great Deal

63. Availability of training programs and models of good practices

None 1 2 3 4 5 Great Deal

District values and policies in evaluation

64. Clarity of policy statements regarding the purpose of evaluation

Vague 1 2 3 4 5 Very clear
65. Intended role of evaluation

Teacher accountability  1  2  3  4  5 Teacher growth

******THANK YOU******
Appendix C

Focus Group Questions for Teachers
Appendix C

Focus Group Questions for Teachers

I. Introduction

1. Describe the purpose for the focus group discussion
2. Describe the process for the focus group discussion
3. Ask for permission to audiotape
4. Introductions of interviewers
5. Introductions of group members

II. Questions

a. What are the major purposes of the teacher evaluation process used in your school?

b. What have been the most effective aspects of the current TAP process in your school?

c. What have been the least effective aspects of the current TAP process in your school?

d. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on improving teaching in your school?

e. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on the professional growth of educators in your school?

f. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on student achievement in your school?

g. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on school improvement in your school?
h. For those of you that have had experience with the old TAP process that was in place between 2003-06, how would you compare the two systems?

i. If you had the audience of the state board of education, what suggestions would you make to improve teacher evaluation?

j. How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?
Appendix D

Focus Group Questions for Administrators
Appendix D

Focus Group Questions for Administrators

I. Introduction

1. Describe the purpose for the focus group discussion
2. Describe the process for the focus group discussion
3. Ask for permission to audiotape
4. Introductions of interviewers
5. Introductions of group members

II. Questions

a. What is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process in the Reading Public Schools?

b. What have been the positive effects of the current TAP process?

c. What have been the negative effects of the current TAP process?

d. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on improving teaching in the district?

e. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on the professional growth of educators in the district?

f. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on student achievement?

g. What effect has the current teacher evaluation process had on school improvement?

h. For those of you that have had experience with the old TAP process that was in place between 2003-06, how would you compare the two systems?
i. If you had the audience of the state board of education, what suggestions would you make to improve teacher evaluation?

j. How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?
Appendix E

Letter to Superintendent of Schools
Appendix E

Letter to Superintendent of Schools-Reading Public Schools

John Docherty
225 Lancaster Drive
Tewksbury, MA 01876

January, 2008

Patrick A. Schettini, Jr., Superintendent of Schools
Reading Public Schools
82 Oakland Road
Reading, MA 01867

Dear Superintendent Schettini:

Currently, I am a doctoral student at Seton Hall University College of Education in the Department of Education Leadership, Management, and Policy Executive Ed.D. program. As part of my doctoral requirements, I am presently preparing to conduct a survey and focus group research for my dissertation. The title of my dissertation is: Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators in a Massachusetts Suburban School District Regarding the Implementation of a Standards-Based Teacher Evaluation System.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the perceptions of teachers and building level administrators in a Massachusetts suburban public school district, a standards-based teacher evaluation system that was implemented during the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school year. The study will measure perceptions of teachers and administrators in the effectiveness of teacher evaluations in relationship to improving instruction, school improvement, improved student learning, and professional growth. Data will be collected and analyzed by level (elementary, middle, high school) and professional/non-professional teacher status.

Once I receive approval from the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to begin my mixed method research study, I would like to conduct a survey and nine focus groups in May/June of the 2007-08 school year. The survey will be open to all teachers and administrators who were employed during the 2007-08 school year. The focus groups will consist of three administrator groups and six teacher groups. The focus groups will be scheduled with the teachers and administrators in advance so as not to interfere with a school or district events. A letter detailing the general information for the study will be distributed to all participants well in advance of the study. I will be able to share the findings of the study in aggregate form with all participants of the study. While doing so, I will maintain the utmost confidentiality relative to the focus group discussion participants, the survey participants, and their responses.
As part of the process, I will be distributing an informed consent form which describes both the focus group sessions and the survey. By completing and returning the informed consent form and participating in the focus group discussions and surveys, teachers and administrators are consenting to participate in the study. With that in mind, no names or personal identification information will be reported or shared in any way, other than the level (elementary, middle, high school) of assignment, and their current teaching status. Confidentiality will be maintained before, during, and after the study with each volunteer being assigned and referred to as a participant number. These measures are fully disclosed in the Informed Consent Form.

Given that participation in this study is voluntary, any participant can leave the survey or focus group session at any time for any reason without penalty or loss of any kind. Even though the participant responses will be tape recorded following the signing off on the informed consent form and then transcribed into written format for analysis, the participant names and building name will not be referenced in the dissertation.

The data will remain secure under lock and key and will not be removed from the locked storage unit until it is destroyed 3 years after the study has been completed. Participants names will be kept completely confidential. As such, there are no risks in this research. There are no monetary benefits for participating in the survey.

If you would like the school district to participate in the study, please send me a letter granting permission to utilize your school district for my study. I have included a self-addressed stamped envelope to facilitate the process.

Thank you in advance for considering my request to conduct my research in your school district, once the Seton Hall University IRB approves it. I am very much looking forward to conducting the research while maintaining confidentiality. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

John Doherty
jdoherty@reading.k12.ma.us
978-851-2508
Appendix F

Approval Letter from Superintendent of Schools to Conduct Study
February 1, 2008

Mr. John Doherty
225 Lancaster Drive
Tewksbury, MA 01876

Dear Mr. Doherty,

I give you permission to conduct surveys and focus group research in the Reading Public Schools to be used to fulfill requirements of your doctoral program at Seton Hall University.

Sincerely,

Patrick A. Schettini, Jr., J.D.
Superintendent of Schools

The Reading Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age or disability.
Appendix G

Informed Consent Form
APPENDIX G
Informed Consent Form

Affiliation:

John Doherty is a Seton Hall University College of Education doctoral student enrolled in the Department of Education Leadership, Management, and Policy Executive Ed.D. Program. He is currently employed as the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment at the Reading Public Schools in Reading, Massachusetts.

Purpose of the Study:

The title of the study is Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators in a Massachusetts Suburban School District Regarding the Implementation of a Standards-Based Evaluation System. The purpose of the study is to analyze the perceptions of teachers and building-level administrators in a Massachusetts suburban public school district, regarding the standards-based teacher evaluation system that was designed from 2003-2006, and implemented during the 2006-08 school years. The researcher will conduct six focus groups, consisting of separate groups of professional and non-professional status elementary, middle, and high school teachers. The researcher will also conduct three focus groups with elementary, middle, and high school administrators. Each session will last approximately one and a half hours during the months of May and June. Arrival time for the participants would be 15 minutes before the start of the focus group session for check in and complimentary refreshments. The date and time for the sessions will be scheduled so as not to interfere with any school or district events. The focus group will meet in a comfortable location at a school.

Procedures:

At a set time and destination, approximately nine other teachers will engage in a focus group discussion that will revolve around a predetermined question route, of which you have received a copy. The discussion will be recorded with use of a Panasonic audio tape recorder and an Olympus digital voice recorder as a back up measure in case one recorder malfunctions. The use of the tape-recording devices is so that vital comments, ideas, and opinions throughout the group discussion are not lost. An assistant moderator will be present to record session notes, to ensure that environmental factors do not impede upon the focus group discussion, to monitor the functionality of the tape recorder, and to set up the refreshments. Participant names will not be utilized to identify participants. Instead, the participants will have in front of them a numbered tent card, which will serve as their only identity in the group discussion. Aside from this number, the participants status (professional status or non-professional status), and level currently teaching or supervising (elementary, middle, or high school) will be utilized to identify participants. The assistant moderator and the researcher are well-versed in terms of the
requirements for complete participant confidentiality and anonymity as well as the rules for participants’ rights.

**Focus Group Interview Guide:**

A focus group interview guide will be utilized by the researcher to facilitate group interaction. The focus group interview guide consists of 10 open-ended questions designed to generate discussion among participants pertaining to the implementation of a standards-based teacher evaluation system and the effect that this system has had on school improvement.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

By signing this Informed Consent Form and participating in the focus group discussion, you are consenting to participate in the study. You are also to be fully aware that your discussion responses will be tape recorded and later transcribed to written format. I will share the findings of the study in aggregate form with the focus group participants and separately with the administrators, if so requested. While doing so, I will maintain the utmost confidentiality and anonymity relative to the focus group discussion participants and their responses. Given that the participation in this study is voluntary, you can leave the focus group session at any time for any reason without a penalty or loss of any kind.

**Anonymity:**

Focus group research involves face to face contact making anonymity an impossibility for the research phase of the study. You will be anonymous, however, to those individuals not affiliated with the study who review the information included in the dissertation.

**Security of Stored Data:**

The audiotapes and transcripts will remain in the possession of the researcher after the focus group sessions. The data from each will be locked in the researcher’s cabinet and will be secured in this location until it is destroyed three years after the study. No other individuals other than the assistant moderator and the researcher’s Seton Hall University faculty mentor, Dr. Colella, will have access to the data. Responses will be kept completely confidential.

**Confidentiality of Records:**

No individuals will have access to the list of participants for the research, the names of the administrators, or the names of the schools. The data analysis will be included in the dissertation; however, no names of participants will be included in the dissertation. The researcher, the assistant moderator, and the researcher’s Seton Hall University faculty mentor, Dr. Colella, will be the only individuals who have access to
the data, and the data will be locked and stored in the researcher’s cabinet for three years after which time it will be destroyed.

Risks:

There are no risks in this research.

Benefits:

There are not benefits in this study, monetary or of any other nature to the participants. The participants will receive refreshments during the research focus group.

Alternatives to Research Study:

Any participants who are unable to attend the focus group sessions will be permitted to respond in writing to the focus group interview guide questions and return the responses in a self-addressed stamped envelope. Confidentiality and anonymity will be extended to participants who respond in writing relative to the disclosure of said information.

Contact Information:

There is one researcher for this study, John Doherty. His Seton Hall University faculty mentor is Anthony Colella, Ph.D. The researcher may be contacted with questions or concerns regarding the study or for information about participants’ rights by writing to him at Seton Hall University, College of Education and Human Services, Department of Education Leadership, Management, and Policy, Jubilee Hall Fourth Floor, 400 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, NJ 07079, or by telephoning him at Seton Hall University at (973) 761-9397. Dr. Colella may be contacted with questions or concerns regarding the study or for information about participants’ rights by writing to him at Seton Hall University, College of Education and Human Services, Department of Education Leadership, Management, and Policy, Jubilee Hall Office #406, 400 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, NJ 07079, or by telephoning him at Seton Hall University at (973) 761-9389. Additionally, Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D., the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Director, may be contacted with questions or concerns regarding the study or for information about participants’ rights by writing to her at Seton Hall University, Office of the Institutional Review Board, Presidents Hall Third Floor, 400 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, NJ 07079, or by telephoning her at Seton Hall University at (973) 313-6314.

Permission to Use Audiotape Recorders:

In having participants complete the Informed Consent Form, the researcher is requesting written permission to tape record the focus group sessions. The participants will be identified by participant number on tape, not by name. The researcher will utilize
the audiotapes to prevent missing the acquisition of data. Participants will have the right to review any or all portions of the audiotapes and request the tapes be destroyed. The researcher, the assistant moderator, and the researcher's Seton Hall University faculty mentor, Dr. Colella, will be the only individuals who have access to and listen to the audiotapes. The audiotapes will be transcribed by the assistant moderator in the presence of the researcher, stored in a locked cabinet by the researcher, and destroyed three years after the study by the researcher. It is to be noted that the transcript data and subsequent analysis will be included in the researcher's dissertation.

Acknowledgement of Informed Consent Form:

I have read the above information, and I agree to participate in the study. I am aware that I will be given a copy of this Informed Consent Form for my records before the research is conducted.

______________________________  ______________________________
Signature                      Date
Appendix H

Permission to Use the Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) Survey
APPENDIX H
Permission to Use the Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) Survey

-----Original Message-----
From: Doherty, John [mailto:jdoherty@reading.k12.ma.us]
Sent: Tuesday, January 22, 2008 4:04 AM
To: Dave Wilson
Subject: Permission to Use Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP)

Good Afternoon, Mr. Wilson:

My name is John Doherty and I am currently a doctoral candidate in the Executive Ed.D Program at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey. My dissertation is titled, Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators in a Massachusetts Suburban School District Regarding the Implementation of a Standards-Based Teacher Evaluation System. I am interested in using the "Teacher Evaluation Profile" (TEP) as one of the instruments in my study.

In researching a 1994 dissertation by Bruce Rindler from Boston University and a 2007 dissertation from Vici Hughes at the University of Missouri, I have noticed that permission to use the revised TEP has been given by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. The original TEP was developed by Richard Stiggins and Daniel Duke in 1988. Are you able to grant approval for the use of the revised version of the original TEP?

Thank you, in advance, for any help in this component of my study.

John Doherty
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
82 Oakland Road
Reading, MA 01867
781-942-5422
jdoherty@reading.k12.ma.us

Yes John, I can provide the permission, and do so thusly:

You are hereby granted permission to use the material referenced in your email reproduced below for the purposes described. Any other material or use will require separate permission. Credit to Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, as well as the authors, will be appreciated.

Dave Wilson
Director, Development & Communications
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 SW Main St., Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
503-275-9517 (v)
503-275-0458 (f)
wilsnd@nwrel.org
http://www.nwrel.org
Appendix I

Transcripts of Focus Group Sessions
Elementary Non-PTS
Focus Group Questions for Teachers
Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators in the Implementation of TAP

Date of Session: June 3, 2008
Number of Participants: 4
Location: Superintendent's Office
Beginning Time of Session: 3:15 p.m.
Ending Time of Session: 4:00 p.m.

I. Introduction

Good Afternoon and thank you for participating in this focus group session.

My name is Dr. Christine Redford and I will be conducting today’s focus group session. The purpose of this focus group session is to gather data on your perceptions of the teacher evaluation process or TAP that is used in this school district. This data will be used as part of Seton Hall researcher, John Doherty’s dissertation which will be measuring the perceptions of teachers and administrators in the implementation of a standards-based evaluation system. You have received a copy of the signed consent form for this focus group session. This focus group session is being recorded. As you can see, we have an assistant moderator present at the session to handle any logistical issues such as refreshments, audio recording equipment, and taking some notes of key phrases.

You will be identified only by a number and the category of focus group that you are participating. This focus group contains teachers from (elementary, middle, or high school). The teachers in this focus group session are (professional status or non-professional status) teachers. If this is not your category, please let me know now.

The answers from all of the people we interview will be combined for the results of the dissertation. Nothing you will say will ever be identified with you personally. As we go through this session, if you have any questions about why I am asking something, please feel free to ask. Participation in this focus group is completely voluntary and you may leave at any time during the focus group session.

This session is a group discussion on the questions that will be presented. I will begin each question by asking one particular person the question. You will be identified by the number that is located in front of you on the tent card. Other participants will then have the opportunity to give their
answer once the first person has answered the question. You may include additional information throughout the discussion at any time.

Are there any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions)

I am now going to begin asking you the questions.

II. Questions

a. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP used in your school?

- I see it as useful feedback for me as how I can improve and my principal and I use it as a jumping off point to discuss different aspects of teaching and what my strengths are and what I need to focus on next year in a general sense.
- And going on with that, I think it helps you reflect on the teaching that you have done, figuring out the strengths and weaknesses, what has worked well this year and what you should change for next year.
- I see it as a time, you know your day is so distracted and there is so much going on, it is almost like a forced stopped and think time. You know, a forced time for you to stop and talk about, you know, certain things. Just because you end up forgetting.
- And also, if we did not have that time scheduled, it would be so easy to just let it slide, because so many other day to day things come into play.
- I agree with everything else that was said, but I look at it as an opportunity for the goals that you set at the beginning of the year to reflect upon those and wrap up to see how you progressed in those areas.
- See mine is not as goal related at this point. It is more like best teaching practices and what I do well. It is almost a chance for me to bring to the principal things that I have done that she may or may not have seen. You know, I was really proud of this and next year I am going to go up to the next level.

b. The current TAP process has been in place for 2 years. During that time, what have you noticed are some of the positive effects of the program?

- I certainly think that scheduled time to meet with your administrator. That point of year or different points of year where you stop and think about those sorts of things so it is kind of putting something like that into your daily schedule to.
- I think sometimes looking at the checklist is a reminds me of all of the aspects that is required of me for my job. Some of it is, oh I did that well and it is kind of like a pat on the back, but a refocus of what those main concepts are and what I should be doing and taking note personally of what I think I did hit and which things I thought, oh I have not focused on that for a while, maybe that is my focus for the next part. But, having it in a written form as opposed to talking and having a visual helps.
• And along with that, I like how detailed it is too and how many different sections and so many levels of each section. You can really see what it takes to be an effective teacher.
• Moderator-So it clearly says what it is...
• Yeh.

c. Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process?

• Same thing. A lot of detail. A little overwhelming when the principal gives you something and says fill it out, see where you think you are. Oh, my goodness, this is going to take a while.
• And you may leave some things out. I was saying before to someone that you may be discussing something with your principal and they might suggest something and I oh I do do that, I just forgot to put it in there. It is very detailed.
• I also think that when administration comes in to observe your lesson and then critique you on the checklist, I find that sometimes what is on the checklist cannot be measured from a single observation. Now, do I know of a way that you can do that? Not really because it is time consuming. But, a lot of things on that checklist are over the year or over the course of that and you cannot take that out of one lesson. So sometimes you feel like ending up defending yourself more than necessary even though they know what you are doing in that lesson because it may not have shown up. But, they have not seen the build up, and they have not seen the follow through.
• An example of that is assessments because you never usually get observed when you are giving an assessment. You have the informal ones with the day to day teaching, but yes.
• I think along those lines as well, the categories, for each subcategory of things that are being looked for and you are either exceeding the standard, meeting the standard, progressing toward the standard, or not meeting the standard. I know that I have heard from various people about where beginning teachers are supposed to fall on that and I have heard that they are to be progressing toward and I heard sometimes that they are meeting towards. I personally would feel very guilty and feel like I was not doing my job to the best of my ability if I was progressing toward, so someone that wants to be meeting towards the standard just because I feel like I am not doing. And when I look at some of the progressing towards the way some are worded, I think, I hope no one is doing this so. I would feel so bad if that was the case so I think sometimes, especially for newer teachers, and I have heard from various different people that newer teachers are supposed to be mostly progressing or mostly meeting depending on who you talk to, but I feel like the progressing to me, if I was on that, I would be nervous. I would feel like I was not doing what I am supposed to be for my children and that would upset me, so....
• Do you think that there should be a separate TAP document for non-professional status or new teachers?
- Maybe that is an idea. I don't mind saying I am progressing towards as being the best teacher I can be, but the way that some things are worded on the document, I wouldn't want to check off that I was progressing because oh, please tell me this is not all I am doing, please tell me that I am doing more than that. I feel that I am, and if I am not, you know, I certainly want all of the help I could get. But, I would feel not right putting it down, but I don't want to say that I am progressing, that is not the term that bothers me, but some of them are phrased and I just felt that it didn't feel right to me, so maybe it is another document that is needed connected to or maybe it is the terminology, but whatever it is, I am sure no one wants to make a fifth category, but even making that clear to new teachers maybe all of those subcategories are not all on there. So maybe if you think that they can't master, maybe, one of them was about all of the curriculum and content in that grade level. If you a brand new teacher in their first year cannot be meeting that standard just because it is their first year, well, maybe that is a shaded out box or something that they can attain, or it comes off their sheet. Something you know they can't get it in a year and it is not possible. Sometimes when I read them I don't know where to put myself.

- I have something in mind that I know that I need to work on and so I am looking for the place that is the one I am going to put progressing towards and that is part of my goal. It is a little manipulative of the form.

- I think mine is sometimes similar to that in that it is the wording itself. The wording for exceeds and the wording for meets sometimes is so similar that sometimes I could not figure out the differences between the two. And that is when I end up making it up in my mind, which in turn turns it into a more subjective piece of assessment than the objective piece of the assessment. So, I know it is hard and I know it is very difficult to make it as objective as possible, but I remember reading it through saying, these sound the exact same. And in some parts for the exceeds and meets, it was the exact same sentence. So me saying I am not sure that I can both and not knowing where it fits. Then going along saying what was said by number 2, the idea of what a new teacher should or should not be. You are already being told that you can't do this and it ends up being taken away and sometimes its that mentality that those assessing say, it is the beginning of the year, you can't exceed yet, it is the beginning of the year. And I know I have had it before where I have looked at my thing and I said last year I had been here, but I have downgraded in September, nothing has changed. So, I sometimes wonder how you can leave at one and come in slightly lower and not knowing how that fits and being told that its that and you started off having exceeded yet because the year is not done to something that is supposed to mark progression. You could not have progressed yet, because you have not started.

- We are giving you room to grow.

- So sometimes I think that the document should be different from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. If that is going to be the mentality that you can't exceed yet at the beginning of the year, then it should be a slightly different document at the beginning of the year that says here is where you are because of the fact that you have not done the year so something along those wording and I don't always like the fact of how could I have dropped in my teaching.
• Or maybe do something where the first couple of years of teaching is one and something through your tenth year because it is a different playing field. I think of our students and we give them grades. You know, if I have one student that is getting a grade and each term it gets significantly higher, that is not only a child that is progressing appropriately, but the expectations are upgraded and he is making even more progress. But that would be unusual to me a child that is at one grade and by the end of the year is at a totally higher grade. The expectation would be they work as hard as they can. Certainly they can do better, but there is not a drastic jump and then go back down the next year so that they can work up again at the end of the year. I feel strongly when I grade my children that way so I would feel the same way about us being assessed as well. You know, you should stay about the same place and in some small areas you should be making progress in and hopefully you are not making negative progress on something, but there shouldn’t be a giant jump from one year to the next.

d. What are some ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed your teaching?

• I think the only thing that is the fact that I am made aware of more and I remember seeing these things, you know, you are going to school and things like that and what you need to become a teacher. But, I think sometimes if you don’t see that on a daily basis you forget all of the parts and I think it comes back to being able to see in writing in a broken down fashion of what it really is. And, just that self-reflecting time in that you always want to reflect on your lessons that you should be reminded on what you should be reflecting on within those lessons.

• It is clear expectations, goal setting, things that you do as a teacher and for your students and it is good to have done for yourself as well.

• It just doesn’t take into account the actual lesson, but how you can communicate with parents or relationships with a student too. It reminds you in all areas of your teaching and what expectations you should have for yourself.

• I think even seeing the summary and sometimes having someone else acknowledge that you have done and you thought you did very well ends up helping you too in your teaching because you get that reinforcement and sometimes you feel like in teaching in your own classroom everyone knows what you are doing. So sometimes it even feels nice that you are appreciated and acknowledged what you have done that you have done very well at.

• But on the other hand, if you have done something well and nobody knows except for you, you get your own self-satisfaction from it, but it doesn’t get recognized or acknowledged in the TAP. So it works both ways. But I think we are in it more for the self-satisfaction, not to get approvals or pats on the back.

e. What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school?
- When it first came out, I think it helped my principal see that there were many teachers who were weak in an area, so we had little helpful handouts, and little workshops, and role playing things. So it helped her see we needed as a group.

- I would agree. I think from my understanding areas of technology was a huge jump which was indicative of filling those out what people had access to and also assessment tools that were more formative. I know that is an area there as well that is not necessarily as, you know, kind of using technology and programs of that nature to do more tracking of student assessments and kind of where the progress is made so those are areas that kind of come up a little bit weaker on the TAP document and those are areas as a school and district that we need to be making progress in.

- I think sometimes it is the goal setting part of the aspect and not as much the checking at the end, but the little details of it. But, having one of those goals being a team goal, kind of forces, but it reminds you, I like that word better, that you should be talking with your team, you know and having a goal. And also feel like there is a support system there too and that it is a goal among many of you so that you are trying to progress, but a reminder that others are trying to tackle the task with you. I like the risk taking one too and it makes you feel like you can try something new and if you don’t completely succeed that is ok, as long as you are trying something and making some progress. You don’t have to get to the finish line at the end, but you want to progress to it.

- Moderator-Do you feel free to have goals that continue for more than one year? Or do you feel that they have to be changed every year?

- I have had one continue form last year to this year. If it is something that you are personally working towards and you want to exceed better in it, its good to have that. I don’t necessarily feel the pressure to change that one, I change others, but not that one in particular.

- I think I have slightly changed it, but more of a focus one. In that I started it, worked towards it and realized that either my original goal was too broad for what I wanted to do and I didn’t want to get rid of the goal because it is so broad because of this goal, I want to work at this point. So, the umbrella I was working at was the same, but I might be picking a new thing under that to progress towards.

- I am a little bit different. I think I need to accomplish my goals in one year. I don’t feel comfortable carrying them over. I feel that I have failed if I don’t succeed in those goals. So I pick different ones every year.

- I am similar and that is why I have focused mine a little more, so I felt that I could...

- So you accomplished that piece and take it to the next level?

- Exactly. It is wanting and feeling a closure.

- Moderator-Am I hearing you right that you don’t feel the pressure to do that it is just within yourself? Is that right or do you feel that administrators...

- It is mostly within myself. I think there is a little bit.

- Yes, there are suggestions for future goals.

- And I think having to focus it on, I understand the concept of focusing it on the district and not the school. But sometimes, they are very broad and I think
sometimes having to pick one from each sometimes has me pick a goal that I would not have regularly focused on and that I realize that might have been your weakness here, so I wanted to work on two things here, but I couldn’t because I couldn’t use the same district goal twice or school goal twice. Sometimes I feel the need to pick a new one because it does not quite fit the parameters.

- Moderator-So tell me about that. How many goals do you usually have?
- Three
- Moderator-And do they have to be under different categories, is that what you are saying?
- Yes.
- So what do you do, you do a district one?
- Well, you have to tie it into a district goal.
- We just usually pick. We do a team goal, a personal goal, and a school type goal but we always have to tie all three of them to the plan.
- And we do too. I tie it in for example to five things on the school improvement plan. I have to pick a different one for each and because those five are different, mine might be more with making communication with parents. I want to work on two aspects of it. But I feel that I can only work on one because I need to pick a different district goal. It is as appropriate for me, it is still good, but it might not be as appropriate for me.
- So it would be more appropriate if we could focus on what our needs really were.
- Yeh.
- I have found that I have been tempted to pick things that not wouldn’t otherwise do, but things that are in the back of your head. Oh, I really want to do this, but it is not necessary, kinda like a change that you want to make. Typically it is something that you want to do throughout the whole year, picking a particular content area and organizing whatever piece of that is. So I tend to pick broader goals and wish I had more time to spend on them. They are not what you have to get done for the next day to be able to teach and instruct, so sometimes at the end of the year. I also think that at the beginning of the year I have a ton that I want to do, so I have to force myself to pick a couple, which is nice. I am glad and that kind of focuses me and at the end of the year when I look back to see how much progress is made, but I definitely wish I especially had more time to work on that goal because it is not something that naturally fits into my day. It is more, I definitely want to get this done and it is a goal to help me get it done, but I wish I had more time for it.

f. What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your classroom?

- Well, I will speak to the assessment piece. I just think focusing on the formative and summative assessments that I find I am more aware of staying on top of where kids are succeeding and where they are having a little bit of trouble. I am able to redirect my teaching then. So because I am more aware of the assessment piece via TAP, then I was able to help the kids.
• And I can't think of which section it falls under but, activating the prior knowledge and summarizing the lesson, I do try to do that and it promotes more conversation among the students and they feel more comfortable once their brains have been refreshed. I try to do that more.
• I have been working on that too.
• Moderator-So it helps them reflect and think.
• I would say, as teachers, we are more conscious of all of the aspects of what makes a great teacher and the TAP document helps us to remind us of those things, then we are more likely to do them in our classroom and that helps our students. So it is a broader checklist of things that has a ripple effect. It kind of reminds us and makes us more aware and making sure no one forgets them. An important area that you know, we might pay as much attention to.
• The only thing that I can think about sometimes is, you know, part of the evaluation is having your boss, the administration, come in and watch you. And the kids notice that. The kids know that someone is there and having the conversation with them that you know when other teachers come in to watch you that people come in to get ideas so that you can learn and improve yourself. So sometimes even having the conversation with the kids about I talk to others and I try to improve myself just like you try to improve yourself. So in some aspects I am the teacher, but I am a student too! I am always learning, I am always trying to improve and having that conversation with the kids. So, the process reminds me that I am a student too, even though I am a teacher, and I need to remember that when I am giving them assessments and they need to know that I am learning to. And I am always trying to improve myself like I am asking them to.

g. In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school?

• Well, I have already spoken to this a little bit, where my principal has noticed areas that as a school we can work on.
• I am thinking technology in particular. It is trying to get more SMART Boards in, more trainings, finding ways to incorporate that more into the student's work.
• One year we had a focus on literacy and so we had different times on Thursday afternoons devoted to little workshops or exercises to do as a team.
• I think that sometimes the hard part is that as well as I know what my team goal is, I am not aware of what the other grade’s goals are. I am not aware if someone has a similar goal as I do and I think one of the disadvantage is that aspect is between that teacher and the administration, rather than with that teacher and the other teachers. And it shouldn’t be lock secret, you know. It should be this is what I am working on and to have that conversation. It should be opened up more to this is what everybody’s goals are and you can connect to other people. Take a staff meeting to say you had this type of goal. Why don’t you get together and talk about what you have done. Maybe midway point because sometimes you see it at the beginning and the end, but there is sometimes this disconnect about the middle of the process.
• That is a good point because I may have a goal that you had last year and you could share ideas with me.
• I think you have to be careful with that, though. Because some people like to keep things private.
• Maybe make it voluntary sharing.
• They may not want other people to know their weaknesses and what they are working towards. Blatantly, but if they are guided into a certain group like a technology group or something that would help.
• Or maybe have a box on the form that would say, I am okay if you share with other teachers about my previous goals or I prefer that you not to share it. Or maybe a checklist or do it as a general. You know, the principal looks over them and says, ok, about half my staff has something to do with technology. We’ll have a staff meeting based around that. And keep it very general.
• And that has happened. The year to year one is kind of cool. Doesn’t that require a database or something? That would be super organized.
• Yeh

h. From your perspective, how has the TAP process seem to improve your effectiveness as a teacher?

• Well, we kind of said this already. We are giving goals, we come up with goals with our administrators, work towards them and see how well we do, and bring it to the forefront of our thoughts.
• I think at times, the process does frustrate me in that I don’t necessarily like the box of meet and exceed and that sometimes it is slightly discouraging and that you look at it and even though you understand at a point you should be here like that. But I think emotionally sometimes the process hurts me because I focus more on a checked box and what the meaning really was supposed to be and this is something I need to work on or something and so you feel personally discouraged.
• Is it more of a continuum.
• Either more of a continuum or I know the summary part is more subjective, but I tend to hear a lot don’t worry about boxes, look at just the summary and that I keep thinking if that is the point, then why are there the boxes. So I think either a broader spectrum of having an inbetween. You know, that there is something inbetween meets and exceeds, or something so that there is more leery, you know.
• Right, because that is where there is a lot of us, we’re perfectionists. We want to be 100%. We want to be across the board and if we are not, 99 is a killer.
• The progressing one can make you kind of defensive. But, then I think too, as administrators, I would be sitting there saying, well I can’t give exceeds on everyone.
• Right.
• And anyone that gets a paper back saying meets is saying why am I just meeting? And I think that piece of everyone wants to do their best and if you are not quite sure how to get there, I think that is really challenging. I do like on the one hand that it is black and white, you know, things are specified with different skills and
different things that are to be expected to be showing, however, I think there are
different ways to measure that. It does seem clear cut, but at other times, it seems
harder to interpret.

- In some sense I like having it there, but I don’t necessarily think that the person
evaluating me has a clear understanding of what I have done for that standard.
Because that standard is something throughout the year and unless you are in my
classroom every day, I can’t see that you are able to truly evaluate me and truly
understand what I do. And I mean, it is not realistic. It is not like I am the only
employee and that you can be in that classroom every single day and every single
meeting. But, I think that is the other frustrating part in that the other criteria that
is on there, I don’t think that it can be checked off by someone that is in your
classroom once or twice to observe or is not there to see the whole unit all the
way through. And I think that is where the frustration for me ends up, in that, is
how are you able to truly evaluate me on this, when I don’t think that you have
really seen me do that one way or the other. So if it is not quite in the box that I
want it to be at, it would be getting more frustrating for me to say, I think I should
be higher and I don’t know why you scored me lower when you haven’t seen me
do that.
- Right.
- And I think sometimes that is where the frustration lies.
- And yet, how do you solve that? You can’t
- Right!
- You can’t have her sitting in the classroom all of the time. Even once a week
visits won’t show the whole thing. And that is unrealistic in itself.

  i. For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which
was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare?

- Unable to answer because none of them were in old process.

  j. If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to
improve teacher evaluation, what would you say?

- I would say make it more of a personal process, rather than an outside evaluation.
  Meaning…
- Almost a self-reflection.
- Yeh, and I don’t think that it would work this way for everybody. You would
  need someone who actually is willing to look at their weaknesses and be able to
  point them out. I think I was going back to saying that I think the boxes should be
  checked off by someone who is not in my classroom on a daily basis. So I think
  for certain things maybe for the lesson to get checked off, but for a more personal,
  if someone is not in my classroom every single day, to make it me choosing the
  box, rather than an outside person choosing the box. I know that process isn’t
  going to work unless the person is reflective enough and will to put out your
  weakness and work toward your weakness and you hope everyone is, but that is
  not always the case.
• We had spoken about a continuum, instead of exceeds and meets, and progressing towards. Say maybe a scale of 1-10, and maybe check off a 7, 8, 9, or 10.

• I guess along those lines making sure the wording matches up with what you actually say, perhaps considering having a different document depending on the number of years that you have been teaching. The expectations should be significantly different. I don’t know if this goes to Massachusetts, however, it is also the way it is presented initially. I feel that there are pretty clear expectations for different points of the year and what is supposed to be done. However, I would have love to have seen only a couple sheets of paper that would have clearly shown what are you supposed to do at the beginning of the year, what are you supposed to do in the middle, and what you are supposed to do at the end. And I know that I have been to meetings where it has been discussed and it has been explained, but I feel that a lot of people spending time after saying, what are we supposed to do now? So I think that there probably is a very clear cut way to put it on one or two pieces of paper and be done with it and have and I am not sure that everyone is clear as they could be on what we should be doing at every point during the year, depending on where they are in their career.

• I think also making it as sometimes when talking to teachers within other schools I think sometimes the mentality behind it in that you are a newer teacher so you should not be there yet. But, I don’t think that is the same in all of the schools. I talk to some people at other schools and they did not hear this is where you are supposed to be because of this. So I think sometimes making it clear if there is going to be a you can’t meet this standard because you are only teaching this many years or something like that, it is clear across the board. And if there isn’t going to be that it needs to be restated across the board. That you should not be hearing in a conversation, I can’t mark you higher because you are only at this year.

• Yeh, have it be the same across the district.

  k. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process?

• I don’t know if there is anything new to say.

• We do like a fall evaluation which is good because we have a new set of kids and a new set of challenges. The timing of that usually happens in late September or early October. That is good because it is early enough in the year, but not too early so we hammer out some of the beginning of the year things. Then we have a midyear to kind of review the goals to see where you are at.

• I don’t have a midyear. I was just thinking it would be nice to have a midyear to see how you are doing.

• Then we have a self-eval and then we have our evaluation and a few observations along the way.

• So at the beginning of the year and this is a piece that I am sure is written somewhere, but amongst a lot of other things or is a little confusing, because I think it is done slightly different in different schools. We are supposed to after completing our goals meet with our administrator and discuss those. And then
you meet with your administrator before and after each of your official observations.

- Before you set your goals do you have anything to do with the TAP document?
- I had to fill out a very overwhelming, but it is the checklist, just in circle form.
- We didn't have a circle form. We just had the TAP document and we just put where we thought we were.
- We did have to do that.
- We completed that at the beginning of the year and then we had to do our goal setting later on in the year when you are formally observed and then you are to meet before and after you are observed to discuss it. Midyear you are supposed to meet to discuss how are you progressing on your goals and then at the end of the year you have to talk about how your goals went.
- That is what I am saying, I feel like there is a beginning and an end and not necessarily a check in process.
- There is a middle, but it throws you for a loop because you are saying what are my goals?
- You know that piece that you have at the beginning of the year where you are supposed to look at the TAP document and kind of self-assess yourself of where you fall? As we said before if it is supposed to be connected from the year before, you should look at the copy that you had last spring. You should talk about the areas that you want to work on and the areas that you should be improving. Speak off of that document and that document is getting adjusted throughout the year instead of a blank document of where you think fall.
- But sometimes the fall one, I think you might need a blank one because if you have a very challenging student or a group of students, maybe your goals may change because of the kids.
- Maybe your goals, but I think that within the TAP document and that piece would probably where you are standing with the progressing, meeting, or exceeding. That should probably stay similar and I know that piece we are supposed to do before our meeting and discuss that.
- I am going to play devil's advocate here because last year I had a nice calm class and this year it was chatty, very chatty. Last year, I was great in classroom management, but this fall, oh my goodness, and this is where I needed to really focus on. Last year's class was too easy.
- I guess that's true.
- I think the other thing I was thinking is that when you first come in and your are a beginning teacher, I think the TAP document is too overwhelming.
- I do too.
- The point of the goals is nice. It gives you a limited focus. Three things. And I think for the first few years of teaching, what it should really look like is if these are my three goals, parent communication, interaction with kids, and this and the only thing you are going to evaluate me in that TAP document are those three things. And then the next year, it is assumed that I am going to look at three other things in addition to the others. Yes, you can still grade me on the ones that I did the last time and then three new ones. So that, if you were going to make the document different for non-professional versus professional, and I think in my
mind that would entail, is a more focus. And you have so many boxes and you are a new teacher. It is unrealistic to be expected to all of that. But if you are not focused on that one thing...

- And you don’t want to discourage them, because if they can’t do it, they’ll say forget this, I quit.
- Exactly
- And I think that when you are focused on every single box, you are not meeting them as well as you should. You can’t exceed them, because you weren’t focused on them. You weren’t trying to learn and improve on one thing.
- So we are applying John Collins writing to TAP.
- When a child is first learning a new skill, you do not expect to give them the unit test at the beginning. You give them one thing, you give them mini little quizzes, you build up and build and build and build. And I think the same thing should be done for us. We are students too and we should be improving as teachers. So that process should be the same process that we give our kids. Build it up the same way. And that might be, you should be expecting a first year teacher to be at the same level as a 5th, 6th, 7th year teacher. Our document should be a little different. And don’t go backwards, once you have that focus they should be marked again. But narrowing it down a little.

1. **How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?**

- Have a midyear.
- Sometimes I think that other people besides the administrator could have input on how well a teacher is teaching. Team colleagues, grade level colleagues, so other perspectives.
- But to play it again as with the grade level sharing, not everyone is comfortable. I do think that you need to take into consideration the perspective of those giving the information. Is it a friend colleague is it a colleague that you may not be getting along with as well. You know, getting it without getting a bias, which is difficult. But, I think it is an important perspective to hear and I think it needs to be in a section that is clear. I don’t know, but there may be a bias behind it.
- Right now, I think that team colleagues do go to the principal just on a voluntary basis and say, you know what, she really did a great lesson on this. Ask her about that or something. I don’t know about parents though. I think they probably volunteer without being asked, so we probably would leave it like that.
- Even if it was at what you were talking about that comfort level in the course of someone being evaluated you could say is there any colleague that you know of that has done something like exemplar that you would like to mention? And again, people do it informally all the time, but it might not even be someone who works on your team, it might be someone else who you saw something just happening. In a way for it not to tell me something that shouldn’t have happened, but is there anyone while you are here that you want to make sure that it is mentioned so that you know when the administrator meets with them they could say you know I heard such great things about and you know that talking point that
speaks about something that they have done that maybe they would not have brought up otherwise.

- I like what you said about maybe the SPED assistants or the SPED people who are in your class anyway and see you more on a normal regular basis.
- But how do you do that without putting them on the spot. I don’t know.
- I know.
- But that would be valuable feedback anyway.
- And I do think sometimes that the parents are pretty good with something good and sometimes saying it. But, I also think, a lot of times, the parents are more apt to say something...
- When they feel they are advocating for their child.
- Yeh.
- When it is more of a controversy, rather than a, and not to say that is all, I have definitely known parents that have said you know, that was a great thing and did you know my child did this and things like that. But I do think what is heard is the negative. It would be good for them to purposely seek out something that would be more of a positive like a general instead of them coming to you. So that you may end up with a more positive outlook to counter some of the more... You end up carrying nothing or.
- But I do think that our principals know who the complaining parents are.
- Yes.
- I think they know that. At least by the time they get to our grades.

m. That covers the areas that I wanted to ask. Is there anything that you care to add?

- I like the fact that it is a work in progress and I like the idea that what is currently working is not set in stone. And that I really hope that you end up taking what has been said in all of them to make some changes and it is not a oh, so that is what they think. And that is nice, moving on.
- I would like to see a little bit of time allocated to us to fill out the forms. I always feel like I have to do it over a weekend and with so many other things maybe eliminate a staff meeting or something and say okay, you have this afternoon, spend it on the TAP.
- I think along those lines in planning and professional development and staff meetings and things that are going to be connected, I know that Reading is not little district and it has a lot of balls in the air in terms of things that it is trying to accomplish and sometimes that is very overwhelming because there are so many different things. And I don’t not to say this is true in middle school or high school, but the elementary level with so many subjects to be taught that the number of things that are being expected, certainly that time piece is huge and if you look seriously at the decisions as a district that we have made, bringing in extra technology to accept the TAP document, all of those things if we kind of connected those in a way for professional development or staff meetings,. It is really connected to those ideas instead of additional things. If we are having a staff meeting, the time is allotted for this we are going to talk about the TAP
document and this is what you are going to do during this time at a staff meeting in regards to it, so making those pieces. We have so many great things going on and I know that is because partially we are always looking for new things to bring in and I think that is great, but I think at the same time, looking at what we have and making it stronger and really kind of saying, this are the ideals that we have adopted this is the goals that we have set for ourselves, lets really focus them and lets do that instead of continuing to look for all of these other and to heap more and more on. I want to do a few things really really well and if we are going to bring that process in, that we allot the time for it and the training for it. If you want something done a certain way and you want some expectation for what it should look like, explain what the standard is, let’s have that discussion during those times, so it is meaningful for everyone.

- And sometimes if you rush through things it is not going to be as meaningful.
- I think at the same time too when it’s the inschool times that you meet and things like that in order to do the preobservation and the post observation, I think teachers should have the choice if you want it during a special time after school or I think there should be an option where you get a coverage in your classroom not losing your prep time and not have to stay in and not have to come early. And I wouldn’t want to make it mandatory one way or the other because I definitely think there are some who just feel a level of comfort during a prep time so I don’t want to have to be away from my kids. But I think for some when it gets overwhelming, everything always comes at the same time. Everything is at the beginning, everything is at the middle, and everything is at the end, and I feel that when that happens, you have a lot of after school meetings, you have a lot of and yes, I know that at the elementary school level we have half day Wednesdays, but a lot of those are taken up by this meeting and this meeting and this meeting. And very rarely do you sometimes make that 18 planning time, because all meetings come up during that time. And so I think giving the teachers the option to not have to take personal time to meet and make it more meaningful. I think that you get a better reflection because you are more focused on the actual document as opposed to oh I have to take my kids in a few minutes, I have to do this in a few minutes, I have a parent meeting here.

- And what am I doing for social studies tomorrow? And I think that is exponentially shown at the elementary level. But we do so many things.
- But I do think it is important to make it an option because if you mandate it one way or the other, because depending on the class, some years it is more of a trial for me to be out, then just to be in there. So, the option would be nice.

Elementary PTS
Focus Group Questions for Teachers
Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators in the Implementation of TAP

Date of Session: June 2, 2008          Number of Participants: 4

Location: Superintendent's Office    Beginning Time of Session: 3:15 p.m.

Ending Time of Session: 4:15 p.m.

1. Introduction

Good Afternoon and thank you for participating in this focus group session.

My name is Dr. Christine Redford and I will be conducting today's focus group session. The purpose of this focus group session is to gather data on your perceptions of the teacher evaluation process or TAP that is used in this school district. This data will be used as part of Seton Hall researcher, John Doherty's dissertation which will be measuring the perceptions of teachers and administrators in the implementation of a standards-based evaluation system. You have received a copy of the signed consent form for this focus group session. This focus group session is being recorded. As you can see, we have an assistant moderator present at the session to handle any logistical issues such as refreshments, audio recording equipment, and taking some notes of key phrases.

You will be identified only by a number and the category of focus group that you are participating. This focus group contains teachers from (elementary, middle, or high school). The teachers in this focus group session are (professional status or non-professional status) teachers. If this is not your category, please let me know now.

The answers from all of the people we interview will be combined for the results of the dissertation. Nothing you will say will ever be identified with you personally. As we go through this session, if you have any questions about why I am asking something, please feel free to ask. Participation in this focus group is completely voluntary and you may leave at any time during the focus group session.

This session is a group discussion on the questions that will be presented. I will begin each question by asking one particular person the question. You will be identified by the number that is located in front of you on the tent card. Other participants will then have the opportunity to give their answer once the first person has answered the question. You may include additional information throughout the discussion at any time.
Are there any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions)

I am now going to begin asking you the questions.

II. Questions

a. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP used in your school?

- I think to identify goals, teacher goals, things to work on, and improve. I think to get a perspective, a teacher perspective, and an administrative perspective as well. It’s a team evaluation.
- I think in addition to all of those things not only just to assign goals but to monitor if you are reaching previously agreed upon goals. So goal making and seeing if you are reaching the goals, the effectiveness of the teachers, in terms of the administration, how you see yourself and how the administration also views your work. Because there could be a difference there. And how you could improve upon your teaching strategies and what you are doing in the classroom.
- It is also much more objective than subjective.
- I think one of the other things is that is just not the classroom things, there are also things about professional development opportunities you have taken and things like that. So they are looking at the whole person instead of just one pigeon hole. Not just your performance in the classroom, but other areas that you are involved in whether it is in the school setting, special committees, professional development opportunities, or academics that you have taken.
- It is all inclusive.
- Yeh. It really looks at all of the different ways that you are improving yourself as a person and how that hopefully will also be a positive effect on the school and the students.

b. The current TAP process has been in place for 2 years. During that time, what have you noticed are some of the positive effects of the program?

- I think the walkthrough.
- Moderator-How has that been positive?
- I think that the administrator gets to see you in more than a regular prescheduled observation situations.
- Moderator-So it is more natural, that is what you are saying?
- Yeh. And more often, they see there is more contact, so that they can see what you do.
- Can I disagree with that?
- Moderator-Sure. What would you like to say, number 4.
- I would say that I haven’t seen as much administrators in my classroom as I have seen in the past. But, it is two different circumstances.
• I think the positive is the collaboration of how its done. Its not all one-sided as it used to be. In the early years, the principal comes in and makes all the judgment and observation. Now, we are being asked to evaluated ourselves and bring that to the table. So I think that it makes it a fair representation, because often times principals don’t know what we are doing.
• And just to piggy back on that also that it might be two different avenues of thought. You personally want to improve in one direction, where administration wants to see a different area. Then that collaboration dialogue really opens it up to an agreed upon goal.

c. Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process?

• Sometimes I think that I am the one who is writing the evaluation. And I put in, as I am sure others do, I put in a great deal of time answering all of those questions. I felt in the past that administration takes all and just copies it and there it is. I have done all of the work.
• Very time consuming, very paper heavy.
• I think that it is a little overwhelming.
• Totally overwhelming.
• And I think if you are not on your evaluation year, it is even more so. Isn’t that even a bigger one?
• No, I think it is easier if you are not. This is not my evaluation year.
• So for your evaluation year it is bigger. So for a lot of the teachers that are newer and are being evaluated this year and they have that TAP document on top of everything else, it is really overwhelming and stressful. Stressful for new teachers, particularly.
• Even for veteran teachers.
• But I think it is to the point that you get to some questions and it is like, I don’t even know what I am writing anymore. I am just going to be putting something down now. Because it is so long.
• I can’t remember from last year. I can only remember this year.
• Was this year your evaluation year?
• No last year. So this year seemed easy because it was a non-evaluation year, but a colleague did comment a couple of weeks ago, she is a veteran teacher and it was her evaluation year, and it was extremely time consuming to do. That very last form that they had to do, it took at least a couple of hours. Too time consuming.
• It is something that you have to do on your own time, you really don’t have time during the day to do it, so it is on our own time, so we are taking time away family and their responsibilities.
• I felt that I was writing a research paper.
• Right.
• And I really was not sure how much to write and I can remember my principal, I had quite a number of pages and he just said, oh my goodness, what had I done? And I said, well you wanted to know, so I wanted to give you everything. There
was no limit. It would be nice to be told, just write in pencil in the sections and you don’t have to write any more than that. But not, knowing...

- Parts of it are very generic. But some of it there’s a school psychologist, a library media specialist, but for some of the other specialists, it is very generic for them to focus in on. I know the National Association of Sports Physical Education under HR has a whole thing on physical education, just similar to this just focused on phys. Ed.

- Moderator-So you would like to see something more specific or differentiated for your needs.

- Yeh.

  d. What are some ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed your teaching?

- I think I reflect on what the set goals are and if I am moving towards the accomplishment of those goals. They seem to be more in the foreground than they had in the past.

- We always had goals and EBO’s and focused on those. I think there is a broader range that you have to look at now. The whole individual.

- I think it really breaks everything down in a very concise way. Just the whole act of teaching, not just the delivery of the instruction, it is the management and the preparation and the...

- Outreach and everything that is included in that.

- Right.

- I agree that it broke it down and focused it which is helpful. I think that I am not responding because not being in that evaluation year, some one just said and I wanted to comment on the broad range and the community outreach. I am not sure if all of those things are possible. Is it looked at over a long period of time? It might be for some years that you are able to incorporate that and other years you are not. You know if you look at someone over a five year period, you could look at someone who ran the student council for three years and for a couple of years not. I can’t remember if that is taken into account or not.

- Moderator-That is a good thought, does it look at the long range.

  e. What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school?

- I look at the areas and it says, exceeding the standard, meeting the standard, and does not meet the standard. For me, looking at this, I am evaluating myself, it is reminding me of the things that I really need to be aware of and focusing on as a teacher and if I want to be exceeding the standard. I think for teachers that it needs to see what you need to work on, areas perhaps that you are not giving much focus. It defines some of the important areas of good teaching. I look at that and say, oh my gosh, I am not doing that enough. You can really be hard on yourself.

- I think that it definitely is a document that demands self-reflection.
• When I went through my evaluation year, I was told that an area that I need to work on was technology. And I thought, oh, okay. Because that is an area here, am I right, technology? You know, you really would not think about that, but technology is a really big part of teaching, but that affected me this year because I have put a lot of focus on technology and we have gotten a lot of technology in the classroom so that has helped. So, I feel like I have gone way ahead. So, it really helps to build your awareness about what you need to work on. Not seeing it as a negative, but, oh, a positive.
• Yeh, the self-awareness kind of thing.

f. What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your classroom?

• I think that the goals are broken down, it kind of automatically causes you to break down your goals with your students.
• And to include good elements of teaching like differentiating and scaffolding.
• Yeh, somehow that came more into play. I can't clarify why it did.
• I think, too, stating goals before a lesson is taught, writing them out. It has changed me, I am writing them out as a little blip for kindergartners, and yeh, it can be done. So I think it is helping them because it is getting them ready for what is to come.
• So I think clarifying those things for yourself and saying this is what the expectation is for me and it makes things clearer for the students too. I am more self-reflective, goal oriented teacher which will definitely channel down to the student and the effectiveness of the classroom and the effectiveness of the instruction. So if you are focusing on all of these little bullets and then the children are going to have a positive, hopefully, they will be positively affected by those teaching practices.
• Moderator-And I never thought it was possible with younger students, you know.
• But I find myself doing the same thing. If I don't write it, I say, you are probably wondering why we have to learn about this. Well, the crux of it, the real reason is you need to know about this is because of...And it makes them listen a little bit more and really think about the fundamental activity or the fundamental reason behind the activity is. And I think that clarifies things for the student too, even the young student.
• It helps make sense of the learning.
• I think it keeps me focused when I say this is what the objective is. Then all of that superfluous stuff is gone and focus on the bottom line on what is it that I really want these kids to walk away with.
• It is not just a random act of teaching...

g. In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school?
• Well, that little piece of family and community outreach, I think we are informing parents more in what we are doing. So they are aware of what is going on. And it is helping them be more involved in the process, so even if they are not there, they know what we are working on. Perhaps it is something they can follow through at home.

• Much more supportive. Not much more, but supportive in supplying technology. It has been unbelievably. I mean the school improvement plan to up the technology. A lot of the goals that we have are technology related that we would not have ever seen without the input from PTO.

• Moderator-So you are seeing that it is really helping you to focus, but it is providing the materials to see the goals come through.

• Exactly.

• I think we are saying that our goals for next year are going to be more often that we did before. I think colleagues are saying more often, oh I am going to make that a goal for next year. Goals come up in conversations more. But, just the idea of talking about goals comes up more, I think.

h. From your perspective, how has the TAP process seem to improve your effectiveness as a teacher?

• I think what I said before if you are really focused on the elements that are within the TAP document and you are self-reflecting on what is important, where do I need to improve, where am I doing ok at, where can I do a little bit better then, I think that 99% of the teachers are going to take that into consideration and really focus on the areas that they need to improve on and work towards better themselves. You know, changing their teaching practices or altering teaching practices, changing their classroom in some ways so that their teaching practices have improved, do whatever it takes.

• Constantly self-evaluating

• Monitoring, now how I am doing. I made these changes and how has that effected my classroom teaching and how has it effected my relationships with parents, whatever you are working on. Or taking the classes if you want to get better at technology and there is classes offered within the district and you take those and say, I have applied that now so I am working towards those goals so all of those things so anything you are doing is improving yourself as a teacher.

• Moderator-And isn’t that what we want when we take professional development where we have time to put it together and apply it in meaningful way.

i. For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare?
• I think this new way of doing it really involves the teacher and the principal collaboratively working instead of a one-sided view. I think that is a huge difference.
• It is much more time consuming though.
• Moderator-So it is more comprehensive.
• Yes.
• But, yet as we mentioned before, the responsibility for filling out the document is put on that teacher’s shoulders, rather than the administration’s shoulders. Before we had to plan our lesson and get stressed out a little bit, sweat, and listen to what they had to say about it, but now we have to put a lot more time and energy into filling out the document.
• I would prefer almost to be interviewed, instead of sitting down and writing it. To have the principal say, okay, what is going on with this and this?
• Yeh, its like a book.
• Perhaps there needs to be planning time allowed in the evaluation years.
• Moderator-So you are recommending coverage?
• If it is taking hours.
• Yeh, it does, it is taking hours.
• And I would question, and maybe I have missed this piece in the TAP document, I thought there was a piece about, in place of being observed, you could produce something, a product.
• That was the last one and it was taken out of this one. But I thought supposedly is was being thought of being brought back in.
• Because we do so much that isn’t looked at and so I just wondered if something is being thought about.
• Moderator-So like a portfolio or some other means to show..
• What you have done. If you have a goal for SMART Boards, you have created 50 different slides and that should count as something if that could be used in place of having them come in for a half an hour. I mean you certainly have put in an enormous amount of time to put those slides together. Much more than an observation.
• Moderator-So alternatives to the evaluation.
• Yeh. Particularly, I think for veteran teachers. I can understand non-professional status teachers, but professional teachers, there are so many.

j. If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say?

• I would say that maybe it could be less often. It could be that your second year could be more of a portfolio. Maybe the formal evaluation is every three or four years.
• That wasn’t what I was saying, I was saying that once you are professional teaching status, I really like the informal, coming in walkthroughs because you are going to see real teaching, not some staged lesson. Because when we are being observed, we are staging a really fine lesson. So that really is not natural
teaching in my opinion. Real teaching is that you come in at any moment at any
time and that is what you see is the real life of teaching.
• The kids haven’t been bribed to be good...
• And so to me, that is real meaningful teaching. As opposed to staged teaching
where everyone is stiff. So I feel like that is a valuable observation that could be
included in an evaluation by a principal who really knows his or her staff. And
allowing at the same time veteran teachers to develop some kind of document or
materials that could be used in a portfolio to show what you have done. What is
wrong with that? There is a lot of observation in that?
• Weren’t we evaluated every three years? Wasn’t that plenty often?
• Yeh.
• For formal evaluation, they are constantly evaluating because...
• It is a tremendous amount of time for the administration. There is so much for
teachers to do and there is so much for administrators to do and to add this on
everyone’s shoulders every other year is especially for professional status people
its kind of overkill.
• Somehow make the document shorter.
• This document isn’t used statewide its just a Reading way.
• And maybe that writeup that we have to do. Maybe there shouldn’t be two
different forms, one for non-professional and one for professional teaching status.
Maybe it should be a set standard of questions of everyone as opposed to.
• Moderator-And which form is this?
• I guess I am talking about the evaluation year and the non-evaluation year. I said
that wrong earlier, why have two different forms? Why not have the same set of
questions? Simplify it.
• Yeh, at the same time, I mean if you have that long form, are you going to
recreate that document every other year or are you going to just keep a copy of it
and rewrite it? So how valid is that second...so if they kept it shorter I think that
it would be a more valid document because people would take the time to write it,
reflect on it and notify changes in their teaching styles and stuff like that. People
that I have talked to have said, I have it saved on my computer and I am just
pasting and cutting every year I am just going to paste, cut, paste, because I can’t
spend that much time rewriting it. So how valid is that document after the first
year? If it is that long. If it is a shorter document, I think people are going to take
it more seriously and maybe reflect on it a little more.
• Maybe focus on the goals because they are so inclusive. Maybe every other year
you focus on take a little bit of this...
• Whatever are in the school improvement plans and then the school’s goals are
different than other school’s goals and then look at the district improvement plan
and pick those things.
• I can’t remember the question and I can’t find the form in front of me, but I
remember when I was writing it, I said, I did the same thing and that was what
you were saying, but I wasn’t doing anything different, but I think it might be
about assessment or something. I can’t recall, of course, I don’t have the form in
front of me. But I remember saying, a year ago, I wrote the same thing, I am still
doing that and that what makes good teaching. So it was redundant and I said, oh
gosh, I am not saying anything different. Maybe I am not doing a good job, but this is good teaching.

k. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process?

- I don’t know if it is clarified any where or if it is your own professional judgment, that the goals can stay the same. I think the expectation is that the goals change, but if you choose to make one of your goals on technology, that could be your goal for five year. If you have decided to work on goals being assessment, that could be the goal for 7 years. So it needs to be stated or understood, or we just make that decision as professionals, that it stays the same. I mean we very rarely reach a goal in one year and then we move onto another one. And, I don’t think in any other profession that would happen where you would work on a goal for this year and shift to next year. It doesn’t make sense. In some cases it would, and some pieces maybe when you are ready to move on.
- Moderator-That is an excellent point, because as you said sometimes it take years to hone in on those things and you don’t want to do them over in just a few minutes.
- And with the change in technology today…
- Sure and it matures and evolves.
- You know, trying different ways of assessment and finding out what is the best and what needs to change.
- Moderator-If you have technology and you don’t have a SMART Board and then you get it the next year wouldn’t you.
- That would be your goal for next year.
- Moderator-exactly.
- Even the SMART Board from September to May the difference in the SMART Boards that have come in are unbelievable. I mean now they have got speakers and they have…
- The new ones we have have the laptops with them.
- Yeh. And the big boom instead of the projector.
- You know, I have always had that question of that every year you have to come up with a new goal. I like what you said, just continuing it. But there has always been a question of how many goals are we supposed to have?
- Is two enough? Or are we supposed to have three? Is it quantity or quality?
- And sometimes three is too much.

1. How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?

- I think that having teachers observing teachers is something that I think is less threatening then having a principal come in. I think that would be another piece that would be interesting, I think.
- Moderator-Are you saying peer coaching.
• Yes. You learn so much from your colleagues and maybe feel, no offense to administrators, but maybe feel, I guess it depends on your relationship with your administrator, you could have your guard down a little bit more with your colleague.

• Also, observing best practices. You have an area that you are trying to improve in, and there is a teacher within your school and in another school that maybe is, for instance, math differentiation is one of the areas that I want to work on. First of all, to be able to maybe visit other classrooms, I know Dr. Redford came to my classroom several times to show me different ways of differentiating and that was great. But if I was able to go to other schools within the district to watch classes that are differentiating. And also to give the support with supplies and resources, that would allow you to work on that goal, whatever that is. Because, sometimes it is like, well here is the goal, and you have to figure out how to fly with that and you have to get there without a lot of the time and physical resources that are necessary to succeed at that goal. So, I think time is a big factor because it is always the same issue, there just never is enough time so, again, as an example with math differentiation, there is math games, there is centers, but to develop each center and to organize them, and instruct students in all that, its all time consuming so that is just one example but whatever your goal is I am sure they are not so simple that you just go and do it and have it done immediately. It is all time consuming so. If there were a way that we could be provided with time and resources, that would make us more effective.

• I don’t know how many teachers do grade level goals, but I think that should be put out there to work together as a grade level to accomplish something as opposed to an individual goal, I think you can accomplish so much more with somebody to work with. Everybody brings something to the plate.

m. That covers the areas that I wanted to ask. Is there anything that you care to add?

• I think there has been questions about the subjectivity of the document that can be given to interpretation. What makes somebody exceeding or meeting or progressing, and I think there is some room for subjectivity and I know that

• It is so much less than it was before…

• It is less, but at the same time you know, if there is issues between the person that is administering the document and the person that is being evaluated then there have been times where that has been questioned.

Middle School Non-PTS
Focus Group Questions for Teachers
Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators in the Implementation of TAP

Date of Session: June 6, 2008
Number of Participants: 4
I. Introduction

Good Afternoon and thank you for participating in this focus group session.

My name is Dr. Christine Redford and I will be conducting today’s focus group session. The purpose of this focus group session is to gather data on your perceptions of the teacher evaluation process or TAP that is used in this school district. This data will be used as part of Seton Hall researcher, John Doherty’s dissertation which will be measuring the perceptions of teachers and administrators in the implementation of a standards-based evaluation system. You have received a copy of the signed consent form for this focus group session. This focus group session is being recorded. As you can see, we have an assistant moderator present at the session to handle any logistical issues such as refreshments, audio recording equipment, and taking some notes of key phrases.

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The answers from all of the people we interview will be combined for the results of the dissertation. Nothing you will say will ever be identified with you personally. As we go through this session, if you have any questions about why I am asking something, please feel free to ask. Participation in this focus group is completely voluntary and you may leave at any time during the focus group session.

This session is a group discussion on the questions that will be presented. I will begin each question by asking one particular person the question. You will be identified by the number that is located in front of you on the tent card. Other participants will then have the opportunity to give their answer once the first person has answered the question. You may include additional information throughout the discussion at any time.

Are there any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions)
I am now going to begin asking you the questions.

II. Questions

a. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP used in your school?

- Well, I think it would be to do a self evaluation piece to look at the whole TAP process to better your teaching, your professional development, and to figure out where your strengths and weaknesses are and work toward having more strengths than weaknesses.
- I think one purpose of the document itself is so that teachers know what method they are to be evaluated so that they can either tailor what they do, or just know what is expected.
- Offering specific benchmarks and objectives so that we have quality teaching.
- I think it breaks things out into specific areas of concentration and kind of focus. Area of focus.
- I go back to the first statement. I would hope that it would improve teaching to strengthen weaknesses and improve upon strengths.
- I think that the way it is set up now, it is set up as a roadmap so that it does not necessarily evaluate where a teacher is, but it gives some guidance on where they need to go and how to get there.
- I want to add something on the negative side, I guess. I think there is a feeling in some ways that the TAP document is sort of trying to renegotiate what excellent teaching is and teachers who were at excellent status have now somehow methodically been bumped down to some lower levels.
- I think that is the thing that has been a little confusing and I speak as a second year teacher so I am not sure how people where evaluated before and how teaching has been defined in previous years, but I think that, I know for me on occasion I feel like I was getting worse just by where the boxes were checked off. I was told, no, it was because we are calibrating the document and we are changing that and I guess there is a little bit of unease on the teacher’s part because we know it is sort of something in progress and administrators are still trying to figure out what is meeting the standard or exceeding the standard.
- Moderator-So you are saying the transition has been difficult?
- Sometimes I feel I am being evaluated and I am not sure what the criteria are and maybe as a second year teacher that does not bother me as much because I expect that I am not there yet and that I am progressing towards the standard, but that may be different for a veteran.
- I think at some places the language seems vague or ambiguous. You are not sure what the standard or benchmark is.
- Moderator-We are going to get to the strengths or weaknesses…Next Question.

b. The current TAP process has been in place for 2 years. During that time, what have you noticed are some of the positive effects of the program?
• I think a positive effect is that it is always good to self-evaluate, so that was there for us to look at. I think with students it is a good thing, for teachers, it is a good thing, and for administrators it is a good thing to try to see what the criteria is and see where we fit so when there is a conversation, it is more meaningful.

• As well as, setting specific goals for the school year.

• I would echo that, I think that it has really helped me at the end of one school year to kind of identify what I want to make a priority the next year. Reflecting.

• I think it tries also to address the whole gamut of areas that are involved with teaching, whereas in past years it focused on a particular lesson, it really expands into all of what you do as a teacher.

• There are a lot of standards, some of them I think are hard to, um...I had a hard time with that self-evaluation, I spent a lot of time with that self-evaluation, but I do agree with you, it is a good piece. Um...but some of them when I was going through them I thought, wow, in terms of being evaluated, maybe this is a different part that we'll talk about, where some of the things I think are harder to, I mean with an administrator evaluating you how can they observe that when they come in twice. But some of the things are not as easily observed and I wonder how can one be evaluated. But maybe that is something that comes later. But, I liked the self-evaluation piece and I liked the goals because I think that it helps you focus on what you are going to strive towards.

• The scope of it, the broad scope of it, whether it is a strength or a weakness. I like that it addresses the fact that teaching is a lot more than the specific things that we say or do in the classroom. I like that it has pieces about action in the community and communication with families and things like that because I do believe that is important. I consider that a strength, but I also consider that very hard for an administrator who has to fill in the document by coming into your classroom twice in a school year to do.

• Moderator-Is there anything that you would like to talk about the positive before we go into the negative parts?

c. Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process?

• Moderator-Some of the things that you mentioned is finding the time to observe and that the wide scope is a problem to evaluate for administrators. Is there anything else that you see as the weakness of the TAP?

• I think to a beginning teacher it may seem to be overwhelming with so many points in 5 or 6 different areas. It may seem overwhelming.

• Last year I felt, oh god, I shouldn't be teaching because they almost seem to be unattainable. To be exceeding the standard in all the areas I thought, oh my! Because I think that Reading has high standards and maybe that is going back to what you stated earlier because maybe they were not exceeding anymore. It was overwhelming to look at the document.

• Sometimes I feel that when you look at the wording of it, the difference between what is meeting the standard and exceeding the standard. I have a little trouble
teasing out that difference and I get this feeling that in my own teaching some of the times when I exceed the standard I have done it by accident. I am trying to figure out if these things if you look at what they call exceeding the standard if that is something I am expected to do every day on a consistent basis and if that is so how do I get it from hitting it sometimes to hitting it consistently on purpose?

- I think based on another comment, and I am not sure if this is the case, but this document, perhaps some teachers felt that more people could fall into the meets category, but, if that is the case, it could be demoralizing for a teacher who is in the exceeds category and it may not make them feel good about what they are doing. Um, I am sure that is not the intention of the evaluation process.

- That has been well talked about too. I am sure that administration has heard about that too. But, I also think that some of the standards as written are sort of utopian, that I would not guess that there would be any one human being that could get exceeds in some of these and even exceeds one day and not the next. Anytime you see “all students engaged all the time”, 100% all of the time, its not life and so I don’t think those kind of things are, I don’t think they foster about people trying to attain that level of performance.

- I know one way that some other colleagues have brought that up at faculty meetings is that they have said exceeding the standards is getting an A and meeting the standards is getting a B and, of course, we are teachers and we want to get straight A’s cause we’re those kinds of people. But, there is a little shift and maybe, think about how we are looking at it and how our evaluators are looking at it and make sure we are all kind of on the same page with that.

- That is a good point...that is a very good point that we are always looking for the straight A. You want an evaluation process where you can achieve that to be attainable.

- Because I think you look at, what is the best one, that is the one I want and what do I have to do to get there. It is daunting when you read all of those descriptions and think of all of the things that we have to do and all of the other variables that would have to fall into place to have that happen.

- I will just repeat what someone else said that I think it is clearly important to have on the document that there is no way that that could be observed. Because I think that there are some possible checks being made to make a check, when there really is not enough information to make that based upon the two observations or without lengthy discussion.

- And to some extent, the preevaluation form, the postevaluation form, and all of that that you sort of write yourselves, you can really color that in a way that sort of builds you up where someone else may not observe. I don’t know, it may not be accurate. You know, you may pick out your best, best thing to put on this document and the administrator pulls from that what goes on the document when well maybe that is true and maybe that is not true.

- Or the best, best lesson. I don’t know...I just teach and they come and see, but some people would want to do the best, best lesson. But, I think that administrators have a lot on their plate and there is not way that they can get every check mark accurately. And I think possibly, when it is done inaccurately, that is demoralizing. So I think that wide scope. For instance, an administrator may
know, that you have a parent that has been difficult to work with all year, and in spite of repeated attempts. And the administrator would know about that parent contact and feel that maybe you can improve in that area and you know we all could improve, but to get 100% of the parents all of the time with us. But they see the daily minutia of emails back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. You know, personally, I don’t have the time or the desire to download all of my emails and bring them in and show them. This is what I got and this is what I did...But I think it is hard to from a specific thing like that to come up with a global positive conversation...The most positive it could be to really open things up. Maybe to pick a few of these things to concentrate on, work with an administrator over the year, I think that would be more powerful to lessen the scope. Less is more and we talk about that in education and paint a broad brush on everything on the table and I think that is what makes it less.

- I think another area of concern in my own personal experience is that I have two administrators who evaluate me in the course of the year who, in a sense, have different criteria. You know, if you took my two evaluations for the year and took the name of the evaluator off, I could tell you right away which person did which one and I think maybe that is a worry that if different administrators are not looking at it the same way, then how exactly does that work? Are we being compared to a standard? And I know that the administrators have their own sessions where they are working to address that and to talk about it to make sure they are being consistent, but maybe they should keep the teachers in the loop about that process so that they know. I know that they talked about at one point when they checked off not observed does that mean that is a black mark for not having done something or is that a statement that was not observed because it was a particular day. I think those things need to get clarified.

- I think my final evaluation did not have not observed at all.

- For the final one it didn’t, but for the lesson observations. For example, when they say about using technology or specific things, I just remember, there was some confusion about if you put not observed for using technology is that cut and dry that is not observed and that is not either bad or good, necessarily or this wasn’t done and you should have done it, or something?

- It’s hard, because I really think that the document is intended to improve teaching. And it is supposed to be your personal mentor to make you better. But, at the same time, it is a document that, you know, if it was something punitive against you that’s what comes from it, so at some point, it is your police. And so, you want to make it look as good as it can even though that is not the intention of it and I think that is where people get agitated by it sometimes. You know, personally, I am a very self-reflective person. And so pretty much, I know where my strengths are and where my weaknesses are and there are things I really want to work on. And I don’t think that the document illustrates that for me. And in that sense, I really don’t put a lot of stock into it. It is nice to see the check marks and I really can have thick skin about it, but if I don’t get them, I really don’t care because I know what I am trying to do. But, at the same time, you want anytime documentation about you and your profession to look as good as possible, so I think that is where the real conflict is.
• I think that the stakes a little higher for those of us that don’t have professional status yet, because we are always looking at how many check marks you need on the left side to have your contract renewed next year. So I agree, in the training that we had to become educators, we have been taught to do that self-reflection. It is something we understand the value of and matching well. I feel like usually, the areas of strength and weakness I see on the document are much in line with what I already think about myself and my reflection. But, then again when you look at progressing toward the standard, I expect that because I am a new teacher, I am going to be progressing and I haven’t arrived yet. Does the evaluator have a magic number of M’s or P’s in mind that I want to get and I am not aware of it? I think, maybe they do and maybe they don’t, but not knowing creates a little bit of anxiety for the teachers who are wondering what are the implications of it? Because it is not just about helping us become teachers at the end, it is about something that goes on record and something that goes into their decision about whether to bring us back for another year.

• I guess that is true. There is no clear standard that way. How do people get the total general sense of where they are? That is kind of hanging out in the air, I guess.

d. What are some ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed your teaching?

• I think just that self-evaluation piece again and the things that I wanted to focus on and maybe prior to something like this it would just be maybe in the back of my head I will work on that. Maybe having the focus areas you really need to work towards the areas and address that and not, oh, I will put it on my to do list and never getting around to doing it, but here you have to be held accountable at the end of the year. You know, how have you progressed, you know, towards meeting those focus areas.

• Yeh, I think that it is really intended to look at the large scope of teaching. Ya know, how you can act out a particular lesson to a unit to a year, um, how you put in all of the external pieces together, all of that. But, at the same time, if you are generally reflective about those things right along, I don’t know if it really benefits you too much. You know, you think about that every single day of your class of every school year. Even beyond, so the document does not always help you to think about those things if you are already doing it.

• It is tough to say being a first year teacher because getting the document itself and seeing what it was going to be without anything filled out yet, you know as number 3 says, you have your own ideas about what you want to do with your class and things like that so only after you get your final evaluation after the first year then you can look at it and maybe next year it can shape some certain things. You also have to look at it, you know, with a discerning eye, ok, was this not an exceeds because a) it wasn’t observed, b) they needed to check off something and they had a general idea of what they think my performance was like. So, you really have to evaluate what you see on your own.
• Or even, is this not checked off because you have too many in this column? And you need to balance it out?

• Right! Like when you fill in recommendations, for example, there is 50 things to check off and there is some sort of pattern that somehow works its way into it and is that on the mind of the evaluator that there is a pattern. Oh, Oh, there’s too many E’s here. Which one can I put an M so that this person doesn’t think they do not have anything to work on?

• And I would also agree with #3 that, um, the most important thing is teaching and teaching is that self-reflection. You are working with people who are teaching the same thing that you do and constantly looking at what did we do, where did we go wrong, what worked, checked with the kids, what worked for them and when someone fills out that document...I mean, when I got it, I had to go back and look to see what did E, M, D, whatever, those were and look and see which one am I at. I can’t imagine there are any administrators that are doing it to that level to really look to see, ooh, did she meet that? What’s this? So, I think it definitely is. Day in and Day out those quiet conversations in the hall with your colleagues and the kid are the things that promote or push yourself to reach the next level and try something new and take a risk and play a little bit.

• And even the varying degrees with which you personally fill it out compared to someone else. You know, you may be super critical on yourself and never give yourself an E and the person next store to you may put several.

• I found that...that is why I took so long to do the self-evaluation because I just took everything to heart. I was just beside myself because I think I am my own critic. Because I do think that you can always do something better. That is why I thought, my gosh, all of these E’s, you would be like super teacher.

• There were a few on the self-evaluation where I did end up putting qualifying notes that I really ended up being inbetween an M and a P on certain things because I have done this enough to know I can do it, but can I do it every single day and every single lesson? No.

• But there is some restriction between like feeling the self-evaluation and is that going to be used as part of the final evaluation? You know, so I agree with number three in that I reflect, I examine what I teach and do what is best for my students, but in completing the self-evaluation I felt some reluctance in knowing that the same evaluation is going to be used by administration to evaluate me.

• Yeh, it seems like the self part is more important because you are getting a formal observation, twice, and humans would want to put their best foot forward, so maybe spending an extra hour planning that lesson and it might be your most fantastic lesson all year, but is that going to be an accurate picture of what kind of teacher you are every day. We know, how we are based on how the everyday thing goes not just this one fantastic lesson that we wanted the administration to see and give us a good grade on.

• You know, for me the most useful part of the whole document is when you get the evaluation back from the administrator. And after every section, there is a little box with a narrative and you read through and sort of see the parts that have been taken from your pre-evaluation, but then you see the parts that the administrator has written on his or her own. And those are the parts that really stick with me.
until a month after the observation happened, but then when I have a specific question about, well you said this and I am trying to think about how I can improve and can you give me a little bit more specifics about what you are thinking or what you would have liked to see, it is hard for them to give me the specific examples because all of that time has elapsed since the observation and the conference.

- And I really appreciated the anecdotal, everyday kind of interactions that you had with the administrators. The drop-ins or the hallway meetings. I appreciate that much more than the formal setup observation in which you have had to spend two weeks preparing, making sure everything is perfect. I think, honestly, I would get more feedback on a drop-in unannounced. You prepare differently for a formal observation than a day to day class. Perhaps you shouldn’t, but people do.
- Moderator-So how do you feel about walkthroughs...about people casually coming in?
- You know, I said before, I am thick skinned, I don’t mind that. I know that everyday is not going to be my best day and I hope that the relationship that I have with my administrator, that, you know, we can talk about that and talk about what went wrong on a certain day, rather than, making sure that I was on my best at a certain time; and not finding anything wrong or finding minor things wrong.
- Moderator-So you are saying that it is more natural on a walkthrough basis?
- I do, but I think a lot of other people may not feel that way.
- I would love to have the walkthroughs. I feel that I don’t have that kind of thing. I think last year because I was in my first year, there was more of a concerted effort on the part of the administrators to come in every so often and check on how things were going. And, I really appreciated that. Now there is this perception that oh you are no longer a first year teacher anymore so that you already have it figured out, okay. And, I know that’s not true. You know, I would love to, not just the two times they come in that I have prepared for it. I would love to have them keep coming. I don’t have hallway drop-in kind of meetings and that, I agree that would be a helpful thing, but it is something I don’t currently have.

  e. What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school?

- I think that we have started some good conversations about it. We have had a couple of faculty meetings where we looked at specific areas of the document and broken into smaller groups to talk about it. I feel we started some really good conversations, but, I am not sure how those were followed up on. I feel that we have had beginnings of interesting discussions and I am not sure what happened to the feedback afterwards because we never came back to it after we initiated the discussions. The fact that we started it was really good for all of us.
- Moderator-So are you saying that you discussed some of the items on the document?
- Yeh, we took a section of the document, say delivery of instruction, look it over, and talk in small groups about what would it look like for a teacher to meet the
standards or exceeding it and concerns and questions that we had about it. Um, I feel like we sort of started the ball rolling, but not all the way down the lane.

- I was in some of those groups and I think they turned quickly into people expressing their anxiety.
- Yeh, they turned into gripe sessions. They became contentious. The start of it was good, but it didn’t end well and I was wondering.
- I think that was happening because some people are unsure about how this document is being used. I mean I don’t think it is so clear cut that. You know, I know that we all answered that first question that it is intended to help us, but there is a lot of fear out there that it is intended to do other things that people are unsure of. I think there are a lot of people that put a lot of time and effort into this document and feel protective of it, because clearly a lot of time has been put into it, you can tell. But, I think that when it turns into an evaluation tool to help us or be used against us, then I think that it can go sour pretty quickly and I think it has in our conversations at times.
- I’ve also perceived in those conversations, and I know that maybe when you have all of the groups together and the feedback that there are pretty clear cut divisions between the new teachers and the veteran teachers and the angles that they are coming from, the ways that they would get it and the specific concerns that they have. It seems like the line gets drawn immediately that way and everybody has their specific set of concerns specific to their specific situation.
- I am not sure that I saw that in my groups. I am trying to think that I am not sure if that is how it ended up being because we were spread out in small groups.
- Moderator-Anything else about the professional growth? Do you think people are taking more professional development or things that are going on in the district?
- I think people participate in a lot of professional development, a lot more than I have seen in other places. But I don’t know if that has anything to do with the document or not. I know there is a place that says what professional development activities are you involved with, but I think that comes from other places.
- I don’t think the document initiates those kinds of things, but it reflects the things that you did.
- There are a lot of people with intrinsic motivation who just want to develop themselves professionally. I don’t think that it is necessarily connected to the document.

f. What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your classroom? Moderator-You are thinking about the document has like activators and summarizers and posting objectives and agendas and those kind of things. Is that reflective in your teaching or in your classroom and student achievement?

- I think those things help student achievement, but I am not sure that those thing are done because of the document.
- Yeh, I am not sure what the correlation is. There are definitely a lot of teachers who are doing it, but I don't think. I have thought a lot of about posting of homework and writing the objective, but I never really connected it. I just did it because I thought it would be a good thing to do.
- It may be...I think as time goes on, when you see a reflection about the fact that you use those things as a positive thing then you may continue and try to add on to those things. So, I can see how moving on that document would help and force those behaviors.
- Not that it would be directly associated with student achievement but the document itself?
- Right, there are a few things.
- If someone took goals directly from there, you know, that they were not focused in that area, you could tie something to achievement, but without the document you would have some goal in student achievement tied into that, so...
- Number 1 said that about the intrinsic nature that we do and we try to professionally develop ourselves all the time because we want to, not because the document tells us that we should. You know, we want to increase our student achievement because we want our students to do better.
- I think as a new teacher coming in, you know, seeing a document like this with all of these goal settings, all of these criteria, although it can be overwhelming, you can get the sense, wow, I really have to step it up because this district means business. So, maybe professional development might happen because you see it that it is well documented that this is what is expected.

g. In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school?

- Well, I think that there are more teachers who are cognizant of using the activators and summarizers, making sure that the board configuration is up. The school improvement, in terms of the students coming to class they know to look at the SMART Board or the white board so that they know. You don't have a lot of, okay, hurry up, sit down. You don't have a lot of that, um, classroom management and discipline so in terms of school improvement, I like that, I like that the kids come in, know what they are doing, and sit down to work. There is not a lot of trying to run them up.
- I like that, whether we have done it in the most productive way or not, I like the way that we have tried to initiate conversations about the evaluation process just to get people thinking about it and people talking about it. Um, but I think one thing that I would like people to see is you know, we talk about it, we break into groups, and compare how we do different things and certain standards. But, I wish there was more of a way to get teachers into certain teachers classrooms, watching each other with not just an administrator coming in two times a year. I love when we talk about the document and teachers get to share some anecdotal evidence of different things that we do, or different ways that we meet some of those standards, but I would love to have an opportunity to see what my colleagues are doing and how I can benefit from their expertise.
- That is a hard culture to set up.
- Yeh, I agree, and I am not sure everyone would be comfortable with it, initially.
- No, I am comfortable with and administrator, I am comfortable with a lot of people coming in, but I know, I have been in that situation before where people come in, but it becomes very judgmental very quickly, especially in your peer group. When an administrator comes in, that is ok, but in your peer group, that is different.
- You would have to make sure that people are trained properly, and you have to trust the people that are there, some people would be fine with it.
- Right.
- Maybe, I think from my perspective, given the nature of my role in the building, the team structure we have in the middle school, um, I welcome having other teachers in my room and opportunities to go into other teacher’s rooms because it sends the kids a message that they really need that connection to other teachers. Maybe that is a personal thing for me because I am in a different position than some of you are. Like anytime that the kids get to see how connected the teachers are to each other it’s beneficial. But, I see your point, I see your point about the level of discomfort and how difficult it is to create that culture.
- You are asking that request, because that is the way you are, you have that need about you. You want to see what everyone else is doing and you want to improve. But, does the document facilitate that? And I don’t think it does. I think we do it because we want to.

h. From your perspective, how has the TAP process seem to improve your effectiveness as a teacher?

- Out of all of the things that have improved my effectiveness very well, any scale.
- Moderator-What are some of the things that effect your teaching?
- Conferences that I go to where I get new great ideas. Journals that I read, things that I find on the web where I spent hours and hours and hours to find something that goes, wow that is great. Talking with my colleagues. Whether in my field or other fields, seeing what they do.
- Experiencing the needs of students and getting this professional development that I know will help my students, pursue this degree that is going to help my students, and the energy also of the teachers, feeling that the staff and teachers that you work with are focused on what is best for the students.
- And get feedback from the students. See what works for them, although it is not always current.
- You know, I will go back to those narrative parts in the document. Those are the parts that I look to. You know, if there is something in there, that I have not seen before, I want to address them.
- I think that the conversation, that you have. I know that the most powerful ones that I have are when I sit down with administrators and just talk turkey. You know, get down to business, where do I want to improve, where can I see you improve?
- But, we don’t do that.
• Some people can.
• Some people can’t do that. Some people can’t hear that and they get very
defensive to hear that where you might not, you may want to hear that. When
someone knocks you around for a bit, it steps up your desire to make yourself
better.
• Perhaps, you know, if it is connected with the evaluation process maybe it would
be different if it wasn’t connected to an evaluation process. You are sitting down
having a conversation.
• Right and that is again...
• I am missing the point.
• If you have someone speaking honestly about your teaching where you don’t have
to feel like whatever is said in that conversation goes down in the permanent
record. Right? That is the big fear. Whatever is on this document is on the
permanent record. But at the same time, you want that feedback to make yourself
better and you don’t want that to be on the permanent record.
• So on the evaluation process you are looking for all E’s, but perhaps in just an
informal, I would think in an informal conversation where there is no evaluation
process involved whether you are sitting with a colleague or an administrator and
there is a conversation about oh these things might improve your practice, then
perhaps, that would be more welcome, a lot more welcome than during an
evaluation process.
• I feel like one of my concerns as a teacher is that I tell my kids that I just don’t
care about them mastering material to do well on tomorrow’s test, I want them to
own things for the rest of their lives. Sometimes, I worry with the document that
when I set things up for my lessons, I do feel a little trying to give my
administrators what they want twice a year and just get through the process. I
don’t have a lot of contact with the administration except for these two times a
year, when they come in and I have to have these meetings and I wonder how
much are they evaluating me besides those two observations because I don’t see
them very much in my classroom and I don’t have many occasions to talk about
what I am doing and maybe they are receptive and picking up knowledge about
what I am doing in ways that I perceive but it is something that I worry about
there are other things being used to determine how my whole year is going to be
judged.

i. For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which
was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare?

• I can’t even remember. I believe that there was a lengthy narrative, which I
appreciated. If I recall correctly there was a longer narrative and I remember
definitely appreciating it.
• It was almost a documentary of what I was doing from beginning to end and so
many minutes. I remember asking, oh god, I said that?
• Weren’t there sections? Sections, sort of like the sections here?
• Right. And it was narrative.
Right, but instead of standards, exceeds and meets, there was a narrative about that.

Moderator-Now, what did you like about the narratives?

I like that they are the words of the administrators, rather than a check box of something that is already written. Or, sentences and phrases from my preevaluation form that I says here is what I have done and it has been sort of lifted in. I really appreciated the anecdotal information. The things that they see and they think about the graphics.

And its more on their insights. It is more personally based. I don’t think we are check boxes here.

And then you can sort of interpret, well here are things that they focused on and why did they focus on those and not the others. Is that what they saw more? Is that what they are more interested in? Is that the part that needs the most improvement? Whereas in this, it is just a comprehensive thing and it hard to see their thoughts.

There seems to be a disconnect in a way. I don’t think that anyone would argue that teachers and administrators we all need to be evaluated, but we have to come to a common ground on what do we think is the most effective, genuine, and honest. You know, what would be the best way to do it. You had said earlier, number 2, that there are teachers who feel aggravatated and frustrated. There are some teachers who have young children, so they have to go home after school. They don’t, they can’t do some of that professional development. That does not mean that they are not interested in professional development so that they don’t want to be evaluated on that standard because it is not fair as opposed to someone else who has all of the time in the world and can stay and do that.

And the assumption that someone who is single and who does not have kids has all of the time in the world.

Right.

I am not familiar with the old document because I was not here, but number three raised a really good point earlier that, which is I filled out the preevaluation form and I do feel like there are a lot of phrases lifted verbatim from my preevaluation form and put on the part that the administrator fills out and I do feel a sense of uneasiness with that. How well do they really know me? Is this an honest evaluation about my work or is it just testing what they read very thoroughly and they were able to pick up what was important? I did not do this because I was not this type of person, but if I had lied about what I have done, would they have noticed? It was just lifted from my words and put into theirs.

Did we do that the last time...wrote what we had done? I don’t know, I think it is always good to do a self-evaluation and give it to an administrator because I think that is the beauty of that process. They can’t be every where and I think it is important for you to feed them that.

No, I am not saying that it is not important. I am saying that the self-evaluation thing is great and if I say I have done this, this, and this and they write back and say that I have done this, this, and that, they never saw it.
• We did that before, but I think in the old one, there was more opportunity for the administrators to use certain words. You know, because the space was larger and you had to be more comprehensive.
• Moderator-Did you feel that it was fair?
• Ah sure.
• Moderator-You knew what was coming up and knew what they were going to be looking for?
• Sure.
• The previous evaluation? Oh yeh, I do. I also like the evaluation that we do, the self-evaluation because it helps me, almost summarize the year and I like it for that purpose. Not for an evaluative purpose, but for my own evaluation.
• I think what is valuable is the process that I go through to fill it out. Not so much what happens after I send it to the administrator, but helps me figure out what I have done and summarize it.
• If I could go back to what five said and I don’t know if it is on this question or not, but you know, I do appreciate that this document speaks to all the areas. It does mean that they are important, we care about them and that Reading means business and all that. I think, you know, the intent is tremendous. I have actually been in lots of other districts and the intent of it is great.
• I definitely agree with that. There is a process. There is structure, there is accountability. All of that is in place and I think I like that personally and having worked in other districts, I do like that process. In a lot of ways, it does make me feel respected as a professional. So, while I think it is good to analyze the process, I think it is good to know that there is one in place.
• I have worked in a lot of other districts to and I’d say they’re I’d go back to the less is more. I think when we first came here the six areas to kind of honing in on that, I think that a document like this you can go and say here are the areas right here, which one would you like to work on next year? Kind of do that because it gives you something that you really kind of need to work on is really great and then someone can check in with you during that year. Did you hear about this? Then I know that the administrator knows that one person is working on this and one person is working on that and sort of can be that support for that person.
• Right, then you are working towards a goal, rather than really evaluate what you have done. Which, I hope is the intent.

j. If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say?

• Try to find some areas to focus on and that be would you would be evaluated on because that is your main focus.
• So does that mean the three goals that you come up with?
• No that is different.
• There are six areas, each area we could say, here is this, here’s this, here’s this. These are the things that I want to pay attention to next year. Do work with, get
feedback on to explore and be looking at our growth there, not that we should be ignoring everything else, but.

- Somehow, I don't know if it could miss the whole teacher. I think it is great to have focus and goals and to work on towards those goals, but I wonder if we are missing the performance of the whole teacher. Something might be missed there.
- Well, I don't think that should be negated. We are put in a box and we are back to the check box again, oh, this one, this one, this one, this one, this one. I think that it is important, but I think it is so hard. It is impossible to be that good and then it lessens the value that it could be.
- So there are six categories and 10-12 objectives for each category. I guess that is 60-70 things to think about, you know, for a whole year. You know, if you just pick on one thing, Planning and preparation for learning, command of the subject area. You decide at the beginning of the year that you would like to learn more about this particular area or topic that is in my subject area and that is what you are working towards for the year.
- But, I question on being evaluated on it because I would choose something that I feel I need to make improvements and I hope that I would. I would not choose things that I already think I exceed at.
- I would hope that people would pick things that they would want to improve on and look to see here is where I am right now. Where do I want to get to? And, have a conversation. What are the things out there?
- Something that I did a little bit on my own at the end of last year. I got my first end of the year evaluation form to sort of look at each of the six areas and come up with a focus for next year. Because I know that I am not super teacher and I cannot work on all of them at the same time. But, just to pick, but that sort of is a decision that I made on my own. There are those three goals that we set for ourselves at the beginning of the year and there is the self-evaluation form and we have a lot of pieces. We need to streamline it a little bit because we have that instructional goal, technology goal, and a team goal. Whereas some way that could be married to.
- You mean the three goals because now I thinking I have these three goals and then perhaps I have another six goals. Perhaps, it is not feeling connected and is the evaluation just like the entire teacher being lost because I am focusing on three goals here and six goals here, but they are really focused.
- And how do those three goals come into our evaluation about whether they are required or not?
- The whole problem is that is it a document for improving your teaching or is something to rate you as a teacher?
- Well, clearly it is a rating.
- It is a rating.
- The three goals, is this part of the discussion we are having? Or is it separate?
- Of course, on the other hand...
- Because I was going to say that with the EBO's I also have this feeling that we fill out this paperwork and then there is no check in at the end of the year.
- There is in our final self-evaluation a narrative at the top where you are the first few are to respond to how you are achieved those goals.
• So, I wrote about it a little in our self-evaluation but I will be honest with you I 
don’t think that I have discussed it with administration this year. I feel that I have 
set the goals at the beginning of the year and it is kind of my problem to see 
whether I followed up on them.
• Yeh, but don’t you have to fill something out at the end of the year on how would 
you address those goals?
• Yeh, but I did it myself. But it was never part of the conversation.
• It shows up at the end of each section.
• And at the same time the goals
• But, I feel like what I am saying is that there is no dialogue with the 
administrators on that particular part of it. I feel like I filled out the boxes the way 
I was supposed to, but it never came into the final conversation.
• I did it, here is what I did…
• Right.
• I don’t recall, but I think there was some dialogue in my evaluation about it.
• So you did this goal, did you do it, great!
• And, some of mine are ongoing so there is consistent dialog with some it anyway, 
so I think it is just part of it. Well, remember what three had said about whether it 
is a concern that it is connected to evaluation. To play the other side of it, there 
does need to be some accountability because if you set a number of goals, the 
expectation is that as a professional, the teacher is going to meet or be working 
towards those goals and show some progress towards them. To be completely 
removed from evaluation would not be appropriate either.
• I think that probably in the school that I worked at it it was the best where I sat 
down with an administrator and tried to look to see what I wanted to do over five 
years and look at a plan and that it is an ongoing thing, not that it can’t change, 
but generally look at my teaching and where I want to go? And, how I was going 
to support that and move through the years? And come back and look at it and 
what do you do with any relationship that you have? You look at it, you evaluate 
it, you discuss it, you make plans, you work on it, you go back, relook at it. It is a 
process, and I think that, I don’t know, a process, a personalized process for 
growth.

k. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP 
process?

• I have had a couple teachers say scrap it and start all over again. I said, oh my 
god!
• I like the self-evaluation piece, I want to keep that.
• Yeh, I like the self-evaluation. It would be tough for me to say, what to change 
because I have nothing to compare it to, it is the only system that I have ever been 
evaluated under, but if there were a way to privilege those narratives a little bit 
more again.
• I really like having specific benchmarks about what excellent teaching looks like, 
but then again I find that there is such a fine line between meets the standard and
exceeds the standard. There was even a couple for my position I felt that I would rather be in the meets just in the way that it was worded and the way that it was interpreted.

- Moderator-Can you explain that a little bit more?
- There is one in particular, and I don’t want to focus on it, but one said will not tolerate any disruption in my teaching for exceeds. And for what I do, I big part has to do with a lot of tolerance. You know, setting structure, but being tolerant and patient and understanding. And, maybe that is not for my specific role, maybe that is for all teachers, I think.
- There was another one that came up. I forget if it that was the progressing or the doesn’t meeting and it was considered one of the more negative categories. Something about teaching students that hard work is the means to success. And I don’t think that is a bad thing, I do think that kids need to be taught about hard work being essential to success. But there was just a few here and there when I talked to colleagues at different times where I would rather not be in the exceeds category.
- There were just a few, but I don’t want to focus on the few. There were a number that were clear, but there were a few that I felt that I would prefer being in the meets category for what I do.
- For classroom management under exceeding the standards, success develops students’ self-discipline, self-confidence, and a sense of responsibility. I mean. I don’t know.
- Moderator-I am not sure if you want to agree with that...
- I guess if you are asking for some changes in how it is written here and for me just talking about setting this up in terms of a grid, but some of us are having trouble with how many things are we highlighting here? So if someone changed it so that classroom management is at the top and there were columns and it just seemed like it was easier for people to fill out. Just some of the wording.
- Moderator-Just go back to the self discipline...
- I just happened to be looking and pull that out and maybe it goes back to what you were saying in that there is just so much here in that you pigeon-hole yourself into which one is me.
- Moderator-Is that a bad comment?
- Were you look for changes?
- Moderator-Uh, huh.
- Then I guess I would say maybe, changing so that either a) there is not that many or so that you can streamline them so that there are less...I don’t know.
- Well, one thing is that the way it is set up in category A and any of the one six categories, A has exceeds, meets, progressing, and does not meet the standard. But, if I want to look at A, I have to go here, here, here, and here. So if we had in A, E, meets, progressing, and does not meet. That way I can look at all four of them right away.
- Moderator-So you are saying look at a different format.
- That is one main thing. It is just, this is what I want to look at. Where am I?
• I don’t know, maybe just rewording, I don’t know it just seemed overwhelming to go because I read through each one and I said, oh am I this, am I that, am I inbetween? I like the qualifying notes that you did.
• Am I exemplary or just meets the standard?
• Sometimes it is just a little adjective or adverb here or there and it seems like there is a one word difference between two standards and you wonder what in terms of your teaching practice.
• Yeh.
• What if we got rid of “all”, go through and look at every single “all” to see if it really needs to be there.
• For the planning and preparation for exceeding the standard, has an outstanding command of the subject area and has an extensive knowledge of how students learn at best. I would not give myself that, but I know others that say, yeh, I do that. This is like super teacher. So I go back to, is that we really expect all teachers to be exceeding the standard? Or is that a lofty goal that we, because so of this seems unattainable.
• Some of my colleagues brought up that whole unattainable thing and said that I don’t want to be that exceeding the standard expectations teacher because one of the things I try to do for my kids is to model and I make mistakes and you know how to deal with that.
• So at the same time, people do, so maybe I am looking at that I don’t want to, but in reality perhaps it would not feel good if they weren’t.
• The other thing, it seems like, again, there is so much of it and again, I do appreciate it that it really addresses so many different areas of teaching because we do a job that has so many different facets but, there is so much to it, and it is so cumbersome that I ask myself, how many years am I going to teach and be evaluated by this thing before I get it. It seems that every time I have to use this document to go back and look over and I find my mind is swimming to the first time because there is so much. I feel like I could teach here for fifteen years and not remember what all the different things are, because there is so many of them.
• Right.
• I think to make sure that there is a process and that some teachers feel that they are not in the process. Like they get left out of the process, and to ensure that everyone...
• Moderator-What do you mean by that?
• That some people make statements, “I have never been evaluated.” You know, I don’t know if that means that they never have been evaluated or they are not really clear about the process. I can only say what they say. And I think to go back to what number 6 said, it is important that these are done in a timely way. It is so cumbersome. I mean, I don’t think that I would ever want to be an administrator, so there is no finger pointing or anything here. It is just that it is a cumbersome process and in order for it to be done well it has to be done in a timely manner. With time to have good conversations and processing time. I think that if you go and get the document and go and sit down about it and that is it, you are gone. I don’t think that is as valuable as having another time to come back after you have thought about it. You had a conversation about it and then
maybe that final document is put together after you talk about it. Because we talk
about being reflective. It is hard to sit down and hear what people have to say, it
is not always going in the best way, and it is always when you go back and think
about it, you probably feel like you can talk about it, you have a lot more insight,
maybe better goals set up, and I know that is adding another loop to the process,
that is already faulty in being timely, because of pressures. You know that when
you sit down a month afterwards, is it really about the lesson, is it about teaching,
is it about getting the document done? I mean, what is it? I think we have to look
at streamlining it some how, it is too cumbersome, make it timely, and have
another loop in it so people can feel good about where they are going.

1. How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it
may be more effective in strengthening instruction?

• Well, you had said earlier about having dialogue, and having conversation, and
another comment that you made about zeroing in on one of the standard areas.
Why couldn’t it be that either on a monthly that we have the early release days
sometimes, why couldn’t it be that one of those or a couple of those early release
days could be dedicated to talking about any of the standards and how could we
as a school, you know, get better and utilize peer coaching or peer observation
whatever you wanted to call it. And then you are in a group situation where you,
whether or not you and I too are thick skin. I don’t, quite honestly, sit down with
this and okay, it’s okay, I will just sign this.

• We have had at least two times when we have taken a Thursday afternoon at a
faculty meeting and said, ok, we are going to zero in on this aspect of the
document, so let’s talk about delivery of instruction so that, but the problem with
that, I think we mentioned before, is that we started the beginnings of a really
good conversation, and it did disslove really quickly into I think people’s
concerns and anxieties. I think that it ended up being a little more negative. Not
that the discussion is not a good idea, but when we have that discussion and
everybody feel at ease about it and they are all part of the process.

• The details of the TAP made it negative that way. Whereas, if we ended up
swapping at a faculty meeting, with the TAP in front of us and said, what do we
want to do about effective instruction? I mean that would be a room filled with
flowing ideas and sharing and it would be powerful.

• And I think that goes back to working with people who are really dedicated about
helping students and that they are bettering themselves in their professional
knowledge. But, I think that perhaps, when it is connected too much to
evaluation, but there needs to be an evaluation process. Because, part of what
makes me feel good about where I am is that there is accountability, that I would
want there to be accountability. That is what creates an environment where I am
working with people who focus on students and what they should be focused on.
In discussion, what number two had said maybe separating so that when we have
discussion, it is not focused on the specific evaluation, but having a discussion
about good teaching and what we need to do.

• Moderator-So the vision of what good teaching looks like?
• That is a great idea.

• Instead of all of us having that TAP document in front of us, just say, today we are talking about classroom management, today we are talking about delivery of instruction.

• Where one we are talking about an evaluation and a perception that we are talking about the evaluation process and if I am understanding number 2, let’s just talk about good teaching.

• I think it is important why a conversation like that, coupled with the TAP document would turn into a negative one. I think that is a very very important question to ask and I don’t think that it is one that should be gone over lightly because I feel like I have worked in places where there has been an evaluation process, we all know it, it is there in front of us, and it doesn’t get that way. So there is something there, and I don’t know what it is exactly. I don’t know if it is the wording, I don’t know if it is new here, I don’t know.

• The history?

• Perhaps the history.

• But perhaps I haven’t been in a situation quite honestly, where on the one hand, it is perceived as we were given the opportunity to look at and analyze our evaluation process. I have never been in a situation where this is an evaluation process and now we are going to sit down as a faculty and analyze that process. It’s like this is the process that is in place and so that is the process. So here, this is the first experience for me where the faculty has been involved in analyzing this process and taking a look at it. So, perhaps, this is where some of the angst is coming in too.

• Well, as you are talking, I remember and this is where the angst comes from. I don’t know if it was in a big meeting at the beginning of the year or at a faculty meeting that it was pretty much stated, well where you were before, expect that you are not going to be there now. I don’t think they quite said it this way, but what was excellent before will now be meeting the standard or something like that and as you are talking...

• That is the only thing, actually in this entire process. Other than that, nothing has fazed me at all to be quite honest. Well, there is a process in place, that’s great, there is a few things that I don’t feel great about like the wording. Overall, it is great that there is a process. But that one comment or something to that effect that sent that really did because if I have been exceeds or meets in these areas and suddenly that is going to change just because. Because of a new document that really did not feel good to me. I felt that my professionalism was really being challenged in that aspect.

• But, I think people have to realize how much anxiety that caused teachers, because I do remember going into this year thinking after my first observation that if you look at which boxes were checked off, I am a worse teacher this year, than I was last year, so what was up with that and then being told that we are calibrating the document and that you were a better teacher this year than last year but the standards are different now.
• I am still not sure that was the intention or if that was a perception. So I am still not sure if that only comment that really bothered me if that was reality or was it a perception.

• What I get from, I remember exactly what was said, and it was that we believe that if you meet the expectations on each of the criteria, then you are an excellent teacher. So, if you can hear that right, then, they don’t think that you are a different teacher because of what check mark they put, they just want to stress that here is what we are calling these levels. If you meet everything and you meet all of the criteria, you are an excellent teacher, but there is something beyond that you can attain and, in reality, when you get one of these observations, and if you get meeting expectations is an excellent teacher and you get a lot of “E” a lot of exceeds, then you look at what do they really mean by that? You know, I can’t really be on this level, but as administrators, they are human too and they understand that if you do a really good job, you should be on the exceeds. So it is sort of like, we are still trying to feel it out.

• So if you get a P for Progressing toward the standard, does that mean you are meeting the standard or are you below excellent. What is it? I think that is the conversation that tilted that whole thing this way. And, it is unfortunate because it is a document, it is usable, but I do think that some people still are not in that process and I think that is important.

• I think that there is too much uncertainty and we talked about if you are meeting the standard, you are an excellent teacher and that was reiterated to me today when I had my meeting so I know that they are keeping that in mind. I also remember being told at one point that there are administrators who think that first year teachers should automatically have P’s in everything because when you are new you are progressing and there are things that you definitely need to work toward and I said, ok, as a first year teacher that is something I can accept. I am definitely progressing, but does that mean I am being evaluated on what year I am in or what I have done? And I think that just

• It is just clarification.

m. That covers the areas that I wanted to ask. Is there anything that you care to add?

None.

Middle School PTS
Focus Group Questions for Teachers
Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators in the Implementation of TAP
• I think it has too many, um, separate bullets or topics.
• There are too many separate bullets or items that you have to address and think about each. It is overwhelming sometimes. And some of the descriptors are unattainable you know at the highest level. And I understand that we are shifting our thinking that not everybody is we don’t automatically if you have been here for a while that you are automatically top level, but and that is something to strive for and I like that, but in some of them, when its, I forget the wording, but some of the exceeding. But on an everyday kind of exceeding the standards and this area, like uses technology to be the utmost for every child. Everything is for every student. So, it seems unattainable. That’s seems a little harsh.
• I remember feeling on some of them, I was feeling eeney, meeney, miney, mo, where am I? On some, I definitely had my opinion, and I could say ok, I definitely fit there and others, I said, oh, I am not sure. Kind of shoot for the middle. I would say, read that first and read the above and read below and see if I belong in the middle. I just think there are too many bullets, I didn’t feel strongly enough so I picked the middle.
• It made me kinda feel like that there were too many things to concentrate on like you can’t possibly meet all of these different areas. And they just.
• Moderator-What we are talking about is some of the weaknesses of the TAP. Anything else to add.
• I wish I had brought mine with me.
• I know, I was just thinking the same thing.
• Moderator-well if you think of anything else, we can go back to it.
• I wondered if you could choose not to have to do all of them. But choose an x number so that could do the ones that were most important to you, but I don’t know how you are evaluated on the same choices unless… I am not sure. I would just like make it not as.
• It helps to set goals and all, but then they just some of them seem unattainable. There are too many different things to think.
• I just know for me having been here more years than other people, I felt that I couldn’t be that topical. And, I thought, wait a second, ya know, I should be stretching and reaching but I can get there. You know there is too many things and then depending on your subject matter, some of them are not necessarily appropriate for certain subjects or is easily done for certain subjects, I guess. And so I thought for new teachers right off the bat, instead of looking at a positive document, it is an overwhelming one.

d. What are some ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed your teaching?
• I don’t think it has changed my teaching as much as highlighted to me what I think the administration is looking for. You know there is, a heavy technology piece to it. I can’t think of anything in particular that I have changed, but it has given me a picture of as a district and as a school what they are looking for.
• I have definitely tried a lot more of the technology, when we have gotten different things and I said that I have better try. I have pushed myself a little bit, but not a ton, not a ton. I think about it.
• I like that stuff anyway, so.
• Well, for me as an anonymous specialist whose voice won’t be recognized, I don’t have that technology available, although, you know, I was trying to push it until I was transferring, but there is a piece of it, you know everybody else has a SMART Board which makes that easily, perhaps. I am not saying that everybody in the building has one in the building, but there is quite a few in the building so that they may have a chance to do what is being look for than someone like myself that doesn’t have that in the classroom.
• Moderator-So how do you think that should be dealt with if you don’t have these things?
• Well I guess if it is that significant to what they want every teacher to be doing, then they need to provide it and provide the training that goes with it. I guess it could be what you were saying which is that if it is ok for certain subject areas not to have to use it then make that in the document some how read so that a teacher does not feel like ok how do make use of the technology if I don’t have the equipment?
• Moderator-So are you saying that if you don’t have the technology that it should be eliminated from your TAP?
• Perhaps or an alternative way to address that goal or item.
• I don’t think that it has really changed my teaching because I think, I guess what I try to do is figure out how the goals fit what I am already doing and try to make sure that I am doing as much as I possibly can. So, I have not seen one particular goal that I have said, oh, I need to totally change what I am doing to make sure that I am doing that goal, because I feel that I am doing everything I should be.
• Moderator-Did you say that you are fitting your teaching into the goals or are you fitting the goals into the teaching?
• I think kinda the goals into what I already do. So maybe in a way it has affected it somewhat. But I they may match up anyway.
• That is what I think too. They kind of match up of what you are doing or trying to do.
• Yeh, but I still don’t feel like that I can say that I am at the top of everything, the way that it is.
• And to be specific because of the specificity. It has changed my teaching in that, I agree with that that it based fit together and the horse before the cart, but I do feel that when preparing lessons, when I am thinking it terms of how I want the students to achieve, I feel that
• I have memory of years ago being a member of a professional development committee at Parker. I don’t know if we have a professional development committee anymore because there may not be the need, but I remember that always being the first suggestion when every year. Was it a possibility to align with universities and colleges to come and teach a course here in Reading? And that was always on the table. It has been in much more recent years that it has become more of a reality.

• Moderator-How does that tie into the TAP? How does the pd tie into the TAP, you think?

• Well, the differentiated instruction piece, the Skillful Teacher piece that I took, the SMART Board training, but the differentiated instruction piece for sure. Those course were great. And they support in trying to reach higher in that. The new course that is going to meet next year with technology.

• The other thing that I have noticed is competition for the technology in the building. We used to get it when we wanted to, but I think because now it is in the front of their mind with the TAP document that I want to work on technology for myself and I want to get involved and take that leap and try different styles of teaching has made it really difficult to get the computer lab and the COW. We constantly calling each other for seventh period are you sure that you need it? It was not the case four years. In our school the math department had everything, we could keep it in our room if we wanted to, no one cared.

• Moderator-so you feel that the technology is being used at a greater degree. Do you also feel that you have that support if something goes wrong?

• Oh yeh, we have full time support person in the building. It is wonderful. But, we need more.

f. What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your classroom?

• I think they are more engaged with the technology.
• And the differentiated instruction
• There is more student-centered stuff just all of it.
• I think kids are more empowered by all of this. It is a trickle down effect, but ultimately they are the clientele, they are the ones that benefit from all of this, so the technology piece. I just think the SMART Board has changed the way students are engaged and the COW and the calf.
• The Senteo. I don’t have a SMART Board, but I have a Senteo system and it is fantastic.
• Is that more math based? I don’t know enough about it.
• You can create any question that you want, multiple choice, true/false, you could do anything. And all I did was take MCAS problems and
put it in this format and the kids thought it was a game show. They loved it. So, I did more of it. You could do any quiz on there. You can put any picture that you want to. You put it in there and each student has a clicker and they give me their answer. Oh my word. They love it.

- Moderator-Now do you do your grades on it?
- We have grade quick.
- Moderator-How do you feel about grade quick?
- I only use it for the...I only see the kids only two times every six days so I don’t use it like say a math teacher uses it where they have so many grades and like the real exact grading. So, I like it. I mean it certainly easier than doing the grades or whatever.
- I think too that the progress reports that has helped with student achievement. Every student is getting one.
- And it is a true progress report.
- It is a true progress report because you could have kids midway getting A’s and by the end getting C’s. You are tracking them, they know that they are being tracked. And that is another piece, the Edline because grade quick can be exported to Edline. So there is no changing grades, none of that, it is out that. So that is probably one of the key pieces because there are no surprises. It is out there. I have had very few parents so I don’t understand when they get the report card. I have had fewer calls because all of my grades are in there. Sometimes you have to create one for each child, but in the long run, each grade is in there and you are just adding to them. Plus, what is good about what is happening in the district is that Grade Quick upgraded and it made it much better because when more than two people got on it, it froze. The columns, I remember. I just remember different things and there was only one person in the building who ran around to each classroom to fix it so. Somehow, I don’t know if that is the correct term for it, but it was upgraded, it has been tweaked. So it has been made things a little bit easier.
- Moderator-Now you said it saved your life, Expand upon that.
- When I do, I see a lot of the school. So, communication with the school, I lost this and I lost that so putting contracts and permission slips and notices just I have when I do the show, I have every piece of paper they need, including schedules that are on Edline so parents can access it. I know some teachers are saying it has made kids less responsible because they know that it is there. But at the same time, on my end, it makes it easier because I don’t have to say that you lost one and here is another one and things like that.
- Books and projects and things. It is all there and you can download it.
- Plus you can email parents from it. So you don’t always have to be on the phone.
- It is nice if you want to email the whole class at one time.
• Something needs to be said for the technology people for the district. It always comes back to them. They offer Tech-Mondays so just for to teach lessons that you can get a quick lesson that you can get after school on a Monday as opposed to take an entire workshop day or a course in it. And just those little things that we may ask each other to put those things out there in word, web pages. The people that we have hired in the district for that, there is always that human piece. We need them. That has made life easier for everything that we do.

g. In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school?

• I think it is easier to have a focus because you pick things off of that. Everybody is kind of working on the same thing. Whether it is technology or differentiated instruction.
• It is a collaborative effort. I think that is what you are saying.
• It is all about the same thing. If we are all working on the same aspects of the TAP document then that is also then that is connected to the school improvement plan instead of being disjointed.
• Moderator-So you are saying it is more focused and connected?
• Yeh.
• Anything that is goal oriented should help improve the kids performance, the teacher’s instruction, the school’s performance, the district. I think it is between goals and to do lists. The other thing I was thinking of is communication and that is where the technology. Usually that is on school improvement plans and the district is communication with parents.
• Having been on the school council for nine plus years it was always on there. Brought up by the parents. So I think we can finally say we are doing our job in that because I think in the past, well I mean it is leaps and bounds. We had one phone in the old school that we had to fight for, now we have one in every rooms, so we thought we were so cool when that happened. Now, it is email.
• I think we have also solicited input from the community also. I know in our school improvement plan one of the things that we are starting is a question a month that is going on Edline that we are looking for opinions to the community and parents. Something that has to do like for instance, what do you think about our homework policy? Or just issues that we are looking for feedback. It is a courageous communication move to get input not just those 12 parents that come for every meeting but anyone who from their own house wants to communicate back to the building. So communication is huge and Edline really helps. And I think that our parents I can tell they really read Edline. They keep up on it. You can tell because we receive feedback all the time. And because I like to send emails from Edline because I can do a whole batch at a time. So I know that they are
looking at. We are communicating much more through Edline than paper unless it needs both methods. But, in general, so that goal, the communication goals are important in both the TAP document and the district improvement plan.

- You know I was thinking that I have been on the school council for so long and we have always asked the faculty for input. But, it doesn’t always get asked. I wondering if there should be a change in how the school improvement plan gets written to make sure that faculty give input. Because, I don’t know how it works in your school, but since on the other end we are now bound to pick from those goals then what happens if you don’t have input are you going to find something or interest or you think is important. Because do you remember in school council that it used to be a document, it was just a document and it was one of those which lists and we all want to do this, but it wasn’t then now, I don’t want to say forced. It is now required from the teachers to choose something from that.

- Moderator-So what you are saying is now it is a living document rather than on the shelf.

- Right, and I am not complaining because I think our goals are good, but I am just wondering if in the future you have a school council who works only within themselves and does not ask the opinion. Would we sometimes get stuck with goals that don’t work.

- I don’t know because it is mandated that parents and teachers are on it.

- I am just saying that. Because you only have 5, 6, or 7 people there. What if we end up with a goal that does not work? Or is not valued by the teachers?

- Moderator-So what you are saying is that it should be brought up at a staff meeting about here are some of the things that we would like to work on and you could bring those ideas back to the school council.

- Right, because we have been lucky. I don’t think we have had a school improvement plan that I have not agreed with.

- Our plan is based upon the Blue Ribbon topics and we have had the same exact topics at the faculty meetings. We have had to each break into groups at those meetings and talk about those topics and those are the same topics and same kind of discussions that we have had at those meetings and those are the same questions we are asking our parents. So we have aligned the communication of the same goals among the three population of the school. The TAP is not necessarily part of that process, but because it aligns with the Blue Ribbon topics it all works in. But, definitely we have done that among the council.

- I do think that is an excellent idea because when you were talking about listening to parental feedback and suggestions it made me think about a technological suggestion box. If every school did that in the district, maybe prior to the school councils getting it goes to the faculty and they get it as well, then the reps meet throughout all this. Sometimes the school improvement plans they carry over from one
year to the next because there is a necessity. It is a viable plan, but the steps are not doable in a year's time. But maybe it is time where we do have some many things in place that we did not have before, that maybe it is time to put those things out there and now that we are here, what is your vision for the next ten years for the Reading School System. What is your vision even or what is your

- Is the town of Reading's vision going to stay? And should that be reassessed every once in a while.

- I never was as a teacher, but as a parent was on the school council. I was always hoping that the teacher would come up with the ideas. I thought that they are the be all and end all of how to improve education in the district. And yet, we often times it is a five year.

- Because sometimes I was towards the end of my career there, parents would have their own agendas that would not fit with the schools. And I would so that made it really tough because it was been there, done that and you don't want to curb their enthusiasm they are coming from a good place, but you actually know what works in a school setting.

- But with that suggestion that your school does. If every school did it, you would have a more authentic representation. If you could eliminate the agenda people and it could be a more authentic representation.

- And you send out a survey and I don't know how many times that I heard them complain only 25 parents responded. But, if you do the one question, it is short, sweet and they only have to worry about the one thing and then next month there is something else.

- And if they want to be anonymous that can write the answer and stick it in the box. Most will just email it back.

- Some of the schools used to have suggestion boxes and as you were talking, I was picturing that. It is an excellent suggestion.

- Moderator-So are you saying to email parents and staff or just one group or..

- In our case, the staff was asked the same questions, but not at a monthly meeting. A few times, we got together to discuss the topics. But, the parent piece just started two months ago and will continue into next year. But, that is just one question at a time and would not be overwhelming and would gather data that was interesting. It is not sent to faculty at the same time.

- Because I know parents in a different way from outside activities it was always really funny to me that they were not welcome in the school, teachers would not have team meetings with them, all of these negative things, and others would say, oh my gosh, I called them all the time, and people were great at that school and it was interesting so that if you did something like that, you would be able to hear all of the sides. Instead, if you are on the school council you have only those
came up and so it was personalized for me because now it is a living
document, it is in writing and all that. So when that discussion
happened, it was a healthy discussion. What came out of it were some
suggestions and one suggestion that came out of it, I did bring to the
principal for consideration because this is a work in progress this
document. And that maybe if that is the case that the M is an A, then
we start with the M and there isn’t an E column and anything that is
exceeds let that be a line, let that be a sentence, noting it. A note of
why it exceeds, or a note because it is exceptional work. But to stop
with M and if that is what has been said to everybody in the district the
M is an A, we are still teachers, we are still achievers.

- We want to be on the honor roll.
- We are still performance oriented. Let’s stop with the M. This is what
came out of a debate at a staff meeting and someone suggested and I
did bring that to the principal when we were talking about is that
feasible because it is going to be more on the principals, but it does
number I, eliminate why I am not A+, and it’s the personalized piece
as well because it is pointing out why you are exceptional in that
particular are because you have all these M’s, you do everything well.
The other says you did this exceptionally well.

- Would people have felt the same, if it were just the categories without
the M and the E? In other words, if it didn’t say, if you chose this is
me and your evaluator chose this is this person and it wasn’t associated
with an M or an E or I forget what the lower one is. Anyway, is it that
letter grade kind of thing?

- Yeh, I think it is.
- So it you just had the P and M and the E, but just the bullet, able to do
this all the time or whatever the detail is, would that have made a
difference to people?

- I think that is what came up in that discussion and it was a really good
point because you didn’t understand why. For example, when they
made us do their self-evaluation. Things have been a little different
for me at my school in the last couple of years, so I couldn’t meet the
standard, and I couldn’t be excellent. And it made me feel horrible
because it was through no fault of mine. I can’t get too specific, but, I
was not able to meet the standard. It kinda of made me angry, because
I am not an honest person, so I had to put, no, I am not doing.

- Moderator-What, because it did not apply to your job?
- No, because of a situation that made me step back from volunteering
and being in a leadership position at my school. And so, I think to me
that these are really important things in a school. And I had been very
much in the forefront trying to help and volunteering and doing all
sorts of things until the last few years. So, I felt like this is not my
fault, but I have to reflect and say I am not doing this. So, I don’t
know if there is a way to. I don’t know why I am even saying that.
But, if you go back to goals, excellent, does not meet the standard, I am going to flunk, you know, get fired...

- Two things I was thinking when you were saying that. Number 1, just in talking to people, most people it was a self-reflection, a self-evaluation. I think we highlighted it or whatever. You know, I lot of people were putting, exceeds. They saw themselves that way and I think that they were being very honest in exceeds. And, uh, maybe throw in a few “meets.” A few “B’s” because many still think that M is a B. And so that to me seems to me more people that have been the business a lengthy time. More people who are very honest about their teaching and work hard at that and so I think if there is anything about questioning the M and the E it is more from veteran teachers, I see.

What had happened at this meeting, a new teacher, very new, about a year, spoke up and said, “you know, if I may add something here, I do see it as a guideline. I know now. I didn’t grow up in Reading, I didn’t go through the Reading School System, everything is outlined. There isn’t one thing that is missing from this document. This is what Reading wants, these are their expectations, so I am going to work as hard as I can to get an M.” He saw it the other way. His whole goal, because he assumed he was going to get all P’s being a first year teacher and you know. He even said it, he said that I saw myself progressing towards because I am a first year teacher. Where veterans saw themselves...you could see the flip side of it. Do you see the psychology?

- Well, because after 25 years you shouldn’t be progressing. You should either be meeting it, or beyond.

- I don’t even know if the word “meet” should be changed. I don’t know, but it is a bone of contention for some people.

- Do you remember the 8th grade teacher? Do you know what she said?

- Yes. She said a narrative for exceeds.

- Yes, I thought she had a great idea.

- That is the one that stands out in my head and that is the one I have mentioned at meetings because I do think the M and if you want to add something you could put that.

- I think that is what I liked about that suggestion.

- I think that we are talking about the same suggestion. And so it was amazing to hear from both ends of the spectrum as far as teaching careers how people saw it because for this new teacher, he could be getting M’s and E’s and not even realizing it. He saw himself getting P’s, but hoping within three, four, five years, he is going to be getting some meets and some exceeds. And yet, it is the flip side. Imagine what would happen if a veteran got a P. I wouldn’t want to be in that room.

- I think it is so specific, as number 2, who left us, said. She felt that some of the E’s were unattainable. But I felt that it was unattainable, I wouldn’t feel the same way about getting an M or if I don’t
particularly care for that idea or that goal. I guess because I have not been teaching very long, I have been only teaching four plus years, and so I thought, I got mostly M’s where I belonged. But, when I looked at the E’s, I said, that is not me, so I shouldn’t be an E. So, again, if I were teaching for 25 years, I would have a different perspective. That if the people who have been teaching for 25 years look next to that E and that is what they attained, then they should have E’s. But if they did not attain it, they could say, I don’t value this as much as that document does. But, I think you should know where to fit.

- But, then, who is the ultimate reader of the document? So, I felt when I did the self-evaluation, I had lots of M’s, because I thought, that is a stupid one up there. I can’t ever do that. Technologically, I don’t have a SMART Board, so there is no way I could do it. But, if I am not reading the document because my evaluator is, then what are they thinking? So, I was fine with the M’s on my own, and fine with the P’s or whatever, because of the background and the history of why I wasn’t meeting the standard. But, I am not the one evaluating me. So then, I guess the thing is, are they looking for all E’s? And if they are, and they are unattainable and I have been here for 26 years, I am feeling that there is something wrong with the document. Or, is the M okay and I think that needs to be communicated, maybe, that M is the thing. If the E is a narrative or just gravy on top of it, that’s great, if you can get the E’s. I don’t know.

- That is how I feel it was communicated at my school. Maybe that is why I felt that way too. The communication by the administration is key.

i. For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare?

- Wow, I can’t remember the old system.
- I can’t either. It was more writing.
- Wasn’t it still the old EBO?
- Moderator-So it was more narrative?
- Yeh.
- I think it was more individual.
- And not as comprehensive.
- Right.
- We also did not have the alternative, which I was too late to do.
- Yes, it was in place. And a few people, very few in the district did participate in that.
- The alternative?
- Yes.
- It wasn’t as specific as it is now. It did not have as much of an explanation. It just was put out there if you like to, and almost in some ways you could frame it yourself. And someone did. But know, it is
sorta of a list of things you can do and not only that, you have an explanation of. I think even one is that you take a course and you develop a unit from a course. Because of how it is set up now, with the explanations and it is clearly defined, it has improved as been presented, it has been improved. I see more and more people taking the challenge or opting for that. Because when I had my evaluation, the principal said that probably the next time you would probably do something like that.

- I know that they looked at me kind of weird when I said just come and watch me teach. Because if I had been doing something that fit, but otherwise, it just felt weird not being evaluated by you seeing what I do.

- I remember the post discussion was more about the wording of what he had written on like my observation. Because it was more individual wording as opposed to the check off. So it was more what does that term or phrase really apply? It was more subjective, I guess.

- I am glad you brought that up because I do think that upon seeing it, if we were trying to make it, create it, and it became a viable tool to generate effective teachers in the best environment around, it had to lose some subjectivity and gain more objectivity. So I couldn’t help, because of what we do, to see it as a rubric. And to me, rubrics came into existence and student worked improved with rubrics. Studies have been done. That is number 1 and I think that is why we use them. The other reason is that they eliminate questions, so it eliminates I am not really sure what you want, because it is right there on the rubric. And the third, I see, is that it takes that personal opinion. When you have a project in front of you, it takes that personal opinion piece out. All of the cards are on the table and people are truly being graded according to that rubric, not who they are, not because they misbehave in the classroom. You can’t help that and you just pull that judgmental piece away from teachers and that it is on the project, the essay, whatever, and you have the rubric. Just like the John Collins and the FCA’s. It is clearly outlined, its in black and white and I think the kids, are much more receptive to rubrics. Especially if you are grading poetry, you are grading some type of performance, or something that tends to be a little more creative than analytical or whatever. I sometimes in the past, one hundred years ago, I think, ooh, this makes me nervous because this is a poem. But when I create a rubric that says that you need three poetic devices, no more than two spelling errors, that your artwork has to match what is in the poem, whatever, it is right there for me and they accept it and they are not hurt by it. I am just thinking that...

- So you are saying that means the same thing for the TAP?

- That is what I am hoping. I still think there is room for improvement there. I do think that it is a WIP, a work in progress, as I tell the kids. I definitely think it is a document that we all need to own. I definitely
think it needs to never come from the top-down but the bottom up, and that is the most acceptable. And the same with rubrics. With the kids using them and I see more and more teachers using this, let’s decide on the FCA’s, have the kids decide on the FCA’s, have the kids decide on what they want in the rubric. Because I decide, it still remains subjective, but when the kids decide, what is important here, why are we teaching this, why are we writing this poem, and we all know where we are going with this, but it comes from them. And I have done that from them and to me I get some of the best work. I do see using rubrics and showing kids examples of work. I think those are two key procedures in enabling kids to improve, to see this is what an A looks like.

- Moderator-Take that a little bit further, because I think you have some good points. So you say that the TAP is a rubric for students. But, you also said that modeling was important. How could we integrate that more into teaching to help teachers?

- Um, as far as new teachers observing veteran teachers. How it can be built into the schedule and new teachers are busy enough. We are all busy and I think that they have enough on their plates. These teachers are trying to make sure that they take attendance, you know, some of the mundane things in their day. But, I do think that something should be done for new teachers as far as scheduling or whatever, that they have once a week that they have something built into their day where they can observe veteran teachers. Don’t you think so?

- Yes, I do.

- I just know that when you take courses, and I really haven’t observed in a while a veteran, but you take a course and you say, I really like what this professor is doing, and I am going to incorporate, I am going to…but then you see some and say, how did this person become a professor?

- I think especially when they are bringing it into this town, they need to observe who is going to be teaching, because so many times you sit there and say, they are not modeling what they are teaching us and so I am old enough where I can say, take what I can and leave what I don’t want. But, if you make sure that every time there is a course offered here and you are encouraging the ones that the young teachers should take, you need to make sure that you have a person that is in the teaching position, who can be a role model. I mean there is nothing better than that. So they are taking courses on teaching and learning and then they are watching the modeling. And I think that is really important and unfortunately, we have all had experiences where they are not exciting, they are not shifting gears, and we are sitting there for two hours, but you are telling us that we need to do it differently with our kids and, I’m sorry, no sale. So maybe we need to be extra vigilant on the professors, especially when it seems more and more that they are bringing then in to Reading. You know and before.
- Very good suggestion.
- Because you used to be able to go and Reading would have no choice. You go to Lesley, you take a course and you end up with a bad instructor. You know, Reading has no ownership in that. Especially now where we are bringing people in, I think it is really important to...
- It is almost like parents on the Enrichment committees who go out and preview the arts. They go out and preview and they come back and say forget it or it’s a go. But, I do think that we have been talking about this for years and years and years, about new teachers observing. We have very highly qualified, high qualified teachers in this district and we talk about it. It is a good idea and we all would agree that is one of the first steps. I think that we have tried in the district to put a lot more in place, but that should be part of the TAP document, a way as a tool to create effective teachers. They need to see what that line item means on that document. And that is what we started to do at some of our staff meetings. We at one time got together, it was classroom management and one of the sections in the document, it was pick a line item, and talk about what type of lesson you would present. I think every school did this, what lesson would you present so in the group you had some veterans and some new so some of the suggestions were discussed often. And I heard one of the newbies say, “I never saw it that way, I didn’t realize.” I think they thought it was unattainable and it is just good practice. It is something that veteran teachers take for granted.
- Well, one of the teachers says that she feels lucky if she lands on an E. And she doesn’t know how she got there.
- But that is how we can get the new ones and I think that it has been written about all over the place that teachers, it is three years from when they graduate from schools, good schools and they graduate from the profession, they can’t make it.
- Actually our former principal said five, because I remember I went to him and said when am I going to feel like I am not an imposter. He said about year 5.
- He knew and that is true, but now they are saying 3 years and there is a turnover. And if you think about the training, the money, the good intentions, and to me it is the most important profession ever.
- One of our committees, not the district committee, but the building committees, I was on it this year. Our product was, we ended up calling it peer poaching and it was a plan and a document for observing each other and stealing ideas. In fact, I went over and observed another teacher at the other school, most people stayed in the building, and just the people on the committee did it first, and we were supposed to present it to the faculty, but our last meeting got canceled. So we have not done that yet, but we are supposed to be doing that for next year. What we came up with was, the principal has offered as long as we plan ahead, to give you coverage for a period or two
periods at a time, and take this document and say that you and I do it. Say, I am having a tough time with classroom management can I come and see you? We choose what we wanted the FCA to be and then document, come in and observe and it would just be between us, it wouldn’t be filed anywhere.

- So it would be mentor, mentee...

- It does, but it does not have to be a mentor, mentee relationship, but it would be not as formal, just between us, and it would be volunteer. We are going to present this to the faculty anyone who is interested in doing this one-two sided piece of paper, things to check off, things that you are interested in. It may be just that you want me to come into your room to see how many times I choose a boy or girl. It may be something that you want to learn from somebody else or something to critique because you are not happy with yourself, you use this very informal system. The only thing that we needed to get from administration was if you needed someone to cover and they said as long as you do it ahead of time because you always have a sub in the building that has a period off or he said that he would find ways to do that. We had fun doing that among the committee members and even veteran teachers learn some of the new stuff from the new teachers, especially with the activators and summarizers and the technology because that stuff that is coming out is all the great ideas from the colleges. You know it is something that takes very little overhead, you probably need to meet for 10 minutes before so that you can understand this is what I want to see in your room and you just jot notes and then you have a meeting to discuss it. You know you can file it in the trash afterwards or keep it if it helps, but it never goes beyond the two teachers doing it. That is one informal way that can help those TAP goals to say, gee how can I get better at. And I think it gets around the building who is really good at this? I know that I am dying to see some teachers who are really good at transitions because I feel that is one of my weaknesses. I say that I have to go watch her and see what is different.

- That might be good for an inservice day or workshop that the big cheeses organize. Take how can we do a workshop around transitions. Or let’s take some of the harder goals to develop and bring someone in that is an expert or something like that. So maybe we could make it, I know that some of them are weird, but bringing someone in.

- I was thinking that when you were saying that, often times, what happens, I think the newbies say, I have an Ivy league education and I am just going to someplace else and make more money because I can’t handle these kids. I don’t think it is a knowledge of subject matter. I think, and I don’t think they are trying to deliberately kid themselves, I think it is almost an unconscious act of sabotage on the part of any school district or in many ways to administrators and veteran teachers that we are so busy, but we need to be cognizant of those people in the
building who appear capable, bright, and energetic and everything is in
the right place, but I think that often times it is because of classroom
management. Sometimes that is not considered more important than
expertise in the field.

- Except you can’t share your expertise unless you have got the
  management.
- You can’t. I don’t care how much you know or how brilliant you are,
  if you cannot manage a classroom and that to me that should be the
  focus your first year. You know, first year, maybe some things have to
  go to the side. But the focus...
- You can always tell who the first year are...
- It is 75% of that first year.
- And I always had this great idea, which has nothing to do with us, but
  that every college that has teachers coming out of it, gets a group of us
  in the trenches to come in and tell stories and have the kids ask
  questions before they get out there because that is when they really
  find out. Sitting in the college room and doing student teaching gives
  you some, but...
- They don’t realize it. And it is amazing that we have had young ones
  observe us. One of the first questions is how did you know how to
  answer that? And even sometimes I had to stop and think about, I may
  not have known to say it my first or second year or how to deal with...
- Or observing kids faces. I mean today I had a kid who had an answer
  and everybody was like, what?, he didn’t raise his hand, but he had
  that look on his face. And I was like what is in your head, share it
  with us. You know, so there are just so many things after you develop
  those skills.
- So I guess...How is this document helping the newbies? Is it? You
  say that person, I forget, was seeing the goals and do we need to break
  it down further? I mean even for veteran teachers.
- Maybe that idea we were doing at staff meetings because I saw
  promise was done. And I saw that people were confused about the
  TAP document.
- Didn’t get the assignment right.
- But I felt, because it didn’t take that long and it was a good mix. I
  don’t know, it must have been a deliberate mix with some veterans and
  some newbies. It was ok, read this and how do you see this taking
  place in the classroom? You know, classroom management,
  curriculum, instruction, and what not. How do you see that? And it
  was more like a conversation. Well, you remember something that
  happened and then you mention that and you would hear people say,
  gee, I never saw it that way and it doesn’t always have to be a newbie,
  it could be veterans sharing that you know. That is a really good way
  of looking at it or whatever. Maybe we needed more sessions like that
  if we wanted to be more of a working document.
• What would be interesting is to mix it up between Coolidge and Parker, you know, so that you are not always with the same people. You know, you could mix up the elementary schools.
• And maybe by subject, too.
• Yeh.
• Because for me, having no one really like me in the building, makes it, I mean I can get all sorts of great ideas from other subject matter teachers, but it might be cool to talk about it with your specialty. All English or all math or all science.
• It would be neat to look at the document with members in your subject area and say, what would we do to get to exceeds. You know, how would we attain that? You know how it is kind of grouped, pick one group and it would probably better with the two schools, because not everybody knows everybody and they have different ideas. But say, what are some of the ideas to get to this goal to get exceeds in this particular thing? And come up with ideas and things that help us work towards that it would be frustrating that, oh, I will never get to that standard. An outlandish goal.
• I am wondering if it would be good with the high school mixed in with the middle. I don't know how that works for you guys. Now that I know that I am moving up here, it will be like two people meeting, if I were the department, so, or is it overwhelming if all of the math and English people meet if there is too many.
• Think of what you are saying, it is almost like you are creating a rubric for the rubric. What you are doing, its analysis, its data analysis. Isn't it? Right? You are looking at the MCAS, the items in the MCAS, you know, how many kids got it wrong and how many kids got it right.
• Because if you don't have that discussion and you don't bounce ideas off of each other, it becomes a document, which in my head even though we reflect on it throughout the year, its not quite yet a living document for me. I think that if we have more assigned time to discuss it, then it would. But then, you don't want to do it every year. But you have the new people. But you could have that as part of your mentor/mentee stuff too.
• But there is a committee so if the suggestions are taken to the committee then the committee can take it from there and go with your suggestion and say, ok, how can this be worked out because on one really has to worry about how it has to be structured.
• Even if it is bulleted items, to exceed, you have to do this. What kind of things could get you there? Take a course in technology, whatever, you know. Especially if we think they are too far beyond. Maybe there are some that are good and maybe from that would come to the administration, ok, this one needs to go.
• That means that it is truly unattainable, we would look at it just like the kids would be creating there own rubric. If I said to the kids that you have to draw the picture that matches the poem to be you know,
da Vinci quality, then that can’t be on the rubric. And we outline it, now it is achievable.

- I think it would make everyone feel good about it as opposed to overwhelmed. There is too much and you break it down into little chunks.

j. If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say?

- I don’t know which is ours and which is there.
- Moderator-Good question, for instance, they require that evaluations be done every other year, where that is dictated, would you like alternative assessments or alternative TAP, you know, you kind of talked a little bit about that. What kind of things would you like and for veteran staff a portfolio assessment?
- I would love and this used to be, where the principal used to just drop by. And I still think you could still do the formal one, but I feel like that is a snapshot and I have a clear example of it. Where I was marked down for because they came in at the culmination of a two year, rhythmic work and I had taught it every way under the sun and I am one that finds tons of ways to get every kid, I am so proud that at the end of seventh grade I can get every kid to do rhythmic dictation, which is they listen to a clapping rhythm and have to write it down in note 4. So, there’s all of these methods that I have used up to that point and I got marked down because I only did auditory, the clapping and they wrote. And I said, oh my gosh, do you know how many ways I have taught them tricks just to do this one thing, of course it is the building blocks of everything up until then. So, they changed it on my evaluation, because they understood where I was coming from, but if they do more walkthroughs and just drive by evaluations they would have a clearer understanding of you know. Because maybe on the day that they observe you, the class is a little out of control and you might get marked down in classroom management. Or you might do one specific thing and I know that you can choose the day that they come, but depending on what point you may have in the year, you may not have many things, so I think that if they could come more often, and not necessarily the whole period, cause, I know their time is limited. And then the kids get to see them there too and kids always behave differently when they are in the room.
- Moderator-Would you like it to be focused? What would you like them to look at? Do you want them to tell you what they are going to look for?
- I think for the short walkthroughs I would not want it, I would want them to get a feel for my classroom like on different days. And then, I think they still would need the formal. But, I also think that it would make teachers less nervous that they are being evaluated and watched
and observed and in the old days when there were not as many requirements, that’s how my principal used to do it. And I think he had a clear grasp of who I was as a teacher.

- Ours do it, our principal and vice principal. I am not saying weekly or daily, but our principal has a goal for himself to be in every classroom once a week, but that is impossible to me. Once a something, so that he is trying to make it more scheduled. They do it now and the kids are very used to them and they don’t change their behavior for them at all. So, I know that is a goal of our administrators. Its realistic, but I don’t think its evaluative. Like, I feel very comfortable when they are in there, that is probably why because I leave my door open all the time anyway. I think I feel that way because people are always coming in, including the psychologist come in and sit at your desk and so we have people in and out a lot and maybe. I don’t think it should be a part of the evaluation process, though. I think it is a good thing to have, but not attached to TAP, though.

- Not necessarily, but it does give them a three dimensional picture of who you are as a teacher versus that one snapshot.

k. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process?

- I really believe the whole E, M, P is really an issue. The E and the grading. That it is a grading scale. And to figure out a way, I mean you literally have veteran teachers of my years plus nervous of this document. And to me that is not what the document should be done to a person. It should be encouraging and something that you want to strive for, but there has to be a way that you do what both sides need. You know that the way the administration needs to evaluate you, but have the teachers feel comfortable about the process.

- One item and I am not sure that we have talked about it, what I like about it is the piece because it matches what they do in the business world. Most times when you have an evaluation in the business world, you spend your time coming up with your achievements and accomplishments for the year. And usually there is some type of rubric for that, some guideline, you come up with your achievements and accomplishments. And, I don’t remember doing it as much, but it is much more in place with specific questions. This would be, the preobservation summary, let me think, you know the summary where you write up everything you have done, the courses that you have taken, the workshops that you have taken, the school and what you have done, the volunteering, whatever. And how, you address the needs of the academically talented and address the needs of the kids that are struggling and all of that. Within that document, there is a place for you and what you have done. You know, professional articles, and if you have made lesson plans for any courses that you
have taken, whatever. And I think that these are empowering, it allows us to become visionaries of our own work ethic, our own commitment to teaching. Because when you think of evaluation, its us evaluating what the clientele gives us. I think the TAP document is something more of what we own and administrators or whoever is in charge of it, you know you can either agree or disagree. I don’t know if I am being clear about it, we are striving and we are using as a tool to get better, but I don’t think teachers are self-promoters by nature. I think we are the worse self-promoters ever. And there is a piece for self-promotion. And I don’t think people realize what they should list. That is what I like about the TAP document. A teacher suggested this and I think it was a very good suggestion, often new teachers don’t realize, what they do every day or whatever, they do realize how important it is to list it. And this teacher suggested that teachers who have been teaching for a long time, share that summary with new teachers. So that they see, what is valued in Reading and valued among their colleagues and what is important to document. I don’t think new teachers realize always what to document. I remember being a new teacher and I remember a principal saying to me, but weren’t you on this committee to do this and I don’t even remember putting it down, maybe if I took a course or whatever, but I do think. That was a suggestion made and I thought it was an excellent suggestion. In other words, they were comfortable to share that with new teachers, so they could get an idea of what to bullet.

1. How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?

- I think the idea that we talked about before really answers that. One of the ideas was getting together and work on action items and lessons.
- Breaking down the document.
- Observations...Peer poaching. And I think too that sharing of the self, not just the lessons and the document, but what I would consider accomplishments and achievements of teachers.
- Even creating a web page. Some teachers have created web pages and don’t even document it. But, once it is documented, it is out there. But, that is something that I don’t remember it when I first started teaching, but knowing people in the business world that is something they did, which was to write down. And I thought, woo, that sounds a little conceited there. But, is it because we are not used to doing that.
- We are givers.

m. That covers the areas that I wanted to ask. Is there anything that you care to add?

- None
High School Non-PTS
Focus Group Questions for Teachers
Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators in the Implementation of TAP
Date of Session: June 5
Number of Participants: 5
Location: Superintendent’s Conference Room
Beginning Time of Session: 2:30 p.m.
Ending Time of Session: 3:30 p.m.

I. Introduction

Good Afternoon and thank you for participating in this focus group session.

My name is Dr. Christine Redford and I will be conducting today’s focus group session. The purpose of this focus group session is to gather data on your perceptions of the teacher evaluation process or TAP that is used in this school district. This data will be used as part of Seton Hall researcher, John Doherty’s dissertation which will be measuring the perceptions of teachers and administrators in the implementation of a standards-based evaluation system. You have received a copy of the signed consent form for this focus group session. This focus group session is being recorded. As you can see, we have an assistant moderator present at the session to handle any logistical issues such as refreshments, audio recording equipment, and taking some notes of key phrases.

You will be identified only by a number and the category of focus group that you are participating. This focus group contains teachers from (elementary, middle, or high school). The teachers in this focus group session are (professional status or non-professional status) teachers. If this is not your category, please let me know now.

The answers from all of the people we interview will be combined for the results of the dissertation. Nothing you will say will ever be identified with you personally. As we go through this session, if you have any questions about why I am asking something, please feel free to ask. Participation in this focus group is completely voluntary and you may leave at any time during the focus group session.

This session is a group discussion on the questions that will be presented. I will begin each question by asking one particular person the question. You will be identified by the number that is located in front of you on the tent card. Other participants will then have the opportunity to give their answer once the first person has answered the question. You may include additional information throughout the discussion at any time.

Are there any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions)
doing a lot also of really taking the opportunity to say, I have done some professional development, what are some activities that I have been involved in. It may really give you an opportunity to kind of toot your own horn if you have not been really thinking about what exactly have you done this year. So, it gives you an opportunity to break down a list of what you have accomplished during the year. But, it is pretty lengthy, I don’t know if that is a positive?

- Moderator-We will talk about negatives in a minute.
- When I said it was detailed it kind of narrows down the area of focus. You know, instead of saying that I am having trouble with discipline, it help you focus on discipline in specific situations or communication. Well, communication, how. What type of communication? Is it one on one communication? Is it regular communication? So in that regard, it can narrow the focus, I think about what you are thinking about for your goals.
- Moderator-Were there any surprises for you when you first participated in the TAP as it is now? Were there things that you were expecting to be evaluated on or was there more of a scope than you thought?
- It is a large scope, but I think that it is one of the positives. It includes not only what your goals are in terms of professional development or school involvement or those kind of things, but it does take into consideration your ability to be a team member, your ability to work professionally, those kind of things and I think those are kind of key components when you are considering a staff member as a whole.
- I think it makes us reflect on. You know we are busy doing our everyday teaching and getting our classes ready and it helps us to reflect on our teaching in general and helping us improve, not just with a class ready for the day, but looking over the year, and what we could look ahead to.
- Moderator-Getting the big picture and looking ahead?
- Yeh.
- Moderator-Has it in any way made you think about goals for the following year?
- What I found out from last year to this year is that I was carrying over goals and starting goals that I haven’t finished. Like one goal led into another. And keeping in mind the district and building wide goals. I feel like those govern where I am going with my goals because if the objective for everybody is that we are heading in the same direction, it is not worth it to me to head in a different direction.
- Moderator-Is that a positive thing for you or a negative one?
- It is positive in the sense that I don’t have to kill myself to come up with goals. They are kind of given to us.
- Moderator-How do other people feel about that?
- I am waiting until you get to the negatives. And I didn’t really want to paint them as negative, but …

c. Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process?
• I think that just because it is so detailed that and the broad strokes that are painted when you go through the pre-process that it does not allow for enough customization of differentiation between say a special education teacher and a department person staff member or a language person. I also think that it does not allow for enough detailed variation between a first and second year teacher and a veteran teacher in the building. It is very detailed, but I think at the same time, it is very broad. The two sound like a contradiction, but I really feel like the detailedness of it limits the scope. My previous experience is in other arenas and the evaluation process is very customized to the job and the task that you have in front of you. So, I feel like it is somewhat limited and really does not depict easily without lots of writing on the preobservation part on my part to convey what I think the scope of my job is.

• Moderator-Okay, so if I hear you correctly, you are saying that somebody like school psychologist or phys. Ed teacher, there focus would be totally different then a classroom teacher. Is that what you are saying?

• At some level, yes, but as this teacher was saying, it is nice that she does have to come up with the goals because the district is almost directing. So that is true, in some levels, you back off because you want to align yourself with what the district is saying and the direction they are heading, but I feel that because this is a very detailed format, it is almost limiting at the same time.

• And I also think too, that the questions can be repetitive. So it they might be asking the same question two or three times, so I see that as a negative.

• I think that being a relatively new teacher, the first time that I saw the TAP, It was the question about the horse before the cart situation. And I found myself looking at what the district goals were and thinking, ok, how can my goals fit into one of these puzzle pieces. And that seems kind of like a backward model. I would prefer to establish what my goals are and try to see how they fit into the direction that the district is trying to move in. I think that it has gotten easier the longer that I have been exposed to it. I have seen how my goals have aligned with the district goals, but I think that what was being said earlier, the kind of goals that a first year teacher have as opposed to a teacher that has been there for 10 years, are not going to be aligned, so...

• As a new teacher not knowing or arriving to a school not knowing what the goals are, and then being given this and trying to figure out, ok, what are the school goals first, and being given the school goals in a document. And then trying to figure out what are out goals?

• Moderator-Ok, I am not sure I am following. So you are saying that you are given the school goals and then you have to kind of ...

• As a new teacher, my first year here, each district has its own goals and there are things that you have to figure out what are the school goals here. Things just aren’t always handed on the first day of school, well, here are our school goals.

• Moderator-Okay, so you have to search for them.

• That way there are and there are some things that not everything is given to you.

• Moderator-What do you think about new teachers for next year. What would be a good thing to do?
• If there is sort of anything that is general, not so specific that you are reading everything a)... What the general
• Moderator-So it would be very straightforward? Quick to the point, is that what you are saying?
• Yeh. For new people to figure out what is the general atmosphere here, what are the general goals?
• I think that I am getting this confused, but I was referring to the document that we got that did say this is what the general goal number 1 is for our school and the district. If I am thinking of the same thing, which I think I am, that you would have to write on the TAP that whatever you had with and what it aligned with. So then you were given something and that you would have to cite the number of the district one that it went along with, kind of? So I was looking to make sure that my own goal was going to fit into that.
• Moderator-And what would be helpful for you, do you think would be helpful for new staff?
• Maybe to, and I think that is what I am saying that the more I have been using the TAP, the more that I am familiar with it and the more that I am seeing that it is not so black and white and I could have a goal that, you know, I can’t think of anything off the top of my head, but that it is not so rigid as I originally anticipated. A lot of the goals you are able to fit them, even if they don’t fit in exactly. So maybe to have somebody, maybe someone who is working as a liaison to that person that mentor to that newer teacher that you should be able to guide them through the process and are not left to their own, I think.
• It would be useful for the mentor process to be able to do that. It should be included in the mentor/mentee thing going this year. I worked with a couple people in my department and we kind of shared our goals so that allowed us to compare the wording, cross-referencing and all that.
• Departmental goals. I think that in terms of one goal that is common with the department.
• Moderator-So you would like that?
• Yes, I think that would be very helpful.
• My first year I think we did do that. We did them all together and had a central.
• Right.
• I think we did that in our department this year.
• We kind of did it on our own. We said what do you want to do?
• I would say, just a negative that the timing of the TAP deadlines. A district wide timeline does not work in a building where everything does not happen at the same time. And I found a couple of deadlines that came up, last year was worse than this year, you get some document that you are supposed to have finished, it is a five page document with a hundred questions or whatever it is, and it is due the same day that grades are due. And just some flexibility within the schedule of it. I mean, I see their point with the deadlines, I mean having your EBO’s due on the same day as midterm warnings is...you know. If they want it to be thoughtful, it has to be respectful of the schedule. That is just a matter of awareness.
d. What are some ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed your teaching?

- If I think about the specific goals, kind of communicative and technology focused goals, and it kind of governed how I set up my classroom this year and I incorporated the SMART Board more, I use it constantly now, so it has become second nature. My previous district I did not have a SMART Board, so just adding that one piece of it, so it is like a whole new facet to my teaching.
- It definitely affects student outcomes.
- I think for me this year it helped me develop where I wanted to go in terms of initiatives that I wanted to set up. It just gave me sort of a guideline, okay, here I am now, where do I see myself next year, and what do I need to do in the meantime to get there? So it made me more aware of what I wanted to do with the goals that I wanted to set up.
- I don’t know if it has really affected my teaching, maybe how I am organizing what I am going to be doing, but I don’t think my teaching of a foreign language has changed. Getting certain things accomplished by a certain time period, but I don’t know if the actually teaching of foreign language has changed because of it.
- Yeh, I think I would have to agree, the evaluation that has been done is based on two class periods, by two different evaluators, so I think that it is kind of a limited opportunity for the evaluators to really have a good grasp on what goes on in a day to day basis in the classroom. The one thing that I would say is that getting the results of the evaluation and reading the comments that were made, that if there were areas that I felt that consistently over the past couple of years are not at a high level or exceeds that it definitely cued me that this is a consistent thing that I have gotten, you know, meet the standard, or whatever, that I would want to work on. So, in that sense, it does make you aware of consistent.
- And for me that is probably I would look for next year. After the first year getting used to the system, the kids, and program, and seeing next year if there is anything that would help me to adjust to things, but I think right now, just being my first year here, I don’t think it has changed my teaching.
- Moderator-Now I am thinking about the evaluation process and when somebody is observing you one part of it. Are there other parts that helped you to be a better teacher or did it affect your teaching in any way either positive or negative? Like are you writing the goals, or is it helping you be more reflective or think about your teaching or those kind of things?
- I guess it, I am not sure if it is the TAP or something. In my previous school I had a similar document so it doesn’t feel different. In fact, I think the other one is longer and more cumbersome. It was pretty bad. But, I just think that those two lessons or whatever it is that we are observed it made me reflect not only on that specific lesson, but how is my room presented at this moment. Like I when I have an observer in my room, what does that person see. I take the time to just for that specific 45 minute lesson, but to think about, what are the goals that I have set up for myself, what are the goals, what would I like an observer to see in my room and just to take it in that. I post more rubrics now, I post more assignments now, I use more visual cues, I don’t know if it is directly related to TAP, but those are
f. What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your classroom?

• I am not a content area teacher, so I think that it may be more difficult to answer that, but I don’t know it that is something that.
• When you reflect and you say that you want to increase the use of technology and you accomplish that. It directly impacts the student achievement.
• I think that it impacts student achievement in a less direct way. The goals are based upon self-improvement. Student achievement is kind of a secondary measure for the self improvement and attaining whatever your goal is.
• I guess if you have goals to improve your own teaching and that improvement in teaching is going to reflect on the students, hopefully.
• I think that anytime that you are reflective about your process for what you are doing in the classroom, the goal is that reflection would play out in student achievement.

g. In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school?

• It doesn’t feel like we have had it long enough to be able to gauge.
• The only thing is that all of the teachers are going through the same process so there is a group headed in the same direction through the same thinking and the same questions which could show improvement for the school.

h. From your perspective, how has the TAP process seem to improve your effectiveness as a teacher?

• Kind of more of the same, but the reflective piece, I think, makes me consider more how I am presenting the material and perhaps make me more of an effective teacher, but at least that would be the hope.

i. For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare?

• Skipped because they were not part of the old process.

j. If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say?

• I think that would be number one that the evaluations be more frequent or observations be more frequent and just more consistent feedback.
• And more does not mean it has to be a formal observation, just informal.
• Moderator-So like a walkthrough?
• Just a walkthrough and I heard maybe that you had a special lesson that you were writing down and you would just like someone to take a look at, because it is something you are proud about.
• I think it is hard for administrators to come into one class and get a pulse. I have four of the same foreign language classes and they are all different. And because of the student interactions and because of the learning going on, I tend to teach each a little differently in each of those classes. So, it is hard to go into one and say, oh, this is how this person is teaching. I know its time and you can’t always get into those classes, but to stop in and maybe see the whole realm of all of the classes. Maybe if it is even for ten or fifteen minutes. Just to go in and see what is happening and get a better idea than one specific class, twice a year.

• Or at least acknowledgment or understanding that or I mean I would assume that they would understand that, but I don’t think they get that this is like today is an aberration or today was a good day even though, so it kind of is not the same.

• There is also a question on the written survey asking about peer feedback and I think that is what is really lacking in our school. We really don’t have the opportunity, oh, I suppose we do, but we don’t really practice here peer evaluation. But, I would love the opportunity to go into other classes and see how things are going on in there.

• I think the colleagues know more often what is going on in people’s classrooms than the administrators. I find that the administrators are looking at it from an administrator’s point of view, and they don’t see it necessarily from a teacher point of view. And, although I think all of my evaluators have been teachers in the past, it feels like in my post observation meeting that they have forgotten about what happens in a classroom. It has become much more administrative, than teacherly. And with that in mind, I think a failure of this and every evaluation process is that in every building in every district there are teachers that are not terribly effective. Kids seem to know who they are, colleagues seem to know who they are, yet, I feel personally that the process has been productive and valuable, but I don’t necessarily feel like that plays out for all the teachers. I suppose it can’t be fixed, but if the problem, if the goal of an evaluative process is to have the most effective, most reflective faculty, then the problem teachers should be addressed through that process. It always seems to be patting you on the back and saying what good things you are doing, but there are times when people are not effective and I don’t know if that seems like it gets played out.

• Again if you had a particular lesson that you thought would be really exciting you could invite the administrator or the colleague to the lesson. And maybe that would be a way to get them to come in.

• We do not see a lot of walkthroughs. In my previous district we had administrators walking through at least once a week, wandering through, even for 30 seconds. That presence was noted behaviorally, it was also noted by the teachers.

• And by the students. I think that it is kind of nice to touch base and get to know who Harry is other than just giving him the high school diploma. Especially a kid who does not get into trouble and just your higher average kid who comes to school every day and doesn’t get a lot of recognition. I think it is kind of nice that administrators could do that.
• And the kids will look very differently upon the administrators if they see them and not just in the hall, hey how are you doing, but coming into the class and say hey, what are they doing in my class?

• And many of them have that innate response when an administrator walks in the classroom and it is amazing the day before they could be totally off the wall and the second there is an administrator that walks in, just how drastically their behavior changes. And I do think, not that they are receiving anything, other than their own self-satisfaction of knowing that they made a good impression when there is an administrator in the room.

• In my previous district, they had district wide walkthroughs, two dozen teachers would walkthrough every building. They would take a day and spend two hours walking through every building.

• Moderator-Teams of Administrators?

• Not just administrators, but teachers too. It would be like six or seven teachers. It would be like a French teacher would go to the middle school and walkthrough foreign language classes in five minutes. And it did not have to be a full day event. It could be just a group of teachers walking through to see what their colleagues were up to. To see what was going on, to see how the room is set up or just to see how they are using the textbook.

• Moderator-And do they make comments about your teaching or anything?

• We would get generic feedback or anonymous feedback like the team wonders if you could be more explicit in your rubrics. And that would be like, well we posted it on the computer so it is not obvious. You could make it a reflective piece to it. The team was impressed with your student communication. They wonder if. It wasn’t critical, it was meant to be positive feedback and any teacher could be walked upon.

• Moderator-But it was taking positive things and stretching you a little bit.

• Yeh. There was a district goal to be explicit in your expectations, so if a group is working on a project, they wondered if the rubric could be displayed more clearly. Well, it was in the computer and in their notebooks, but yes, it could have been displayed along the walls as well, they don’t get to see the big picture, but the reflection is did I display it as clearly as I could have?

• And I think especially at the high school where in elementary school, teachers have bulletin boards outside their classroom and it gives everybody an idea of what that teacher might be working on in that unit with some themes and stuff like that. But in a big high school, you don’t always know what people are working on and there are a lot of people doing a lot of exciting things in the building.

k. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process?

• Some of the forms are just incredibly lengthy. I can’t remember, but there is one where you identify how you think you meet these each one of those. Like some of the paperwork could be condensed. It does not need to be 20 pages.

• In a discipline where we are being asked to meet different learning styles and different learning needs, it sure would be spiffy if there would be different forms.
I mean there are some of us who are visual learners and those of us who want to read a paragraph. If we have to do a 20 page document and we are being asked to differentiate our instruction, it is not hard to create a form that is visually pleasing. If they could change the documents without much difficulty that would address those who need it set up in a different way?

- Moderator-So expand on that a little bit more, how would you like to see it more visual?

- I think that when I sat down with my evaluator, we ended up changing the document so that one was a checklist and we could do it by either highlighting or checking or reading a paragraph. But, I ended up changing it myself because I found it too irritating. So I printed it out my way and handed it to him and said, deal with it.

- Moderator-So what was your way?

- I just numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 and just put it down the side. I can’t remember how it was. Remember that we had to do it the beginning of the year? I can’t remember the exact form, but I remember looking at it and saying that this is a ridiculous form and I need to do it my way because it was just too long.

- And there was lots of emails with confusion as to…

- And then there were multiple versions and then we did not know which one to do.

- That is one thing I was thinking about earlier that I was wondering if there was a way to post on the town website just so teachers had access to it. You know, a list of the forms.

- I think they are posted on Edline. I haven’t checked exactly which ones, but I think they are posted there.

- Is there a narrative portion to the post observation? I know there is dialogue when you sit with them, but is there a narrative?

- I think there is.

- Moderator-So if it is not on Edline, you would like it to be on Edline and posted with the dates that you would like things to be due? Is that what you are saying?

- Yes, what I was saying is that it would be nice to have access to them in a clear way and it could show this is the first one you do, this is the second one you do, etc. Because I find myself going back to my emails looking for which one I am supposed to be doing.

- It would be good to have on a cover page for each one that this is due on such and such a date for those of us that are approaching midterm warnings or whatever. I say, ok, I’ve got this form coming up next week. It does feel like, I like to plan and for some of these things that suddenly show up, it feels like in September that you have to have this form done for next week. And I would like to take the time to be reflective and yet, if it is due next week, I can’t do it.

1. How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?

- It seems like some of the pieces of TAP are more paperwork and time oriented than focused on instruction. Like, have you done X, Y, or Z. It is a time consuming process in that I don’t know if there is a way to get shorter or sweeter
High School PTS
Focus Group Questions for Teachers
Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators in the Implementation of TAP
Date of Session: **June 9**

Number of Participants: **3**

Location: **Superintendent's Conference Room**  
Beginning Time of Session: **2:30 p.m.**

Ending Time of Session: **4:00 p.m.**

I. Introduction

Good Afternoon and thank you for participating in this focus group session.

My name is Dr. Christine Redford and I will be conducting today's focus group session. The purpose of this focus group session is to gather data on your perceptions of the teacher evaluation process or TAP that is used in this school district. This data will be used as part of Seton Hall researcher, John Doherty’s dissertation which will be measuring the perceptions of teachers and administrators in the implementation of a standards-based evaluation system. You have received a copy of the signed consent form for this focus group session. This focus group session is being recorded. As you can see, we have an assistant moderator present at the session to handle any logistical issues such as refreshments, audio recording equipment, and taking some notes of key phrases.

You will be identified only by a number and the category of focus group that you are participating. This focus group contains teachers from (elementary, middle, or high school). The teachers in this focus group session are (professional status or non-professional status) teachers. If this is not your category, please let me know now.

The answers from all of the people we interview will be combined for the results of the dissertation. Nothing you will say will ever be identified with you personally. As we go through this session, if you have any questions about why I am asking something, please feel free to ask. Participation in this focus group is completely voluntary and you may leave at any time during the focus group session.

This session is a group discussion on the questions that will be presented. I will begin each question by asking one particular person the question. You will be identified by the number that is located in front of you on the tent card. Other participants will then have the opportunity to give their answer once the first person has answered the question. You may include additional information throughout the discussion at any time.
Are there any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions)

I am now going to begin asking you the questions.

II. Questions

a. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP used in your school?

- I think to determine if a teacher is doing his or her job and in an appropriate manner and to determine if they are up for rehire. Add anything to that?
- I also think it would be useful for administrators to come into the classroom to have an idea of what is going on in the school. So it is a way to force administrators to come in and see what is going on.
- And I think to give teachers feedback so that they can improve their teaching.
- I would reiterate that. I see it first as an assessment of a teacher’s strengths and weaknesses as a teacher and identify the areas that need improvement. I like the way it lays out the standards and so it gives teachers a sense of what the expectations are of them and I think it gives administrators a way to see what is going on how teachers teach and how student’s behave.

b. The current TAP process has been in place for 2 years. During that time, what have you noticed are some of the positive effects of the program?

- Well, personally, as someone who is not a strict classroom teacher, I like the way the new process delineates my responsibilities as separate from teachers. So it is not a one size fits all document with everybody in the building. I think that is important. I think there are big differences in what we do and what we should be assessed on. And I like the way that it accounts for that.
- I guess that I just find it is kind of unyielding, that it is more complex that it has to be...
- Moderator-We will get to the negative. This is just the positive right now.
- I think actually one of the things you said, number two in the comment earlier in that it gives teachers the expectations. Sorta of like a rubric when you give students an assignment to do, they have a rubric of what expectations a student has to meet. And the indicators that are laid out are one of the positive aspects. It tells the teachers what the district considers to be a good teacher.
- So, along those lines I would also say that I think the standards are right and what the district lays out are important.
- Moderator-So if I am hearing you correctly you say whatever is written there is going to be reflected in the teaching so it has to be sound. Is that what you are saying?
- Yeh. What I am saying is that I would not want to be held to bad standards.
c. Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process?

- I find that there are so many categories under each standard that some of them seem redundant, some of them seem to use a lot of educational jargon. What is scaffolding? When you think about it, yeh, I guess I know what that is, but what is the point? Too jargony. The thing that I like most about it and the thing that I look to immediately are the comments. Like what are the comments that are being made here as opposed to these little check, check, check, check. I guess everything in education seems to be going to checklists and without any. And I find the comments much more meaningful than I do the checklist and then sometimes the checklist, um, the document, if you are just coming in once to observe someone, there is no way you could possibly look at every standard. But, then sometimes the standards that are checked off, the little boxes that are checked off and aren’t checked off are, I did do that in that class, why didn’t the person pick up on that. So, I don’t know.
  - Moderator-So is there a dialogue afterwards?
  - There is, there is. And that is absolutely helpful. But you just read it through. You are busy, they are busy, etc.
  - That dialogue is usually very positive.
  - Yeh. Which, hopefully if you have been here for a while it should be positive, you know. If you’re new and things need to be changed, you should be made aware of that too. We used to a long time ago instead of coming in just once, I realize that this would be a time problem, the department head would come in over three days and I thought that was very useful because you could actually see the development of a lesson. And you actually got a better sense, but I realize it is more of time constraint than anything else. I think the preevaluation, going over what you are going to be doing in the class is fine, the actual visit seems to be fine, obviously, although, I don’t know if they still do, but a few years ago they got that running stream of consciousness, they would just type. I found that the most frustrating thing in the world. Because you would get, as part of your evaluation, a stream of consciousness, what the person wrote down. And you are going...it didn’t make any sense or it made you sound wrong because the tone was wrong. Having a joke or something and it didn’t come across as a joke, and you look weird and the person only caught part of the conversation flow. So I thought it was very misleading.
  - I would think that would be so hard to do. You are not even trying to write down everything we are saying. How are they supposed to type down everything that is being said?
  - Certainly, sitting down with the person ahead of time and saying this is what I am planning to do and here are the reasons why, etc. and the post evaluation meeting is helpful too. Sometimes it can be very helpful for the teacher if maybe you didn’t realize that something was going on in the back of the room. You know, your eyes are not everywhere, so I learn good things about the class.
  - Some of the things that your brought up are real issues in this whole process. I think at least for PTS teachers we get one department head visit and one
administrative visit over the whole year. And those are supposed to be a big enough sample to see if we know the material. If I was testing my kids and I gave them two questions. And they were supposed to have two questions where they knew the year's worth of material, it is not a large enough sample size. And I think, and I know this is not our group, but I have heard complaints from non-PTS teachers that their evaluators did not come in early enough in the year, to give them some feedback so they could make changes before the next visit. You know you really need to have prompt, timely, response to the first visit, so that you can modify what is in the back of the room that you didn’t notice before the next person comes in again. So that whole and it is basically again administrative time. How much time do they have to spend in your room?

- The other issue I have is that some of the things in the document itself, like standard D, part e, posting of student work, we had this whole thing when we built this building that we do not have large blackboards because we can’t have all of this paper on the walls because of fire code. And then we are regularly expected to post student work. I don’t have that much bulletin board space. I could post one student’s work at a time, but that's not very conducive to student’s feeling good about themselves always picking on the one kid.

- If you have three sections of the same class and they had a project how do you get all of those posters up without breaking that fire code.

- Moderator-Do you see things that are not aligned, that there are discrepancies?

- Yeah. I think there are some things that are just more appropriate at the elementary level where you are teaching heterogeneously grouped classes than at the high school level, where we are divided into more homogeneously grouped classes.

- Moderator-Can you explain some of these? Can you give an example of that?

- Perhaps where part c, section h, differentiates and scaffolds instruction to accommodate all students. I would do that in some of my classes more than others depending on the level of the class. If I am teaching an honors or an AP class, there is a level that I expect the student to meet. If I am teaching a level 3 or 4 class, I would definitely differentiate or scaffold and if my administrator happens to see one class or the other, either I meet that standard or I don’t simply because which course they chose to see. I think it is also an issue having the department heads having such a big piece in the evaluation of the teachers. Because department heads are members of our union. And so, it is a very awkward place to put them and to put the teachers who are being evaluated because you can’t have a grievance against a member of your union. You can’t grieve something your department head said, you can only grieve if it is your assistant principal who writes the evaluation that you don’t like.

- So you can’t grieve an evaluation period?

- Not if it is by your department head. But they are not officially doing evaluations, they are officially doing observations. But their observations become a piece of this document.

- Maybe that is one of the reasons they turned it over to the assistant principal actually writing the document. You know, as opposed to the department heads. But at the high school level, it is very important for the department head to go into
the classroom because you have got so many different subject areas taught so an administrator is not going to be an expert in any one area. It is extremely important for the department heads to be going in and observing and saying, you know, this needs to be changed, this needs to be done. Because I was just noticing that the Assistant Principal came to observe me and he didn’t even bother to check off “designs high quality lessons that breaks down complex tasks and targets learning needs, etc.” Well, the class that he had been into, I had done a bang up job with that, but he did not realize that because he did not understand the subject. You know, so there are issues like that. That is why I think it is so important for the department head to be part of the whole observation and evaluation piece.

- And then the other thing you look at what is the difference between exceeding and meeting? We don’t have any sense of what the criteria were for meeting versus exceeding. So you say, oh, okay I met that, but why didn’t I, why do I have exceeds here and meets there?
- Some of those columns seem arbitrary.
- Or you just don’t know how they arrive at that particular. How did you get a meets versus an exceeds and vice versa. It is not clear. I think. But then I guess we have a whole nother set of rubrics that we have to wade through so that we understand so it gets very...gets to be too much.
- I wonder if there needs to be an exceeds at all? I mean once we met the standard, isn’t that what we are aiming for? And it is just creating anxiety and divisiveness? Saying that you should be exceeding some of these standards? So maybe that would be the solution take out the exceeds column all together, you know, we are all aiming for meets. And if we meet it, we are done. Because at what point do you say, I got 10 meets and 3 exceeds.
- How do you exceed an expectation?
- It is like the comments when you put down a report card, 1, 2, 3, 4. Some teachers put down lots of ones.
- I don’t give a lot of ones.
- I give a one for the kid who comes back for extra help every single time. There has got to be something for someone who is above and beyond
- That is true.
- But how do they know what I have done above and beyond because they don’t see what I am doing at home in my house or in my classroom at 5:00 p.m. or my classroom at 9:00 p.m. or in my classroom on Saturday when there is a concert in the building and they are not there to see all of those times that I am putting in all of that time and effort that they are not witnessing because they are only in the building at certain times and they are only seeing what is going on in my classroom on one day a year.
- Moderator-Do you have any time built in to talk about those things or present anything or do you think that would be helpful?
- They write the evaluation before we talk about it.
- Moderator-But, do you think it would be good to have a piece where you would discuss some of the things, some of the accomplishments that you have had in your classroom throughout the year?
• We do fill out a form that says, what have you done this year.
• Not particularly in the classes, but certainly, extra-curricular, professional
development, clubs that you have been involved in and special things that you
have done with the kids, etc. That is usually done at the end of the year.
• And you know what, I would love to see that form at the beginning of the year
someplace where you can be jotting things down as you go. Because at the end of
the year what was it that I was doing in October would be hard, it is always hard.
• You need a secretary. Sometimes I feel that way myself sometimes.
• I just keep one piece of paper and stick it in a file in my top drawer. And then
you can look through, because you know, you do forget. Especially in the first
part of the year.
• But even if there was some sort of log, a sheet of paper that you just keep jotting
down, you know, as you go, you know, it will...If you had something that came
to you that said, in the spring when you have your evaluation we are going to ask
you to fill this out, it might be easier for you to keep track of things as you go.
Some sort of reminder in the fall. And not the first week...late September would
be good enough when things have kind of gotten going and a reminder that comes
out that says, by the way, keep a folder, put all of your stuff in. It is not just pdp’s
for five year intervals. It is this year, what are you doing, because you are going
to be asked to tell us about that.
• Well, you now you have been talking about everything being based on one
observation or the two observation, clearly it is like Family and Community
Outreach, standard E, there is no way that they can realize in the realm of the
classroom, what is going on there. Then, it is kind of interesting to see well, I got
exceeds in everything and then meets in something else. But, I think there is a lot
about a teacher is more that what is going on in the classroom. You know, it is
whether guidance is getting a lot of phone calls about a teacher and parents are
upset about one thing or another. There are a lot of things that go into writing an
evaluation about a teacher that are not reflected in just a classroom observation.
That really is the way that it has to be. You know, because in a classroom
observation, you don’t see the rapport, or if the classroom teacher collaborates
with a department member. You don’t see the whole family aspect. You don’t
see whether the teacher is involved in certain extracurricular activities either. So
there are things and certainly they are mentioned in this document. Those are
important parts of teaching also. It isn’t just that one day in the classroom
observation.
• That is another one of those categories that fits better at the elementary school
than at the high school. Standard e, part j, uses parent and community volunteers.
• That tends to be non-applicable for us, definitely.
• Yes, if you take a field trip and you need parents to go along and chaperone a
field trip, you use parent volunteers, but you are not bringing them in to help with
the spelling of your French words. And some teachers have more occasion to do
that than others. So why would we mark somebody down for not having parent
volunteers coming into your classroom. You don’t want parent volunteers
messing up your chemistry experiment or whatever.
The other thing that I was sort of baffled by was the fact that the department heads
needed so much time and out of classroom to actually learn how to be an effective
evaluator using this document. I was shocked at the amount of time that
department heads were expected to like all of these seminars and figuring out how
to do these. It seems to be very very complicated and I thought, well how
complicated can it be to walk into a classroom, sit down and observe things going
on in the classroom? You know if you were at the level of a department head you
would have a pretty good idea of whether or not a teacher has good classroom
management if they seem to know what they are talking about. If their rapport is
really good with the kids, so why do they need and I know that some of the
department heads were complaining about the fact that they were being pulled out
to go to many of these learning sessions on how to be a good evaluator, so. I
mean, I obviously didn’t go to any of them so it seemed over the top as far as, you
know, why do you need so much time to explain the document, it should be more
user friendly.

I have also heard people feeling like the community part implied that there was an
expectation that they go to events that were held by the school. Like, go see the
plays, go see the sports events, go to the auction that is a fundraiser at the
elementary school. I don’t see that as a standard here anywhere. I can’t find the
place that says you know, showed up at a lot of outside school things. But I have
heard teachers expressing concerns that when it says community that is what they
are expected to be doing.

Because clearly the standards are all basically your communication with the
parents of your students and on how the students are doing.

But, I wonder where that message got garbled. That there were feeling like they
had to go to events and watch their students perform or their students compete or
go buy things at the fundraiser auction. And especially for a lot of the younger
teachers can’t afford to live in Reading or near Reading it is a much bigger
burden. For the people who live in town to come back and see a show on Friday
night is no big deal. If you live 45 minutes or an hour away, it makes it a whole
different game to come back and participate.

We also have a rapidly changing staff with a lot of younger families involved so
you have a lot of issues like daycare and things like that where a teacher would
like to stay for a game or something but the constraints of the daycare provider
dictate it because they have to pick up their kid at a certain time that is part of it
also. And if the teachers are feeling pressure that’s not good. That should
definitely be voluntary.

But, I was looking to see on this form where it says that. But, maybe it should say
family outreach then, rather than family and community outreach.

Because the community means that you show up at stuff, yeh.

And even in the comment section in my comments, the comments are referring to
the school events that I go to, which doesn’t show up in any of the indicators.

Okay.

What do the comments say?
In the school or at school events, she is an open, honest, and friendly face for the parents. So the fact that I am there where the parents are with school events is being observed even though it is not one of the criteria.

It's interesting because mine mentions absolutely nothing about that.

Your evaluation?

Yeh. In the standards under the comments, there is nothing mentioned about extra-curricular activities or anything. It just says parental contact, communication, and values these things.

But, when you look at the list of standards there, how do they know that I have been emailing and responding effectively and making the parents feel welcome at the school. Has someone been checking the number of emails I have been responding to or only because they didn't get any complaints.

That is a good point, because sometimes you have every now and then there's a parent who makes the effort to write a letter or call your principal or department head and say, wow, I am really impressed with the teacher and what he or she did for my son or daughter, because, my son was struggling, my daughter was in trouble, and this teacher went the extra mile. And occasionally that happens so that is where you could get exceeds where one parent calls.

So, if nobody complains, then you are meeting. The expectation is if you don't get any complaints from a parent the message is....

We are doing a good job because no one has found fault with it. Well, you it makes it questionable because what is the line between exceeds and meets, and how is this all brought together. Is it just a perception? And a lot of it, I think, is.

Yeh, I think a lot of it is arbitrary.

It's check, check, check. Its sort of like, yeah When I think back about a person or a certain teacher you have certain idea in mind. You know, hard worker, a collaborator, yes, really makes an effort to come to productions that the kids put on, sporting events, and is really committed to the school. You kind of create an image of a teacher. And so a lot of times when you are writing an evaluation it sort of includes all of those things. I think that it is nice to have a through k, but to me, a through k seems like, wow. The first thing I did when I looked at this thing, I made sure that I didn't have any P's or D. I am okay. There are not P's or D's, I am good. And then I read the comments because the comments made sense to me. And that is how I would look at the document.

And then the evaluation right, the written narrative.

The narrative, right, the comments on each one.

But, don't we have a long narrative?

Would you call it a long narrative? I wouldn't. It used to be, which I really appreciated.

No, it is two or three sentences in each little section.

And there is no...and there is an overall comment for the school year.

Last year was there a long narrative?

I am looking at 06-07.

That is what I am looking at too, 06-07.

I got a long narrative.
I wonder if it is different from administrators. I have an overall comments for school year edits maybe four lines, five lines.

- I have a box that big. I think the box maybe adjustable size. What goes here? Oh.
- Please attach any forms. That is not supposed to happen there.
- Please attach a pre-evaluation summary form or other pertinent artifacts. You got a big narrative under the signature part.
- No, it was attached on a separate document.
- Okay, maybe that is the way that they did yours.
- Okay, different style, different administrator. Okay, there you go...

  d. What are some ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed your teaching?

- Not particularly.
- I feel that the change in my teaching comes more from collaborating with the peers in my department. It really does. I think, though, it is useful to have this. If you have a seasoned strong teacher growing every year then it is one of the few times during the year that a teacher has a pat on the back. You know, you are doing a good job, keep up the good work. It is very nice in that way, but I think this type of thing is crucial when you are talking about new teachers, teachers that do not have professional status. Because I think that one of the issues in teaching is that people are allowed to stay on well before they should have been fired, because they are not teachers, honest to god they can’t teach, and why are you keeping them here. And this type of document can say look, you give people time, and you have to give them a chance to improve, but if they don’t, you have a document that says these are the areas that you are so weak in and we cannot have you continue here as a teacher, because you haven’t kept up, you haven’t shown that you have made any progress, and unfortunately, I think that is more what I see this being is help for a non-professional status teacher. And I would say definitely collaborating with the department, working on curriculum with other department members, is something that is very very useful in making my teaching and my classroom better.

- I would say that is true for me too and courses that I take would be a greater impact in how I am teaching and what I am teaching. Changes, of course, in technology and research and stuff like that make me change. What has made us change is that we have these new resources that we did not have before. But, as somebody that has less, I do have professional status, but I have not been teaching as long as you guys have and I in Library, you do so, you know it maybe about a third of what you do. But to me it is important and it lays out what the district says is important. If this is the district’s document, it is saying these are the claim, these are the things that say these are important and that we value as a district. Now, the district does need to take a long hard look at these and make sure that they do think these are important. And, I think obviously somebody is looking at it.
• What I think, yes, this lays out what is important, but let’s say I am getting a P or a D on one of these standards. I would really want somebody to give me some models as to what we are looking for, because simply saying, plans the year so students will meet state and district standards and be prepared for all assessments. If I am being told that I didn’t meet that, what should I do differently? You know, explain to me what you are really looking for in that category.
• They don’t do that because you never get a P or a D.
• You never get a what?
• You never get a P or a D.
• No, I don’t.
• They probably do that.
• I would hope so.
• I would too.
• But, but, you know.
• That is where your department head comes in and...
• But, some concrete feedback on here’s how to move from here to here. You know, if we are going to have an E column, what does it take to move from M to E? You know. And is it going to matter, whether I am M or E? Does it make any difference to my...
• I think they want to distinguish between a veteran teacher who just can do it like that and someone who has been three or four years. Yes, that person is meeting expectation, but they’re no superstar and so maybe that is what the E, because I have heard that you should not expect too many E’s. You know that is really reserved for, I have not been told that personally, but that is the rumor that has been floating around out there.
• Yeh. Because how would you differentiate between you and competent, but new.
• One of the things that I like that we have to come up with is that we have to come up with goals every year it is a very positive thing because it allows you to really work on the things that you want to work on this year. I really like that aspect. But what I find very difficult spending an inordinate amount of time aligning my goals to district goals. And my goals are very good goals, I thought. They did not necessarily align with the goals of the district for that particular year. So, I think that they should be a little bit more flexible about that because in my department we have the district goals and we were going through them with a fine tooth comb and figure out how to do this. Well, one of the district goals is to have more AP and higher level courses. I was developing a course that was allowing my kids to continue in my subject area, but not at the honors level. It was a course that was going to allow more kids to further advance in my subject area. Well, it was diametrically opposed to the district goal of having more AP courses. And it was very difficult to find something in the document that would substantiate my goal, which was a very legitimate goal. That, I think they need to...obviously if it was way out of line, it shouldn’t be accepted. But, most of the time, you come up with something that we really think is important to work on and why do we have to write down consistent with district goal 11b, it just seems that it was a waste of time. It is not the way that I wanted to spend my time. I have better things to do like get my classes organized. That I found to be very annoying.
I like having goals, but I absolutely agree with you. I mean, having to fill out tedious paperwork.

And that is what it felt like for no reason, because there was nothing wrong with the goals.

If the district is setting the goals, this is the district goals. This is a phantom district.

But, the district goals are going to change from year to year and those goals are going to be carried out in certain parts of the school. Not every person in the school is going to be involved with the district goals.

Do you have to align your curriculum to every district goal.

Yes.

But, how is every teacher going to develop an AP course. You do not have even the authority to do that?

Well, I guess if you are part of teaching that course, you are part of a district goal.

Well, if you aren’t teaching it and the department doesn’t even have it.

I think it is the other way around. Everyone of your goals has to meet a district goal. But you don’t have to meet all of the goals. And you have to figure out which district goal...

And if they don’t meet any of your goals, then something has to change. Either you don’t have the right goals, or the district isn’t accounting for...

Yes, but the district goals can change from year to year and they can be very specific. But, if you ask if my goals fit in with our mission statement, do they fit in to what we are trying to do to better our school system? Absolutely. But, it is very time consuming for an individual teacher to have to wade through this. I don’t read the district goals, wade through it and try to figure out my goals. I am thinking...what is really going to be good for me to work on this year. The end of the year you say, oh gee, I wish that I had done some things differently. I am going to change some things next year because I think that it might work better. So you are constantly evaluating what you are teaching and how you are teaching and how you do everything else. So, I am not looking at the district. But, everything I am teaching is aligned with the state frameworks, the subject area, and obviously, going further in the subject area that I am teaching. So, I meet district goals, but to find a specific district goal is tedious.

And my goals have to do with being assigned to a course that I have not taught before and I have to prepare for that course. And if you had a district goal that said, teacher is designing a new course. I would like there to be a district goal that says, I am designing a new course, that is my district goal. You know, I always write a book when I teach a new course because I was writing all of the materials, creating the tests, because when you design a course there are never enough written assignments, never enough assessments and never enough activities.

And this goes all the way from elementary school up because they are learning Wilson Reading, they are learning Chicago Math, and that is going to be their goal for the year. Whatever that new curriculum is that they are going to have to grapple, that is got to be the highest priority. That does not show up on district goals and how do you put it on your EBO?
• Even though it may be training our kids to be global citizens and training our kids to be thinking at a higher level, etc., etc. So I think, it has been a thorn in the side to align every single goal of mine to every single specific district goals.
• Years ago, there was just like you need a professional goal, a curriculum goal, and a personal goal and it is done that way.

  e. What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the TAP has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school?

• Well, I think because of the recertification, you have to do that. The PDP’s is fueling it at this point.
• I think before PDP’s to get your step increases did you have to earn so many credits? I don’t think you did. I taught in another school district and you did. To get a step increase you had to get so many pdps. But, they did not help pay for anything either. And that is one thing about Reading is that they do give you some subsidy.
• They also offer great courses.
• They do, absolutely.
• There is not shortage of interesting, useful, professional development activities. And I think that has more influence than anything. I have never heard one person refer to their evaluation as a motivator for taking courses.
• Maybe because we are old timers here and we have taken so many of them.
• And/or maybe anyone that gets a bad evaluation is not going to talk about that.

  f. What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your classroom?

• The TAP to me is just a reflection of the evaluator. Like, how am I doing, am I doing well in my teaching. It is the courses that I am taking, it is the collaboration that I am having with people in my department, its workshops I go to and meet people from other schools, that are giving me ideas, um, to make my classes better. And those are the things that are going to make my class a better class, not just the document. And the document should reflect all of those things.
• Moderator-Tell me what those things are again. PD and what else?
• Collaborating with the department, other department members, going to workshops of people in other school districts. That is very, very valuable you learn a tremendous amount by talking to people from other schools. Going to professional conferences and things like that. That has much more impact than this document itself.
• I’ll take the opposing view here. I do remember reading through the indicators at some point. And the one that sticks out to me is frequently checks for understanding and gives student helpful feedback if they are confused. And in some of our professional development things, the John Collins Writing Course, or the rubrics course or something like that, they did this thumbs up, thumbs down voting thing. And, I remember seeing the thing in the TAP that frequently checks for understanding and, oh, I could do that thumbs up thing in my classroom. And
now I do it on a regular basis. And the kids think that I am skewing the vote by asking which was thumbs up and which is thumbs down. Recently, I asked them to point to the blackboard and point to the closet. So that it would be neutral. But, that technique I learned in a professional development setting, but being the standard in the TAP document, I could do that and it actually did help my teaching. But, how much time in my teaching life per year do I spend reading the indicators and the TAP document? It is once, maybe twice in the year. And, it is not something that I am going home and reading for my bedtime reading at night, so that I say how can I provide feedback better. Because I am busy spending time getting my grading done in a timely manner and I don’t have time reading through the TAP and seeing if this is one of my goals. So, if we are expecting the TAP document itself to be a way of encouraging teachers to do better, some of our professional development time needs to be set aside to spend here are the indicators of the TAP document, here are ways you can apply those skills.

- It has a lot to do with the RBT thing, the Research for Better Teaching where you do a lot of checking for understanding strategies. You know, the 3-2-1, the ticket to leave, and stuff like that. That kind of technique, you know, were never ever mentioned before. I love the way that it is reflected in here.
- But, how to do it, is the piece. How do you get from what is mentioned in here to concrete explanations.
- Well, like with differentiated instruction. You have to take the courses. And that is what it means to be a professional. It means to continue to say that I am not comfortable resting on my laurels here, I am going to learn something. So, it means to be in classes frequently. Or workshops, whatever. This document is good for any teacher, any district, any subject, except for special education.

g. In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school?

- I don’t know if this is the TAP, but things have become state and nationwide more rigid as far as keeping people in your school system. And if somebody doesn’t comply with the state regulations then they don’t become a highly qualified teacher and get the Master’s in Education in the specified amount of time. Even though they may be a terrific teacher, they can’t keep them anymore. I think that is a real shame and if you look at teachers who have come out with a lot of debt from college, that are barely making enough money to have an apartment, and a car, and how to make ends meet on a beginning teacher’s salary. But, they are expected to get a Master’s within a very short amount of time and it has to be in education. We have someone in our department who has a Master’s in a subject area and it is not good enough in Massachusetts, which seems so ridiculous that it does not count towards that teaching credential. So I think it is a miracle that people can go into teaching. Think about it. Especially at the beginning, not making a lot of money and having to take all of these courses to comply with the regulations.
- I think that I kind of disagree with that because like you said earlier, you could get a teacher for three years and that was it. There are no other professions where
Maybe what I need is a mentor teacher refresher course before I am a mentor again and having a checklist of here are some things that I could be doing. And, I know that I did that in the original training, but I would really love to come back to that and say look at the TAP document and not worry about what your lesson plan is going to be. You know, how can you become a better teacher. That might be a year 2 or 3 kind of thing. As opposed to year 1 when they are supposed to be getting their feet on the ground. And it is unfortunate that the mentor/protégé relationship is an official relationship, and then we drop them like a hot potato and they are scrambling in Year 2 or 3 for the same kind of help that was built into the program. It would be great for them in Year 2 or 3 to get advice towards professional teacher status might be helpful.

h. From your perspective, how has the TAP process seem to improve your effectiveness as a teacher?

- Pass because they do not believe that it improves effectiveness.

  i. For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare?

- The old one was the big stream of consciousness narrative. They are very similar in that you get very few observations over the course of the year to actually base your evaluation on.
- Did we actually get more?
- I think that there is a time constraint as far as the administrator's time goes on the amount of time that teachers get observed.
- But was there a time when there used to be more?
- Well, I do remember years ago, that department heads would come in over a three day period for two or three days in my department. And I thought that was really good because the department head could come in and see a development. Like, how were things done for the review, how were things done in thread over three days and I thought that was good.
- I think in the first few years, the non-PTS teachers would get more visits. Then once you are on PTS.
- I think three observations per year.
- Now, three by your administrator? Or three by your department head? Or some of each?
- I don't have a department head. The principal has to observe new teachers and that is still that way. Well, it is for new teachers. That is a lot, you know.
- I mean that I did not care for the stream of consciousness, it just was not pointed, it was misleading and it was not indicative of what was going on in the classroom. It would be pages and pages of this transcript. And half the time, I said, I am not reading this because it doesn't make sense. This went in one ear. This came from someone else. I am like, were we in the same class? So I think that it was very ineffective. So this is better.
- I think that is probably true.
• I think it was before then, but I am not sure, but when the previous assistant principal. I remember one evaluation where she and I met and said what I really would like you to work on is better questioning technique. And she said that I want you to use good questioning technique in the classroom. And we talked about what she considered as good questioning technique and we did that long before the lesson came up. And with that lesson, I planned in the things that she was looking for in using good questioning technique.
• Did you plan all of the lessons that way?
• No, just the one that she was going to observe. But, basically it gave me a chance to learn a new skill. And then we talked afterwards and she gave me some feedback on that technique. I kind of like that.
• She was an outstanding observer. She always had the pulse of the class and she wrote a nice narrative for the evaluation. I thought that she was one of the best people that I have every had coming into the classroom. She really wrote great evaluations. The things that she picked up on. You did this, this, this, and this. I thought she was very good.
• But with some of that, this is what I am going to be looking for. Can you focus on this for this particular lesson? It would be a useful thing to go with this TAP process. Time to focus on five pages of x’s.
• It is overwhelming.
• Actually, I think the value of the standards that we think are important, then we should be able to say I want to focus on classroom management or planning and preparation for learning. Now, you have an opportunity. It is about this is the research I am reading, this is what I am doing, this is the blogs that I have read, this is how other people are doing it, or this is a conference that I went to. You know, you could be evaluated on those things.
• So what you are saying is what I am saying which is focus on specific...
• A good administrator could say, well I am interested in x, y, and z, you know and questioning techniques. That may be really nice, but, unless there is at the beginning of the year, a school wide focus on that, but it is not really fair to have the administrator pick it. But, it is very fair for the person being evaluated to say, please focus on how well I question students. Do I have all sufficient wait time? You know, am I asking questions that summarize well?
• That is interesting because when I first came here they had peer coaching, which looked at things like that. You had a teacher, that you would work with and they would say things like that.
• And that is all you would focus on.
• That is right. To me, the evaluator coming in is looking at a broad spectrum. So, I don’t if that would be too...but the mentor too. They could sit down with you and see this about my teaching. And they would not be there to evaluate. But, this is an evaluation. So, it looks at more global things, wide things. So, this would be more interesting, but I have also heard administrators say that you should look at this or skills like transitions or something like that. I will look at transitions, okay, what do we do here. And then they tell you what a transition is supposed to be.
• Well, let's just say you had some P's or D's on your thing from two years ago. Wouldn't this be the year that you and your administrator in your preobservation meeting or whatever you could say two years ago or last year I had these P's and D's and I want to see how much progress you have made in getting there.

• I think that is supposed to be happening in this process.

• Moderator-So you are saying that each year should not be looked at in isolation.

• Right.

• And as a professional status teacher, you are observed only every other year. In that sense, it could be used as a non-professional status teacher.

j. If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say?

• So, is it the law that says how much we have to be evaluated?

• Moderator-Yes. So this is your forum to see if you want it done differently.

• Maybe it was the 2003-06 TAP document that had all of those alternate choices.

• Yes.

• And it was in the document, but I am not sure that it really came to pass.

• Moderator-So are you saying a portfolio assessment or are you saying if you want to work on a project something like that, that you should be able to do that?

• There was a whole choice of options.

• You could say that you wanted to be evaluated on content knowledge that I have acquired or you could do a whole bunch of reading or you could be videotaped and hook up with a younger teacher and work on your mentoring skills.

• But, I think that all of those things were overwhelming to proposing it if you are a brand new teacher.

• But it wasn't an option for new teachers.

• Right. But for the teachers that have been here for a while, you know people do opt for it, but I think there was never a choice at the time.

• But then, all of a sudden, it got revised out.

• Moderator-Is it something that you would like back?

• I don't know. I felt like we were changing and the change lasted only two cycles for me. You know and those two cycles, we were in the middle of moving and there was no way I was going to do it.

• And there was probably new principals too, right?

• Yes. So you say that it got phased out because people didn't opt for them. I don't feel like it was really ever given a chance.

• Do you think there should be multiple ways of assessing a teacher's proficiency?

• I don't know that I would say so, but I feel like we went to all this work to develop all of this and through them out the window before...you threw out the baby with the bath water.

• Moderator-Well, would you like a choice? So that you could have one or the one we currently have or do something else? Do you think that would be viable? Do you think that other teachers would like a choice?
I think it is a lot of work, to tell you the truth. Given that everything that we have answered on the first three or four questions like what improves your teaching. We are really busy during all this.

But, if one of those things we did....If the fact that I took a course on rubrics and I have generated five lessons on rubrics, can I submit that?

You should be able to say, well the district goals were and my goals were and I took a course on this and I would like some feedback on how I am doing.

But the day they come in is before you have developed that rubric. I did not happen to call you to come see that lesson. And by the time you get your act together...

Don't you have to be told when they are coming in?

But, if the lesson I wrote deals with this unit and I happen to be on this unit.

You know if you do a bang up lesson on this one specific thing on that particular day there is no way they will be coming in on that day.

And so, you know, one possibility is for us to be more proactive and say I would like my observer to come in and see this lesson that I have spent all of this time and energy on. Rather than them say, this is a good day for me to come and visit and you scramble to figure out what you are going to do that is going to be worth showing.

I think that they would be happy to do that, to comply with that because that would be one scratched off their list. And knowing how much anxiety there is for department heads

Moderator-So an alternative would be a good thing, is that what you are saying?

Well, I think what we were saying was that we would like to have more say on what lessons get observed. Particularly if we have new strategies that we are trying to employ and would like some feedback on it.

And that is something that could be encouraged. You could say it would be a wonderful idea if you could come in and see

Every time I say, because I know there could be a day that I am not in any classes. I know they don’t care how I order books or schedule facilities or maintain web pages.

So when I know that I am going to be doing something, I say to the assistant principal that I am going to be doing this and here are the times and why don’t you come in. He is also happier because it crosses one off of his list.

And the teacher’s lesson is better, because you are seeing their creativity, you are seeing the lesson that they put a lot of time and effort into...

Instead of, over the next two months, when do you want us to come in?

Moderator-One thing I have noticed when I have done other high school group more so than different levels that there is a lot of talk about the observation being a huge part of the evaluation and I don’t hear that at the other levels. I hear them having midyear talks with the principals, or other discussions, constant walkthroughs. I am hearing that they are having discussions about how they are coming along on their goals. You know, where do you need some help kind of thing. I am not hearing that from the high school.

It is too big of a staff. We are in our own little pods, in our little departments so I think that it is different than in an elementary school or even a middle school. I
down and see what we are doing here. And share ideas and share activities and stuff. You know, in my department we are in opposite ends of the corridor. You know, I don’t see people down there. So, that is why it was so disappointing that the early release days were not used for and that would have been a great time for us to talk about goals and things too.

- Hopefully, twice a month we will be able to...
- But, aren’t those going to be used for the library?
- No, not this year. They are not going to be used for common planning time.
- Let’s go back to frustrations about lack of time. When we moved into this building, every department brought with them their stuff that they had with them. Every department had to figure out new places to put their stuff and organize their stuff. And instead of being told spend your half day to figure out what you are going to be doing with your stuff, we were told, sit down by yourself and write a curriculum map. Every single half day and release day for the entire year we were supposed to sit by ourselves by the computer and write a curriculum map. And we were all divvied up what curriculum maps we were going to write. And then later it turned out, what we were doing was wrong, because two of us were writing the same curriculum map, instead of two of us writing different curriculum maps and getting twice as many done. Instead of collaborating on it, we worked on it as individuals, when instead we could have been collaborating on it. So that whole curriculum map fiasco was so frustrating. And we still have boxes unpacked for the last two years because we are always chasing the new glorious toy. You know the toy of the SMART Board we have gotten we had to figure that on our own. After school on your own time volunteer, same thing with Grade Quick, same thing with Edline, because all of our days were taken up writing our curriculum maps.

- Or something else you had no control over.
- You know, all of that, I would really like to see the TAP document focus on giving us more time to learn the tools that we need to learn as opposed to busy work that is actually not what we need to be doing. Give us a chance to do the things that we need to do. And maybe, unpacking your boxes is not curriculum per se, but it sure would help us find out what is available instead of spending money for things that are packed away. You know, because how do you know it is in there until you figure out what it is? And agreed among your department where it belongs, instead of searching for where you knew where it was in the old building. You don’t know where it is now and there is no system to signing it out.
- And where there is no common planning time. If we had common planning time, we could use that. And then, to add on to that, I think that we have been bombarded and it is hit, hit, hit, hit, hit. There is so many things that make your head spin.

  k. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process?

- The TAP document needs to help us have to do the things we need to do.
- Unpack and organizing (housekeeping)
• Common planning Time
• Learning to use the new equipment.
• Wow, you certainly got an earful. If the TAP document could help with climate control.
• Align curriculum with Massachusetts standards and state frameworks and stuff. I don’t see anything that says we need to be making ipod movies. What I see in the Mass frameworks is all of these subject matter content topics and the framework is a moving target and we need to catch up with that.
• Yeh and that is something that needs to be done at the department level, because you have different people teaching different levels of Biology. Everybody needs to be on the same page to get those kids ready for the exam.

1. How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?

• I think what was said before was the idea of not all being based on a single observation per year. More thorough observations perhaps.

    m. That covers the areas that I wanted to ask. Is there anything that you care to add?
• None
I. Introduction

Good Afternoon:

My name is Dr. Christine Redford and I will be conducting today’s focus group session. The purpose of this focus group session is to gather data on your perceptions of the teacher evaluation process or TAP that is used in this school district. This data will be used as part of Seton Hall researcher, John Doherty’s dissertation which will be measuring the perceptions of teachers and administrators in the implementation of a standards-based evaluation system. You have received a copy of the signed consent form for this focus group session. This focus group session is being recorded. As you can see, we have an assistant moderator present at the session to handle any logistical issues such as refreshments, audio recording equipment, and taking some notes of key phrases.

You will be identified only by a number and the category of focus group that you are participating. This focus group contains administrators from (elementary, middle, or high school).

The answers from all of the people we interview will be combined for the results of the dissertation. Nothing you will say will ever be identified with you personally. As we go through this session, if you have any questions about why I am asking something, please feel free to ask. This focus group is completely voluntary and you may leave at any time during the focus group session.

This session is a group discussion on the questions that will be presented. I will begin each question by asking one particular person the question. You will be identified by the number that is located in front of you on the tent card. Other participants will then have the opportunity to give their answer once the first person has answered the question. You may include additional information throughout the discussion at any time.

Are there any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions)
I am now going to begin asking you the questions.

II. Questions

a. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP in Reading?

- The purpose is to improve instruction and to encourage teachers to be reflective of their practices and to engage in conversations in decisions that they may have about instruction and kids, choice of materials, and primarily help to improve instruction. Encourage teachers on how to be reflective about it.
- I think it is also to provide a common language for all teachers and administrators and to provide a common set of standards. So as we look at different categories everyone knows from the standards what is valued in Reading
- I agree with the other speakers, but I think a huge piece of this, the collaboration piece where you have an opportunity to work with someone and suggest things that they might not thinking outside the box and being able to hear just another approach.
- I agree with everyone said. In addition to that it helps the administrators have calibrations in terms of the way we assess our teachers and helps us have a clear picture in our mind what exemplar is and what meeting the standard is and so that we are all on the same page.

b. The current TAP process has been in place for 2 years. During that time, what have you noticed are some of the positive effects of the program?

- For me, I think the most positive aspect has been that it gives you an opportunity to recognize effective teaching and I call it patting teachers on the back in a formal way. So, you that you have discussions not just in terms of their suggestions, but you have a more lengthy opportunity to discuss and credit the work that they are doing in very specific detail. So it is motivating, in my sense, it is motivating for teachers. The feedback I get is that they recognize the effort that has gone into in bringing all this information together, being specific about your recommendations and being specific about recognizing them for the hard work that they do.
- I have had limited exposure to the process, but one of the pieces I thought was terrific was an opportunity to sit with staff members and talk about goals, long term goals, short term goals and align them with my goals in moving forward and district wide goals. So that we were all thinking about moving in the same direction.
- To piggy back on #1’s answer, and it really helped teachers identify what the goals were. In the past goals were connected to an initiative, as
opposed to personal growth, so I think it did help clarify that. Another positive that I have seen is the timeline part of the process. Everyone is involved in conversations with me. In the past, anyone that was on their off cycle really was off, they did their own thing, and I did not feel as connected with them. I think the midyear conference that is part of it is important and I think the forms for evaluation, midyear and off, are important. It let’s me know where the teachers are at the end of the year as well.

- I think for new teachers and teachers new to Reading to have that document that is very specific and very explicit helps them to understand the different standards and helps them to be able to define and understand what we are looking for in our teachers. So it gives them a framework. It also helps them to see where they have to go and where they need some assistance in.

- To comment on the goals aspect of it. In bringing that into the evaluation process, this is the first time we did it last year and now this year. Maybe the others have done it, but this is the first year that I have actually embedded it in the evaluation, the work that they have, the steps that they have accomplished towards there goals, so that is really now part of the conversation and the wording is included in, not just the specific steps and goals, but the actions that they have taken. And that has been helpful in conversations that I have had with them and it is helpful in conversations with me and it helps again move on to the next year and have some conversations about that.

c. Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process?

- One thing that I don’t know if I see it as a weakness, but more of a concern with having teachers getting used to using a rubric for their own self-assessment as part of their evaluation. Teachers in Reading have very high standards already and one of the areas that was different in this type of system was having the categories exemplary, meeting the standard, progressing toward the standard. It is part of the whole education piece to it. That was one area that was perhaps more difficult for teachers as we move forward in this. I liked it because it was very clear, but it was hard to differentiate between the exemplary and the meeting. It was like one word or two words. How did you actually show that, what type of evidence did you have to support one level versus the other.

- I think that it is still somewhat a subjective analysis. It is a subjective decision whether you are meeting the standard or exceeding the standard. And that still is the point of confusion for some teachers and in my own mind and with some teachers it is a point of confusion. I have had some teachers ask me well how do I move from meeting the standard to exceeding the standard. And, it has really taken time to work out that wording with some specificity for them. It may be splitting a hair, but it is
a new process for teachers. Initially they have seen meeting the standard as average and it has taken some work to move beyond that and I think they have done that. In my mind, you do that through the supporting comments and the supporting evidence in relation to the standard. And I try to have more conversation around the comments instead of meeting the standards or exceeding the standards. Where they are progressing, that is pretty evident. Just based on conversations, there are usually not any surprises around that and there is conversation that you have had and there is some documentation around. Usually, it is positive and they say, “oh yeh, I agree with you.”

- I would not call it a weakness, but I agree with number 4 that it is a challenge to get people away from that feeling of that they are trying to do their best day to day. But, there is always something that you can work on to do better and I think that is inherent in any evaluation tool when you are looking at meetings and exceeds type of criteria so I know that it is going to be a challenge to get people to that realization that it is not a negative to get a meets the standard. It is always something that we can work on and being better and not to be threatened by that.

- This is number 4 again, to me, I don’t know if this is a negative or not, to me some of the standards, the wording sometimes seems redundant to me and it almost seems cumbersome in helping teachers analyze that. For example, meeting the state district standards and that is commented throughout. So, I think that would be helpful to have a wider discussion about administratively or with the teachers or the TAP team. It seems like it is redundant and it is not focused enough on effective practices.

**d.** What are some ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed teaching in your school?

- I think with the new teachers they have really analyzed and looked at their evaluation and their midyear observation and I noticed a change from that first observation to that second observation because of things that I had commented on because on an initial observation so, I think it was just clear and explicit for her and it was easy for her then to go back and make changes.

- I think it also has helped grade level teams identify an area that themselves could work on, especially like an area of assessment. Some of these standards and specific actions from within really could be team goals that supported the conversations that we had.

- I don’t know if I could say that the document has really changed instruction, I think it has been the focused conversations based on what has been asked of them and the give and take around the conversations that have been for teachers and it certainly has been helpful to me as an administrator to understand decisions and process that the organization that they are setting up in their classroom. It has helped me be reflective and it has helped them be reflective. I think that it has furthered the
common language and you can have conversations with one person and
have similar conversations with another, using the same wording and it is
better understood. You have examples of it. I like the emphasis at some
points on technology, and the utilizations around technology and that will
become more and more important over time.

- M- Have you seen some things that were particularly key and I am thinking
  of using activators...
- I was just going to say that I think that it has brought those more to a
  prominence whereas in the past, sometimes they were there or not, but I
  think now that you can see things that are part of an evaluation, it raised it
to a different level of importance. I think that it helped teachers see that
there are so many parts to that lesson, not just connecting to the
background knowledge. All of these pieces, and I think the part on
instruction was very clear with all of the components that needed to be in
place.

e. What effect do you think the current teacher evaluation process has had on
the professional growth of teachers in your school?

- I agree what was said earlier it is not a result of the TAP document itself;
it is a result of the conversations that occur while having meetings and
using the TAP document as the guide. If we are talking about someone
meeting the standard by using activators and summarizers with someone
who is progressing then the conversation may be well I really don’t know
much about activators and summarizers. Well, here is a great course you
can take and it comes up in conversation that way.

- I think it is part of the overall culture, not so much directly related to the
TAP. TAP is a document that is aimed at everyone being their best,
improving instruction, making things great for kids, and it sorta sets the
tone in the culture. And, I think that there are so many professional
development opportunities and things that we are offering. For example,
over the summer, we have so many people that are interested and have
signed up. I think it is the big picture more than the document, although I
think that it is an important piece and having people understand that we
expect the best. I think it is culture.

- I think it clarifies priorities within the district. It clarifies what good
teaching is and defines it, more specific ways in a more classroom
centered manner. And it helps with the discussions, focuses on the
discussions. I have lots of discussions around objectives and sharing
objectives and how you go about doing that from fifth grade to
kindergarten. What is the wording like? What conversations do you have
with your teams surrounding summarizing, why is that important for kids.
So that to me, it has helped people focus on what the priorities are around
instruction and what good instruction is. I think that it has been very
helpful for new teachers.

- I agree.
f. What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your school?

- I think probably looking at the emphasis on connections with the kid’s background knowledge and the level of engagement. Looking to support that with other school initiatives and combine it with hands on learning. With projects. I think #4 mentioned it with the technology piece. Looking for ways to integrate it. There is more of a level of awareness with it. I don’t think that we have identified specific ways to monitor, you know, student progress. Of course, we have the MCAS, but we need to look at things over a course of a few years before we really start to see anything. I don’t think we really targeted specific things back to a particular assessment. I think it is still more global right now and it will be something, you know to probably to look at because I know that is the goal to improve student instruction. I think the question remains, what will we measure?

- I think the achievement in learning is a very complicated process and many variables go into that and to say that one document would have that effect is over stating that. I think that it does have a ripple effect and we have talked about helping teachers focus and prioritize about what good instruction is but how that plays out to a classroom setting and a school culture there are many, many variables that play into that, I think.

- I think instruction is as good as the people who are instructing and because this process leads people to more professional development opportunities and to think about personal growth, um, I think it can only positive outcome on student achievement, but I don’t have anything to base that on, I just know it. I am thrilled with the interest in professional development and I know that we will see the fruits of that as we move forward.

g. In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school?

- I think it helps to unify our school and get everybody on the same page. So as we are looking through this and as a school feel that we need to strengthen, you know, classroom management, for example, then, if there is a group of us, we might form a learning community and read some books or do some research and put it into our school improvement plan and so I think again it holds everyone accountable to the same set of standards and where it is easy to identify. For example, in the indicators of success in the assessment, we feel as a staff that we are not doing a lot of formative assessments, so part of our school improvement plan for next year and part of everybody’s school based goals will be focused on the newly created assessment meetings that we are going to have next year. And so, by looking at the TAP document and really start talking to people about what really is a formative assessment, it has helped to identify that goal.
- I think what I have noticed with the six areas that all of them now are in the forefront. You didn’t look at good teaching as just the instruction or the preparation. I think the section on the responsibilities really to go to support the school initiatives. Because it really emphasizes the collaboration, where it be at the grade level team or a committee, not only with the school, but promoting that idea of leadership. Teachers are beginning to see the difference between attending a meeting and participating or leading a meeting and there are different contributions that they can be at. I think that the professional responsibilities really support what I am doing within the school. And I think teachers see how it fits together too.

- I also thinks it reinforces what cements the importance of home and school, parents and teachers and the essentialness of that communication. That is a major priority for teachers to understand and work their skills around it. If they don’t do that, it creates huge divisions or misperceptions and miscommunications. So I think that having that alone in the TAP document gives a very clear message and a very appropriate message to teachers about the importance of that type of connection with parents. That partnership with parents.

h. From your perspective, how has the TAP process seemed to improve your effectiveness as an administrator?

- I think that it is easier to have ongoing opportunities to offer feedback. And, I have a slightly different perspective, but knowing that people are constantly reflecting on goals and what they are doing, it is easy to catch someone in the moment and say here is another way you could have done this. So, it makes it easy for us to continuously offer feedback.

- I think it helps me to give feedback on a particular thing schoolwide as opposed to just individually. Teachers can share, I know the biggest was the use of consistent activators and summarizers. When you are able to bring it to the whole group. It is easier to others to support as well. Also, being able to, I could kind of facilitate those conversations. For example, if I saw someone do something very well, go see how this one is doing this or share it at a staff meeting.

i. For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare?

- Well, the former one was much more of a narrative. You actually, I think it was seven standards, maybe 6, I don’t remember. They were very similar standards, I think the parent outreach is a new standard. It was always part of the professional responsibilities, but I think it was singled out more in the new TAP document. I think they were similar in being able to provide teachers with that a narrative feedback. So that standard is different where you have to make decisions about the quality of
instruction and performance. And I think that is new for administration, new for #4 to some degree, but I think it is helpful in having those conversations with teachers. It helps you provide that clear definition and it helps you see where the areas that are not clear.

- I think it provides greater clarification. I know that what no matter what I wrote in the teacher evaluation, the teacher reads into it what he or she wants to and I may have differentiated in my own work with someone who a good job versus someone who did an excellent job. But, the teacher said, oh, good job. So it gives you much more detailed information to the teacher and now they are comparing themselves to standards. I think the other piece is having the self-assessment in it this year. I think in the past teachers were very happy to sit and receive the information as I espouse their virtues. You know, they waited to see what I thought of what they were doing. Whereas now, they are eager to come in to tell me what they are doing. I have seen that as a big shift.

- I think, repeating itself, that it has been a harder shift on teachers to see it as a standard based program and just a narrative and I think that is still a work in progress for teachers. Maybe a recommendation for more professional development around that topic for staff.

- One other thing that I see as a great connection is the use of the same rubric for both the observation and the evaluation, where as, in the past, the observation was sorta what the teachers wanted feedback on and that was the driving force as opposed to standards and giving feedback on specific areas.

j. If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say?

- For me, it is the numbers to really meaningfully supervise and impact instruction to me as an administrator to really complete 23 formal evaluations is some, doesn’t make sense in my mind. If you had seven that you were working with and you had this document, I think that you could have a more dramatic impact on you certainly would have more in depth discussions. Which is what it is all about. It is supervision, but it is also a conversation and a discussion and encouraging the teachers to be reflective while you need to be reflective also. To do that with 23 people and a myriad of 30 assistants, is not realistic.

- M-So the Time issue.

- The time and the number is huge for me.

- I agree. I would like to see it go to a three year cycle. That way you would be able to do more in detail, more in depth. But, I think that we have some possibilities with the independent projects. That provides professional development in such a different positive way and it would be wonderful to see that it is a part of everyone’s, not an option if you want to do it. Like a formal one and like a collaborative one you know with a peer relationship and an independent one. I think it is a great model.
- M-So you think like an action research?
- I think you have to spread it out over three years.
- Teachers really need to see that as a meaningful process for them and believe that is going to impact their instruction. I think we have some work to do in making that clear for teachers. But I do think that it has potential.
- I like the idea of an alternate opportunity because I think just like with children, one size doesn’t fit all and I think you have some teachers that are exemplary and need to go to that next step and that offers them that opportunity.

k. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process?

- Just, I think more training for the teachers and more training for the administrators. I know that people were doing certain pieces differently. I think the self-assessment is one where different administrators had different approaches. If we are truly going to get data from this process, then it should be consistent. Just an ongoing conversation.
- I would like to make the document briefer in terms of the standards. I think that there is a lot of verbiage that we could work through and condense and eliminate and make decisions about prioritizing. The more standards you have the wider the discussions can be and should we make a conscious decision on narrowing that discussion. I don’t if it narrows instructional improvement, but pieces of it can be improved upon.
- I agree with that, I definitely do. You know many of the things that are under each standard are somewhat repetitive, redundant, combined together, and then it would allow us to have that opportunity to reflect in the comment section. Sometimes I get to the comment section and I just reported on everything of great importance up above and you really think about what belongs in that section. You just touched on everything that was so essential. So I think that if we condense a little bit, we could state examples underneath or evidence that we have seen of reaching those standards.

I. How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?

- I don’t know if it is answering the question, but I go back to fewer and fewer numbers. If you have fewer teachers on an annual basis that you are required to complete things and evaluations you can be more effective. You can have more frequent conversations, you can have more frequent observations. And, you can work more effectively with a smaller team, rather than a team of 23.
- I think also tapping into other’s expertise. Like if a special education teacher is being evaluated, that I would find it helpful to have input from
someone who has greater expertise in that area. Like if you had some specific feedback to help that teacher grow in a specific discipline.

- I would love to see eventually, part of this document or part of this process with teachers spending time in each other’s classrooms. I know we suggest to do that, but a lot of times they don’t want to leave, they have too much going on, or it is too hectic. But, I think that is one of the greatest professional development opportunities that we can have is watch other colleagues and seeing somebody else in action.

- Utilizing technology. I think video taping is such an effective tool. I think it is threatening at first, but if we did it on a wider basis, I think it would be terrific.

- M-Can you see teachers helping out in the evaluation process in any way?

- I don’t see them helping out in the evaluation process, but I see them helping out in the coaching relationship, and I think that a trust element would have to be in place. Teachers don’t feel threatened by one another. If you have an exemplar teacher who is activating and summarizing in every lesson, it may be a great idea to say go see what exemplar looks like and go see Susie teach the lesson so that they could learn from one another.

- I know I try, but time is always tight, but at staff meetings there is that time for sharing. You know, breaking up into those mixed grade level groups. You know the conversations, what is working and what is not, brainstorming.

- I tried to do that in the first of the year at staff meetings and things start to take over.

- People crave for that.

- They want opportunities to share and talk.

- I think the mentor program is a good example. The coaching piece that has been very helpful for teachers.

- But it stops after one or two years and teachers should still have those opportunities to go and observe and collaborate and go to the grade previous. Go to the next grade, see how it spirals, we see it everyday when we walk from classroom to classroom. They don’t see that a lot of times. They can appreciate that.

- Maybe that becomes part of the evaluative process where you have to show evidence of observing another teacher and give feedback a couple times a year.

- I would love to see that.

- It catches on, it becomes part of the culture. They do see the value of it, but they do not take the time. Unless we kind of force the issue to some degree.

- You know, taking teachers to do a walkthrough, go around the building and visiting another grade. Its culture.

- It is and it is more than a walkthrough. We did the consultancy for the Open Circle this year and in talking with teachers that was kind of the highlight was the observations where teachers are going in and watching
them conduct open circle meetings. And they were going into each other’s classrooms and the only emails that I received about observations was for open circle can you make sure that I have coverage for this time. It as positive.

m. That covers the areas that I wanted to ask. Is there anything that you care to add?

- None
Middle School Administrators
Focus Group Questions for Administrators
Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators in the Implementation of TAP

Date of Session: May 27, 2008  Number of Participants: 4
Location: Central Office Conference Room  Beginning Time of Session: 1:00 p.m.
Ending Time of Session: 2:15 p.m.

I. Introduction

Good Afternoon:

My name is Dr. Christine Redford and I will be conducting today's focus group session. The purpose of this focus group session is to gather data on your perceptions of the teacher evaluation process or TAP that is used in this school district. This data will be used as part of Seton Hall researcher, John Doherty's dissertation which will be measuring the perceptions of teachers and administrators in the implementation of a standards-based evaluation system. You have received a copy of the signed consent form for this focus group session. This focus group session is being recorded. As you can see, we have an assistant moderator present at the session to handle any logistical issues such as refreshments, audio recording equipment, and taking some notes of key phrases.

You will be identified only by a number and the category of focus group that you are participating. This focus group contains administrators from (elementary, middle, or high school).

The answers from all of the people we interview will be combined for the results of the dissertation. Nothing you will say will ever be identified with you personally. As we go through this session, if you have any questions about why I am asking something, please feel free to ask. This focus group is completely voluntary and you may leave at any time during the focus group session.

This session is a group discussion on the questions that will be presented. I will begin each question by asking one particular person the question. You will be identified by the number that is located in front of you on the tent card. Other participants will then have the opportunity to give their answer once the first person has answered the question. You may include additional information throughout the discussion at any time.

Are there any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions)

I am now going to begin asking you the questions.
instruction or excellent instruction. What are those 10 or 12 factors that need to be there? So it is very specific and sometimes it helps to have something is being done or it is not. Other times it is how well or how effective it is being done. So it is very helpful to have those specifics in doing evaluations or simply having good discussions with staff.

- Two points, one, in terms of the comment has it made teachers, has it created opportunities to be reflective and set goals or work on in different areas? It has. One area is technology integration. If teachers have been marked as progressing in the technology integration level, that is certainly helped teachers or gotten them going. They want to be better in areas. I also think it is fair to say that any veteran teacher does not want to be in progressing in anything. I think the other point in discussing is that in the two years that the TAP document has been in place, in terms of the administrators being able to work together this year to cross the curricular areas and from school to school to look at teaching collaboratively to calibrate the document has been particularly helpful. I think that what may have been marked as a P in one area was marked as an M and that activity has helped us be more consistent.

- I also like the whole process that begins with self-reflection, then goal setting and midyear meetings, pre/post observation meetings, and really sets the standards for administrators to meet and talk about what is important with teachers.

- M: So the teachers are aware and have a clear awareness? Is that what you are saying?

- Um...I think it is. You know when they self-reflect and do it seriously. That document you can sit down and say what do you need to work on to bring yourself from progressing to meeting the standard. A lot of teachers took that very seriously which made the goal setting simpler and something that is actually done before it was just sending in your EBO’s. Um...then meeting midyear to talk about how you are doing whether that is with preobservation, postobservation, whatever. There are things that you do together and discuss together. This is something that was missed in the past.

- It is a more comprehensive look at teachers from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, terms of them assessing themselves. What I think we found is that most teachers are pretty well in the range of how they would grade themselves. We have teachers at each end of the spectrum where some are too hard on themselves and are exceptional, exceptional teachers who think they are or graded themselves too harshly and we may have other teachers who give themselves a pass at things. They kind of inflate some indicators and standards. But, for the most part, we have found that through the process of teachers writing goals and charting goals in how they are progressing, they have been very accurate.

- I also think, and this is a slight change, in comparison to the former tools that were used in year’s past in that the “meeting the standards” bar is very high and is not at a minimal and I think that resisted a culture that to be doing a really good job you are exceeding the standards in everything or commended in everything. And I think that culture, for the veteran teachers is difficult because that bar is set
high to begin with and that is part of the process. That has been a major switch, I do notice that in the discussions that is good thing, I think.

- I also think it challenges their understanding because people all want to be in the left column. So.
- It is not always realistic and difficult to have everything in the left column. Some people can really do it, depending on where they are at in their career.
- I mean, my point is that you are dealing with educators who participated in one or two graduate programs where they have done exceedingly well and it is what they are used to.

c. Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process?

- Um...I found the difference between the classroom observation report and the evaluation report, um the differences between the two in terms of how you rate a teacher. For example, if you observe a teacher in a 49 minute lesson and you gave them a “not observed” mark indicator or a progressing indicator. But, on the evaluation, which is kind of a summative, a whole year long statement of how they score higher or lower, I think teachers have had difficulty with that and have said and made comments like, wait a minute, on my observation report I have been higher or lower compared to my evaluation or vice versa. They will say on my evaluation I am higher or lower than on my observation. They don’t jive. So there has been some conversation that we have spent in talking with teachers and differentiating what the observation report for 49 minutes verse an evaluation which is a document that is summative.

- I also feel that, um, and this more from an administrator’s perspective more so than the staff’s perspective, but just the issue of time. I think the rubrics and specific standards make it a more efficient process. I still feel in going through the process, especially with veteran teachers who are very competent teachers. I feel the amount of time spent is so precious and so limited. You use the expression the bang for your buck is not there. You think about the hours spent in the process. It could be anywhere between, what if you talk about the various meetings, observation, you know, everything, you could be spending between 3, 4, 5, 6 hours on a teacher.

- I think you need to break it out, in terms of how much time you are spending and how much time the teacher is spending.

- I think it is from both perspectives. From my own perspective, I am talking about mine because I am in that process right now with year end evaluations. And I think for some people, who are at that stage in their career where they need to know exactly what to do and for other people, if it is that many number of hours times 10-12 people that are doing it, probably a more valuable way to spend our time. Maybe the alternative evaluation may remedy some of that. It is not that I think it is a waste of time, I am not sure that value equals the amount of time spent. Time is limiting and where could we be putting that valuable resource of our time and energy. Um, on the other hand, you know for that teacher that really needs it, there are some really substantive discussions and document areas that we
think that they need to improve and if you need to do so, provide the
documentation. So, it can be a strength, as well as a weakness for depending
upon who we are talking about. I think the issue comes from a teacher’s
standpoint. I think that it has gotten more efficient, I think that again depending
upon the individual the amount of time spent with forms and conferences and
things like that it is still an amount of time depending on the individual it is still
the most valuable use of that time. Um, I am not sure it always is, depending
upon the individual.

- To piggy back on that, I agree, and I think that those teachers who are really
  excellent teachers, it is difficult to do the document as you keep hearing, wait a
  minute, don’t use exceeding too much and you keep hearing that they can do any
  better. So then you get to the point where they need to be doing alternative
  assessments, they need to be doing something. All of us, again not wasting time
  because it is good to talk about it, but, you don’t have much to talk about if they
  are doing it. You know, it gives them a chance to talk about what they do every
day. It is not helping them to move forward.

- M-Something else about weaknesses of the TAP document?

- I think the pre-evaluation form that the teachers make out, should match the
evaluation form. Some of it seems redundant and others seem to be missing. For
example, the question about instruction so that when you are reading it, and you
are trying to plug something in about the instruction, there is nothing there and
there are professional responsibility responsibilities in lines 3 and 4, which some
teachers will leave blank because they have already made that statement once.
And I think that it would be more efficient to just cut and paste stuff and then use
when you are filling in the form. Instead, it is all over the place. I think also the
monitoring and assessment piece of the observation form I find myself putting a
lot of non-applicable because we are not able to see in one observation. Do you
agree with #6?

- I agree with number 6 when she says that. I think there have been only one or
two items in the section that I have every marked because that is rarely the lesson
that you are going in to see. It is possible that you are going to see a presentation
and that you will see the whole rubric and it is an assessment, but that is rarely
what you are observing.

- Two things that I am really curious about. One is, the other end of the spectrum
where we are talking about exceptional teachers where the evaluation is leading to
a work plan or where teachers need to improve and how that could lead to a work
plan in really supporting a teacher to be better. Um, the other piece that I am
curious about is differentiating positions. For example, it is hard to use one
document, for example for a learning center teacher who is teaching a mini-lesson
to three students where if we are talking about assessment and follow-up, we are
talking about a mini-lesson and that is connected to the curriculum that is already
in place, where the assessment piece is predominantly done by the classroom
teacher. That is one example.

- It will be good, they have those cover sheets that we have to do for the special
education teachers that some how will be incorporated into one specific grouping
for special education.
• I think that will be ideal. It is a lot of work to set up because it has been a lot of work to set up the teacher piece, but that would be ideal situation to set up an equivalent rubric for a special education teacher, for a school psychologist, whatever the position is. That would be a big improvement.

• M—Any other positions other than special education and school psychologist?

• Library Media, Technology Integration Specialist, Reading, any of the specialist positions. Because their job descriptions can be very different and that the day to day is different.

• A tremendous amount of time articulating what the range of good teaching looks like. But, for specialists, if we could fill in those descriptors or standards or indicators, I think the more that we would have to talk more with them about.

• I think it is good that we have the standards there that are unique to each of those positions, but we do not have them flushed out in the various levels. So, it is a good start, but we are not quite at the same place as we are with the teachers.

  d. What are some ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed teaching in your school?

• M—Early you had said that when they see their evaluation areas where they were not as strong as others that they set their goals for the following year. Is this something that you see in their teaching? I know that it has been only been two years in place, but are you noticing changes. One of the things that you had mentioned, #2 was technology, maybe you can expand on some of those ideas.

• I have definitely seen a difference in the number of teachers that have put the objective out there and communicated it clearly and throughout the course of the lesson. I have seen a big difference in the teachers that I have worked with.

• A few of those items under instruction is very clear because there is a separate indicator in that standard under instruction that will say, talk about the objective, which is what you just mentioned or about activating an activator or activating prior knowledge or a summarizing technique. Some of those things you either did it or did not. If you did it, talk about the effectiveness of it. It is just not there, so even to put that, those are very clear cut examples. But, those are a good start because it is talking about basic structure of a lesson.

• M—So what you are saying is that you are starting to see people talk about these things?

• I think that it has created a common language is what I hear and a common language and a common expectation, in terms of what a good lesson looks like. The components, what is fundamental in an effective lesson. It does not have to be the same all of the time, but some portion of the time, a lesson has to have a clear objective. Now, what objectives is where teachers could use a little work in terms of what to write, what they think about objectives and how to write objectives. But, I certainly think it has made it easier for us to talk about, for example, the student work being displayed in a classroom. You know, the timeliness that the work is rotated on and off the walls. I think that there is a lot.

• I agree with number 2 with the technology piece I think that there are veteran teachers who are at this point in their career, would not have moved forward and
gotten trained in all of this new technology if it had not ended up being a piece of the evaluation. I mean, they see themselves having two to five years left. Not keen on technology to begin with, but this was a little push and once they began doing it, they enjoyed it, they incorporated all of their lessons and they are doing a great job, but without that little push, you would have not seen that.

- M-Can I go back to a point that was made earlier? Did you say that teachers had a difficult time writing objectives?
- They do.
- It is not that they do not write the objectives. Sometimes you walk into a classroom and they have on the board “put notes in their notebook”, instead of, this is what the real objective is.
- Actually, I have had some good discussions with a few teachers about the difference between the objective and the agenda. It moves closer to the objective of what we are doing but why we are doing it and how to communicate that so that it makes sense to kids. We are doing it to make sure that we are not just connected to the frameworks, but it really is to help kids retain what they have done and why?
- I think there are a lot of examples of that because engaged learning is another one. They say, “I put my kids in groups, doing worksheets in groups. Is that engaged learning and provides an opportunity to talk about what that really means. It is a common language and if it really was engaged learning what would it look like. That is hard to measure if that is happening in the class. It at least fosters good conversation between the administrator and the teacher.
- This is a big idea that we have been working with and working with in the TAP and that is student engagement. What does it look like? In one of the indicators it talks about reaching a higher cognitive level with students and um, and that is an interesting indicator to talk about with teachers, in terms of, what did that look like in the class. If they self-assess themselves and give themselves an M or an E and you are talking about a particular lesson, what does that look like in class? At times, when a teachers gives an answers to the question that they asked, or students will simply give back information that teachers have given them. Well, that is not exactly a higher order of thinking skills.
- M-Do you feel that some teachers will need help at the beginning for writing objectives so that they stay away from writing standards, for example you mentioned that standards that are measurable, do you think that is important for teachers to have some guidance in that? What are your thoughts?
- Well, I think that why this is good, because it sets up conversations where you are able to talk with individuals and we also did it where we took one standard at each faculty meeting and had people sit in small groups and ask, what does it mean? What does student engagement look like? So it gave us an opportunity as individuals and small groups and large groups to talk about what the language means.
- There is also a learning piece, and I can only speak for number 2, I feel that I am learning what engaged learning is. You know, people are talking about engaging people about how students learn, ya know, what are priorities, how do we fit
everything in. I have certainly learned a lot about how that can be done with students, what does work, which is kind of outside of the norm.

- Something that I have found useful is when I have seen and given a teacher an exceeding the standard, I try to use them as a model for other teachers who are progressing and say go back to that teacher and say, "Gee, I have a teacher that would come and visit your class a few times, would you be open to that?" I would then go back to the other person and say, "I have a person that is exceeding the standard on this would you be willing to go in and observe their class and see what it looks like on a daily basis?" With a couple of teachers, I have had great success with

- I think people are talking about it more. Those people that are getting progressing toward the standard that are horrified and people are talking about oh, what does that mean? Whereas, with a narrative, people just got their narratives and just lived with it. Now, people are talking about it.

e. What effect do you think the current teacher evaluation process has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school?

- I mean I think it has aligned things for technology, for example. You know, there is a district push to get technology integrated into the curriculum, but it is also supported, supported from the district level to the individual school level, to the individual teacher level to the student level. For example, I really feel that Dr. Tim's visit, Tim Tyson, ya know, gave teachers a concrete reference of what they could be doing in their classroom. They get very excited about trying it out and they need, now we need to keep pace with their desire and energy to fill those commitments.

- M-So you are really saying it has kind of spurned teachers on to try new things.

- Yes.

- Do you really think that?

- I do.

- I mean I think some of the things that the district has done has gotten people excited, but the TAP document is getting them to do that?

- Well, I think technology, we are talking about technology being in the forefront, whereas, you wrote about it in a narrative three years ago, it was a narrative. Ya know, what did that look like, it looked like a hundred different things as defined by a hundred different people. Now it is more concise, it is more concrete, more direct, and I think that comes from or some it comes from improvement plans being connected and aligned with the TAP.

- I think so, too. I think as opposed to the narrative it makes it very clear and specific what you need to work on so that if you are going to move forward with some professional development opportunity, you have something very clear to go by and going to pursue. I think people look at it and think that. I mean certainly we have the one on differentiated and scaffolding instruction is very clear there in the rubric and for teachers that struggle with that, um, I think seeing right there as opposed to the narrative form which could have been less specific, is helpful in choosing where they want to spend their time.
• I have found that same process and concept has happened to in the area of classroom management because it is a separate standard with several different indicators on the same par and level as instruction. I think in a community like ours has put it on the radar and for a community like ours it is a little to easy for us to think that we have one or two or three kids in a classroom that it can be more challenging and it is somebody else’s job to deal with it, as opposed to some other communities where you have many more of those types of kids. So your classroom management skills as a teacher will make or break your success. It is very difficult to do well in your instruction part if you do not classroom management. So I found that leading people to those discussions about professional development in the area of classroom management has been helpful because of the TAP process. Pushing people more towards proactive classroom management systems rather than how they react to situations.

• You know we talk a lot about engagement, with students being engaged equaling few students exhibiting off task behavior, equaling very few, if any, classroom management issues. It is very simple.

• And, specifically, how does one do that? And we can agree what does it look like, however, how can you get a 12 year old to have very little off task, but there are ways to do it and others are very effective at it. That does not, those are not skills that people have had a lot of training in. They may have had a course or a part of a course, but a lot of that is gained on the job once the teacher gets better and better at it.

• I am not so sure that the TAP document is an incentive for the teacher to change in an area that they need to change in. If I think of the very few people who are not into technology, using the TAP document has not made them use technology. I do thing it is an opportunity for people to get down in writing the things that they do, which I think is important. When I read the pre-evaluation summaries of what people have done all year long, it is amazing to me that they take all of these things seriously and getting the staff development that they need to do it.

• I also think the technology issue that you talk about. I agree with you, I wonder if that can be different in different buildings. I mean, part of it is the facility and if how each room is equipped, um you know. In the high school, if I was a teacher there and I was put into a classroom where everything was installed. It is all right there, the SMART Board, I have to know things. It is a little bit different. The teacher I was kidding with the other day when I observed a lesson they want a SMART Board, they want a projector, they want all that, we just don’t have that yet. I was commending her on her state of the art use of the overhead. But, gradually, we are getting those things installed.

• What I find interesting too is the amount, the amount of different staff spend to fill out that pre-evaluation summary. For some I get that are 4 pages long and some that have not much in them, but you know that the staff member did more than they put down.

• What I found and this may not be a good thing to do, but I am conscious on how much time so people have spent on things, I urge them not to spend a lot of time writing and revising and just bullet the information and get the information on there. I have found, especially the newer teachers that would be a task to have
that perfectly written document for their evaluation. I want the information and it
certainly should be a part of it, but I don’t think that is the most valuable use of
their time to spend 8 hours on this document.

f. What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has
seemed to change student achievement in your school?

- I think that as a greater common language has come about, teachers are trying
different things and I think in regard to a statement made earlier about teachers
not trying different things because of TAP, I would argue that they are trying
different things because of the TAP because they don’t want a bad grade. So,
they are figuring out entry points into activities that they would have not sought
out in the past. For example, they are going to the technology integration
specialist, they are going to the Library Media Specialist so that they can do
things so that they can articulate on their pre-evaluation summary or their EBO’s
at the beginning of the year. That they are trying things. Things as simple as the
use of the lab on wheels. Kids using laptops in classrooms. Things that we would
not have seen teachers doing in the past, they are doing this, and now that they are
doing this, they want to make it very public that they are doing this. Please see
me doing this, please do not give me a “P” again, ya know, or give me a “P” and
understand that I am moving toward an “M.”

- M-So you are saying that in turn this is affecting student achievement?

- So I think as teachers are trying different things, they are learning and it is having
a positive effect on student learning. For example, if a teacher is using a lab on
wheels to do a virtual tour of a museum or a place that they are going to go to on a
field trip, it gives students prior knowledge before they go, it gives them more
insight into what they are studying, it is more connected. Whereas, before, the
teacher would never have brought students up to the computer lab, done a virtual
tour, they are figuring out ways to get some sort of technology into the
curriculum. So are very, very small, others are much more ambitious.

- The communication of the objective, the reference to it, the course of the lesson.
It enables students to say to you, this is what we did and this is what we achieved
today. For that, I think they have a better understanding to the overall picture,
instead of the specific task.

- Ya, all of those components of good instruction we talked about earlier that are
listed there in that document. I mean, it is helping students get a consistent
experience when they are changing rooms and subject areas. They are getting a
consistent experience on how curriculum is delivered to them. Which I think is
helping them achieve and retain all that.

- I am having a hard time separating any of it from student achievement. I think
professional development and good teaching make all students achieve.

- I think in terms of the standards the, as number 3 said, the instruction and as #6
said it being all related to teaching, I think the area that needs to be filled in for
teachers and an area that I think there is a tremendous need is assessment,
monitoring, and follow-up. I think a lot of work needs to be done in assessment,
monitoring, and follow-up, because that is, where we are what this indicator looks
like and how do we know that students are actually progressing. The models of teaching are starting to look similar. The models of assessment are still not. The models of grading are not.

- The data collection would tell us what they are actually achieving and if they are achieving what we want them to achieve.
- And that is, perhaps because we are not, because we said that assessment is not usually part of the classroom observation. You know, most of the time it does not really even need to be part of the form for the classroom observation. So we are not having continuous discussions about that, but I agree that is part of the reason that is an area that I think we need to focus on. In some ways, we would have better indicators of printing out teacher’s grade books and progress reports. You know, and having discussions about those. Believe me, that still would not be ideal, grades and assessment.
- They can be two different things.
- Absolutely, for some people they are the same. That may be part of the problem. So I don’t think we have had in depth. We have had some, but yeh, that is an area that I think we need to focus more on.

  g. In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school?

- It highlights what staff development we need and we have done a lot of work examining the TAP document together and deciding who has what expertise in the building and run workshops during faculty meetings or whatever so I think that has happened a lot in the area of technology, in the area of special education and kids who need accommodations, and so forth. Again, I think when you set up a time so that people can systematically look at what teaching is and how to get there and show people how to get there, then you, then it makes improvements in the school. If not, change the climate where the focus is on teaching and learning, as opposed to who is parking in the wrong spaces in the parking lot. It is quality conversation.
- M-Anybody else?
- Just to say something and I don’t know if it fits here, but I miss, really miss the piece where people talked about alternative assessments. I thought that helped people really improve the school through site based research where we really could have people show them what they accomplished and to show what better teaching would be. And because we did not have that piece, I know we are getting it, we did not have it this year, I thought we lost a lot.
- M-So on site research?
- Yes, or even on site data collection and examination and then changing something because of that data.
- This idea of alternative evaluation and action research is something that I think teacher leaders have had the autonomy to do in the past and they almost expect to teach teachers. What comes to mind is that we have had teachers who have become curriculum specialists and take great pride in mentoring new teachers and actually being a teacher of teachers who took advantage of these alternative
evaluation tools to participate in something that they really loved in teaching teachers, but also contributing the improvement of other teachers, and the school.

h. From your perspective, how has the TAP process seemed to improve your effectiveness as an administrator?

- The discussions that you have with teachers. It allows you to clarify what they really do well as opposed to what they need to work to improve upon. Um, it sets the stage for really good discussions about everything in the area that they need to improve upon. It also sets the stage for good discussions about what they are doing well and having conversations about let's talk about what makes you stand out in this area because then it gives me ideas that I can share with someone that is not doing well in that area.
- I think it gets you into classrooms and sets the stage for be invited in for follow-up. It also makes you feel like a part of what is going on because teachers will say, “remember that project that we were working on” or go to the library because they are hanging up there. And I also agree with what #4 says. I find myself a lot saying, oh, I was in a room and I saw this and you may want to try that.
- I think it was really important to note a comment that was made earlier. If teachers follow a process to the letter as it is designed, their pre-evaluation should provide you with a very reasonable and accurate assessment of where the teacher is at in where they are developing. In addition to their need for continuous professional development.
- Well, we did say that it could be improved upon that pre-evaluation summary.
- Oh, I agree. But I am talking about the whole pre-evaluation summary, I am talking about if they participate in the whole timeline, you know, the EBO’s, the midyear, the teachers are coming into those final evaluation and those conversations are generally pretty short because those teachers know where they are at, where they need to improve because they have had to reflect so much and write so much about where they are on each standard and within each indicator. I do agree with you that the pre-evaluation needs to change.
- M-How has it made your life easier or harder as an administrator?
- I think it is confusing. And I don’t know if it is because, I shouldn’t be confused because I was part of creating it. But, I am. Teachers are confused and I don’t know if it is because it is the first year or what. For example, I ask them to send their pre-observation summary and they send me their pre-evaluation summary and they don’t know what the difference is. I think it is going to take some getting used to. I think the EBO thing, it’s funny we talk about EBO’s, we agreed to get rid of EBO’s but the evaluation form says, EBO’s. So, I think people are trying to figure out where they are with the process or something.
- What was the question again?
- M- How has it made your life easier or harder as an administrator?
- I think both. I mean when I had to write the narratives and I only had to do that for one year, I found that I was really hesitant to use the same statements, that I really had to personalize it more. So it took more time. But it is very clear cut with the language that you use now and the statements that you make. So, I find
that easier. Um, on the other hand, I think that it should be more personalized and you have the comment section to do that, and the comment section at the end, so I find that try to personalize in that section.

- I think it has made it more difficult because it is so hard to be more objective. I am still struggling with meeting the standard and exceeding the standard.
- Do you sometimes read it like seven times before you decide?
- Uh, Uh. And then I say, why, what difference does it make? The difference is the talking about it afterwards. It is the meeting and I think that it will become easier once there is an alternative assessment for those that get all exceedings.
- But in terms of someone getting all exceedings there is a normative reference as opposed to this criterion objective, you know, where there is a standard and then there is an indicator where you fall. Where normatively, there are teachers that are just fantastic, I mean, they are the best of the best. And, you know...
- Then you have to compare them to somebody else
- Then there is no comparison. If there is no comparison, then, there are not many teachers like that, but there are, you know, certainly some.

  i. For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare?

- As #4 said, the narrative was more personal. Teachers were more gratified because they felt the narrative captured the 48 minutes in the classroom. Thoughtful and the things that they did with students. They appreciated that.
- In the narrative, you wrote down what you saw. It was Saphier-like and you did not have to decide did it Exceed the Standard or Meet the Standard or what you saw. In that way, it was easier.
- I still find this an improvement because it gives you the flexibility to include the narrative if you want to in final comments or comments as evidence under each standard. It frees me from having to do that, maybe because I always found it much more time consuming to go through the narrative and not start from scratch to have the language being provided for me. Again, it is not that it is not more gratifying to a teacher, just is it the most useful way to spend your time? Um, I find the language of the rubric cut to the chase and we can give specifics on what happened in the lesson that indicates what worked really well or something that did not work quite as well as expected. Um, so I think it sharpens the focus. I experienced it both ways. I even experienced it as a teacher. On the other hand, I didn’t experience this new one as a teacher, obviously, because I think the time is spent more productively it really gets to the heart of what you want to talk about, it is not a complete narrative of the entire lesson. What are the specific areas that can be improved or exemplary.

- I think the whole process for teachers and administrators takes longer than the narrative process. To manage the whole process.
- Are you talking about the writing piece? Or the whole piece?
- From beginning to end...I think from beginning to end.
• With doing the narrative piece, I found that I was more focused with writing down what was happening in the classroom as opposed to observing, assessing, and evaluating.

• And I have heard positive comments about that. I used to bring the laptop into the classroom and I was typing away. And I thought that I had a very good summary of the lesson with the time. It wasn’t scripting, but it was a good summary of each segment of the lesson. But, now, I go in with a pad of paper and am more free to observe what kids are doing cooperatively, to get up and move around and hear what is going on and I have had teachers mention to me that they enjoy that more. That there is more to it.

• You pick up more.

• Yeh. It is a discussion that I have had a few times with teachers. Does my presence in there effect things better or worse? Or at all? And I think it is less so, if I am coming in with my hardware. Because they are used to seeing me carrying around a pad of paper. It is more natural and more comfortable. I think people appreciate that.

• I remember #1 having a postobservation conference with a teacher and she said, “I love this it is like a story about me.” And I thought, well, what good is that? I thought I spent all of that time writing a story about her. I would rather improve teaching and learning.

• I agree with number 6 and it is the most valuable use of time. If time were not an issue we could do that all of the time, but.

• It is very different to start a conversation with that instead of oh my god, I have 3 progressings, why could it not have been better?

• In addition, I think that was done differently by different administrators in different schools. So, I could see how a teacher would very much love to see the narrative about them, but could get another narrative with a sad ending.

  j. If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say?

• I think being off rotation for excellent teachers that we should not have to do them every other year. Where it takes so much time and energy that if we already have people that are moving ahead on their own and just ask for your help when you need it, that this sitting down and doing all the things that we need to do is very time consuming.

• But, I don’t know if those teachers should just be exempt.

• I am not saying exempt. I am saying instead of a two year rotation, a three year rotation.

• But, what I am saying is if they are not on a two-year evaluation and they are not being evaluated in a traditional way, um, if they were contributing in another way to help teachers be better teachers and if they were becoming teacher leaders of curriculum or teachers of something, that we could spread the wealth.

• They are already doing that, because it is in their repertoire to do a workshop. Why do we have to formalize it.
- I am saying to formalize it. I am saying give teachers choices where they are not. You are in rotation and you are not an exemplar. A teacher that is exceeding the standard in 4 of the 6 standards and you want to be a teacher leader and take on responsibility. Then, it would be nice to be able to fill that in collaboratively with the teachers. The idea is to tap into the teacher leadership collaboratively where teacher leaders are taking on some of this. And I think it would improve relationships, it would improve teachers, it would improve the alignment of curriculum. I think that the potential there is great, maybe.

- I think that what #6 is saying there are certain teachers with that year-end evaluations process form is not that useful for the time spent. I actually find the classroom observations beneficial. I think regardless of how excellent a teacher is, absolutely, would benefit from the conversations that happens as a result of watching a very good lesson and discussing it. So, I don’t have any complaint about those. But to go through that process at year end with some of those teachers. I think I know what it is going to say, they know what it is going to say and I could bring up one from two years ago, stamp it, and say, let’s use this one again. That would say a lot of time. You know, but I also feel like people need to be validated on a continuing basis, so how can you continue that in an efficient use of time.

- I think peer observation would be a good piece to have for a teacher to be able to reflect on more than an administrator coming in and observing them. You know, having one of their peers, I don’t know if it would work because they may invite their best friend, but it would be to look at it realistically, who is a peer, and who could give them feedback.

- I think it would be great to have that as part of the process where we reach a point where the evaluation is done by you and a partner. The two of you decide on your goals, achieve your goals, and writing evaluations of each other.

- That would be great.

- Maybe this is where those teachers that are exceeding the standards do it.

k. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process?

- The preevaluation summary is one.

l. How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?

- Spend time with all of our teachers talking about what the exceeding indicator looks like in each of the standards.

- Giving them opportunities to take one of the indicators and delving deep into it. We spent one early release day just looking at engaged learning and you had 10 questions and you rotated to each table. Answer questions like what would the room look like, what would the teacher be doing, what would the kid be doing and give people the opportunity to share ideas about that one particular area.
• I think we have been talking a lot about that in the other questions, I think any of the ideas that we had about having alternative means for teachers that truly are and have already proved their competence. It is a challenge in education. It is different from other areas in industry. Even for very talented individuals in an organization, their evaluation could determine their next step and their promotion, their raise and their salary. In that situation they need to be validated. They need the opportunity to grow, but we don’t have that have those other traditional things that in society you are able to attach to. So how can give that validation to people without having to go through the motions? And spending the time doing so.

• We have talked a lot at administrative council about doing walk-throughs together. As we walkthrough together we have an opportunity of what we see and change. I was with some teachers from Andover the other day and they say that everybody is paired up and everybody does walkthroughs with a peer and talk about what they saw, what was good, and what was not good and the way that they would change things in their own classrooms. I am fascinated by that idea because it has been helpful to me what I have done as an administrator.

• I think that is interesting and it really has the potential to change a culture because if that culture buys into that, it becomes the norm. That is an enormous positive pressure. You think I may be walking into a classroom, but if my peer is walking into the classroom that is just the norm, that is what happens. It could be very positive.

m. That covers the areas that I wanted to ask. Is there anything that you care to add?

• I would love to know what teachers say about this.
High School Department Heads
Focus Group Questions for Administrators
Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators in the Implementation of TAP

Date of Session: May 23, 2008
Number of Participants: 7

Location: Superintendent's Conference Room  Beginning Time of Session: 7:15 a.m.
Ending Time of Session: 8:30 a.m.

I. Introduction

Good Afternoon:

My name is Dr. Christine Redford and I will be conducting today's focus group session. The purpose of this focus group session is to gather data on your perceptions of the teacher evaluation process or TAP that is used in this school district. This data will be used as part of Seton Hall researcher, John Doherty's dissertation which will be measuring the perceptions of teachers and administrators in the implementation of a standards-based evaluation system. You have received a copy of the signed consent form for this focus group session. This focus group session is being recorded. As you can see, we have an assistant moderator present at the session to handle any logistical issues such as refreshments, audio recording equipment, and taking some notes of key phrases.

You will be identified only by a number and the category of focus group that you are participating. This focus group contains administrators from (elementary, middle, or high school).

The answers from all of the people we interview will be combined for the results of the dissertation. Nothing you will say will ever be identified with you personally. As we go through this session, if you have any questions about why I am asking something, please feel free to ask. This focus group is completely voluntary and you may leave at any time during the focus group session.

This session is a group discussion on the questions that will be presented. I will begin each question by asking one particular person the question. You will be identified by the number that is located in front of you on the tent card. Other participants will then have the opportunity to give their answer once the first person has answered the question. You may include additional information throughout the discussion at any time.

Are there any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions)
I am now going to begin asking you the questions.
II. Questions

a. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP in Reading?

- 5-Well, I think the primary purpose is to provide a system where we give feedback to teachers so that they can improve in their teaching and the goal would be to provide a support system that brings all teachers in their competency levels to a very high level...so that the staff is teaching at a very high level all around. That is the primary purpose, also the purpose becomes if people can't provide those improvements then it provides a mechanism for noting that and communicating that there needs to be improvement as well.
- U-I agree with number 5 and in addition to that it provides us with a place to define what good teaching is and define what we are looking for with good instruction...yeh...and I would say that would be the two reasons already listed
- 5-One other thing I would like to mention is that it also gives us a chance to give the positive feedback to someone who is doing a good job so that they feel, they feel recognized for what they are doing in the classroom.
- U-It can work both ways, which is good.
- U-It gives the opportunity for self-evaluation, which is good.
- U-Sometimes we think we do a good job but we have another set of eyes looking at us, it validates what we do or provides some corrective feedback for what we do.

b. The current TAP process has been in place for 2 years. During that time, what have you noticed are some of the positive effects of the program?

- U-I think one thing is that it is a rubric. It streamlines things which makes it easier. Before it was just a narrative. So I think we can be consistent on what we are looking for, I think it has been a positive to the document.
- U-I think tied into that is the clarity and what is clear about what is being judged.
- U-It has standards defined, so the evaluators and those being evaluated know specifically what standards are being measured which leads to what number 2 said about consistency
- U-In fairness, it is not comparing apples to oranges
- M-How do you think new teachers find the standards?
- U-I think at first they find it intimidating, but I think that once the process is explained to them and that everyone uses them and it is used as a positive and a source of reflection then it is a lesson to them. I know at first initially it was a lot to digest and it is very detailed. And I think they wonder sometimes how it is going to be used.
c. Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process?

- U-One thing that I know that happens on occasion with me is that there seems to be categories that I don’t think are as nearly important as others, yet when you go on the checklist it is almost like you are creating an importance. So, you hope that once you grade someone that there is consideration of a rank order to what you are reacting to
- U-That is true, one other thing that I have problems with is that sometimes within the categories, say, number 5b that b will have two different things to be looking for and if a person exhibits strength in one thing and not in the other thing, I am a little bit unclear on how I am going to judge that
- U-I thought to that there is some repetition between technology questions that were asked in several different places and it didn’t seem that it needed to be there as often.
- M-Anything else?
- U-I think it is uh, to the point made earlier that it is a little intimidating, it is language heavy, there are so many standards that are outlined on there, um, even with all that language, um I think to someone. Another point, there are certain aspects of a good lesson and good teaching that are not necessarily reflected in all that language. In stepping away from the long narratives, maybe we have lost the ability to capture that although there is a place for comments, certainly there is room to add any additional comments. But, nonetheless, there is certain more intangible evidence of good teaching that is not captured in those standards.
- I think in addition, the difference between an exceeds the standard and meets the standard the way the rubric is written to me is one word. I know the observation tool the way the phrases are written are to meets the standard phrases so sometimes it is tricky because you are doing your rating to meets the standard and you have to keep in mind that there is a whole other document for what exceeds the standard looks like and what meets the standard looks like so you have to not just evaluate what you see on that observation document but you have to keep in mind what exceeds the standard looks like and it is just a difference in one or two words.
- The other thing that is hard is that meets the standard I think is supposed to reflect that they are doing a very good job. But I think a lot of teachers take that as all I did was meet the standard which is like giving a student a C in that you really didn’t do a good job and it is hard sometimes to make sure with that phrase that when a teacher gets a meets the standard that that means they are doing a good job, it is not an exceptional, off the board job. Because I know that I have had teachers feel a little miffed that you only said “met the standard? I felt that I was better than that!” Plus that is average and that doesn’t mean much.
- It is almost like you need something in between exceeds and meets
- Maybe to explain exceeds the standard is like giving a kid a 1. How many 1’s do you give? Versus most people do their job and get a 2.
- I don’t know if the TAP document (announcements interrupt speaker-there is a pause until announcements are over) is appropriate for all subjects. I don’t know
if it is the right tool. There are some things, like the TAP talks about technology. There are some curriculum that don’t deal with technology as much as others. Um, so I don’t know if you put N/A and is that held against that person and how does it look. Um, so I don’t know if it is perfect for everybody.

- I also think that it was time consuming, more so for me. I have not had any other experience so I have nothing else to compare it to but it was a very time consuming process to make sure that I was answering each area correctly, and you know, it wasn’t as easy or user friendly. It took a lot of time to go through that.

  d. What are some ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed teaching in your school?

  - I don’t know if it has changed teaching, but it levels the playing field so that everyone knows what is being assessed.
  - It is like giving out the rubric before the project.
  - M-So everyone understands the expectations?
  - I think it is good for new teachers coming in.
  - I have seen cases where teachers have improved or changed because of the TAP process. That they have seen the rating and seen comments of so apparently I am not meeting the standard or exceeding the standard in this area so I need to do a little bit better at that so I have seen teachers making that change. It has had an effect
  - Well, again, I know the specific document is different from what we had in the past. That, other maybe being a little more specific, I don’t think it has changed the process for me drastically. I feel that I give the same feedback and information for teachers that I gave under the older system. But what I do think is that the newer teacher coming in has a more clearer idea and may help people starting out in particular to know where they are aiming and where they are heading. But, I think that I have seen people improve through TAP but I also saw people improve through methods that we were using before as well.
  - I think that any type of feedback that you give that is constructive criticism as long as a person takes it in the correct light

  e. What effect do you think the current teacher evaluation process has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school?

  - I would think that the inclusion of the technology component, which is a significant item that is there several times let people feel that I need to catch up on technology and make sure that I am aware of what is going on
  - M-Are people participating more in professional development opportunities do you think or do you think that they are taking advantage of more opportunities for growth?
  - I think there have been more opportunities, but I can’t say that the document is the reason. I think that because there has been more opportunities in house that communication and email outside schools that people are much more aware and that there are more opportunities, which is very helpful.
I agree with #2 and that there are reasons why people participate in professional growth activities whether it be for advanced certification or effecting their salary status or for areas of interest or internal motivation to learn and to improve. I don’t see a direct correlation with that and to the TAP document.

In our area, I would say the same there are more work in professional development in the last two years but that is because of a grant making professional development opportunities more available.

In terms of formal professional development activities, I am not sure I can point to an increase in the TAP document, but, as much as it has been around for only a few years it may be a little early to judge that. But, I think it influences in a more informal way some of the things we talk about in our department about what good teaching. I think we may make more reference like the importance of summarizing over a course of a lesson, formative assessment or something that we think about a little bit more and I think it has something to do with the fact that those are things that are emphasized on that document.

What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has seemed to change student achievement in your school?

That may be a tough one to measure. I think we make exception that improved teacher performance and pedagogy is going to improve or result in improved student performance. Just off the top, I can’t see instances of it but...I mean obviously the goal of teacher improvement is to improve student performance. So, I am pretty strong on the assumption that if teachers are constantly improving that it results in student improvement as well.

I think that I have the same problem in that it is pretty tough to measure what student improvement...again you would hope that different activities and different styles of teaching, hopefully the use of summarizers has increased. But it is hard to know if it is the key to increased student performance.

In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school?

I think that professional development opportunities have been tied into some of the TAP and that there has been a move to provide training and professional development in the areas. So that if we are asking teachers to improve, here are opportunities to help you get there.

So there is a tight correlation?

I think so...I don’t know if it is super tight, but I see offerings made on a pretty consistent basis for programs that are directly and connect to items on the TAP documents.

That’s true, but for the last two years, have you noticed an uptake? Because, Reading has always been very solid in supporting people and helping out in professional development.

I think it has been much more.
• Much more in-house. I think you can go out and get the training. A lot more has been done to bring it in and have much easier access here.

  h. From your perspective, how has the TAP process seemed to improve your effectiveness as an administrator?

• I think that it provides a common language and frameworks so that everybody is held to the same standard.
• The common ground is good. In terms of no one feels that hey why did you pick this out to talk about mine and nobody else’s deficiencies. It also allows you to pick out specific areas so that you can suggest specific areas of improvement for a teacher and still indicate that their overall performance is very good. That is, if there are two or three places that they don’t meet expectations, you are not giving them something that says, you are doing a terrible job. You are doing a very good job in some areas, but here are one or two things that you need to step it up.
• I don’t know if it is important to note that we are not administrators per se, we are teachers who observe using the TAP document in our observations and provide input for evaluations, but we are not the ultimate evaluators.
• M-Sometimes that makes you a better observer because of that.
• I don’t know where this fits too, but to kind of add to that is that input is needed for the final evaluation, but it almost seems that there needs to be, I don’t want to create more work, but it almost seems that another different document than the evaluation to note things on in a simplified manner and to provide feedback. It is separate and is not the same document as if you were writing it yourself. So, in other words, we do observations and we send that down and we need to provide feedback as well for the evaluation. But, as number 3 had mentioned, we are not administrators, so we are not supposed to be the editor of the document. So the way in which we have been providing the feedback is on the document that the writer will write on and I just wonder if there can be a more simplified manner to give feedback to the evaluator but it is not the same document. Because our input is very valuable and we are there most of the time and that is understandable, but when you are using the same tool as the document that you are giving the same person, it looks like you are the evaluator.
• That is a very awkward position for us to be in
• And...it is recognized that our input is needed...which is true.
• M-If I hear you correctly you wish that maybe there would be another document to give to the administrator so that they can put the pieces together.
• Just a separate document, not the document per se that is given to the person. Not that same document because you feel that you are writing it yourself and it is not supposed to be that way, but our input is needed.
• So you are saying instead of, not in addition.
• Thank you for the clarification, #7!
i. For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare?

- The old one was just a narrative.
- With C’s and R’s
- I like this system better than the other system because as I recall in the other one there was the boxes that you checked. They were a little different in how you responded and it seemed like they were a little negative on that than this to make any recommendations to teachers.
- The observation form you put categories for C for commendable and R for recommendation for improvement. And, you would leave it blank if it was not observed or if you were meeting the standard. That was some confusion too because was it not observed or was I just meeting the standard. But when it came time, there was always a narrative part for each section.
- So the new system, the standards are all spelled out on the form and what the teacher gets. That was not spelled out before and if the teacher wanted to unless a teacher had committed to memory all of the standards. The teacher was going to have to back and forth between the document that contained all of the standards and their evaluation form. That was really a lot to expect. This certainly makes things a lot easier for teachers to see exactly, again, what they are being measure on. And, easier for evaluators too, just because we do not have to go back and forth.
- Yeh, I find that I had to do that all the time. I had three words and what was that mean exactly and I had to go back to the document.
- That is true that would make it a lot easier and even unfortunately in today’s world where we have teachers moving from one job to another, for those that leave us and take those documents with them it makes it easier for a teacher and you do not need to look at them to find out what it really means.
- So to raise the question, I personally find this document more user friendly than the previous one.
- I was just sorta thinking we were talking about the person doing the observation and the evaluation. As a teacher, thinking back I think that this new system is a lot clearer for the teacher or for myself being the teacher being evaluated than the system of the past.

j. If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say?

- One thing that I find difficult is the time to do this system as well as I would like to do it. Ah, where I teach three classes a day and there are a number of other things to my job, I often find it is hard to set the time aside to do a preconference, post conference, and an observation that really deals with things and the way that you want to. You find yourself cutting yourself short or in some cases, changing the time of the meeting because other meetings come up and push this meeting out of the way. The key factor I see is that if there was more time available to implement the process. I feel that I can do a better job.
• Also, too you make suggestions, but do you ever have time to follow through to see if they are doing them. You need the time to help them, guide them and support them. I also question every other year for veteran teachers to be evaluated.

• M-So you feel that every year they need to be evaluated?

• No, I don’t think it needs to be as often. I am not saying an observation, but an evaluation. It is a lot I think.

• M-So how long do you think between evaluations?

• Right now, it is every other year. Every third year?

• For many years, it was every third year. It seemed to work and if there was a problem with a teacher, you would step it up. That was the minimum that you would do.

• And I think too that people would do goals each year. You know, for their own personal growth. The evaluation/observation piece I do not know if it is always necessary.

• Especially if we are talking stepping up walkthroughs and that type of informal observation. It seems that if you did have a problem with a teacher that came up through that then you could step it up through the evaluation process as well.

• So the idea is if the teacher is on a three year cycle it doesn’t mean the teacher is being ignored because of the walkthroughs and other goal setting and all that.

• It is still part of that, but there is time for the pre and the post and the formal observation. I don’t know if it is really necessary.

• The whole process is daunting. I don’t know if there is clarity. The forms were really confusing on what was an observation form, what was different, what to look for, how do we tie it in to an evaluation form. To bring to learn what each form was and to view what we were looking for did take some time. I think knowing as I was learning the forms and the standards that we were looking for initially, I had 9 evaluations to do and that was just an incredible amount of time to meet to go through and it was not very particularly easy to figure out who was new and what the difference between a veteran teacher for what I was looking for and something for one that was new and that has been kind of tricky.

• M-You know that you had mentioned that perhaps that evaluating teachers every three years and that you did goal-setting and walkthroughs. Is there anything else that the teacher could be doing during that time instead of being evaluated every year or every other year?

• One of the things that I was going through that really struck me could be my department and that we are kind of young, but the goals, which should have tied in to some of the evaluation piece, there was not a lot of crossover. So there goals did not necessarily match their evaluation. So when I was getting feedback on their goals and what they had done, it do not meet any of the standards. So they worked on their goals, but it did not meet anything on the TAP document.

• I think also what is mentioned in the conversations that changing in teaching. There is more opportunity in technology but it is where we are at in this day and time. And as noted by #5, time is key. Ten years ago, you did not have new teachers coming in, there would be fewer of these to do. It is different today, it is not Reading, it is the culture and the climate. It is not going to go away that there
is going to be a regular turnover and as a result these numbers 9, 11, 13 to do a year. I think we need to step back and look to see how can we address this because it has changed. There is more to do and we want to do it better and that time piece really needs to be looked at. I think we are concentrating on improving the document and I think that is valuable, but I think we need to recognize that there is a greater demand on department heads and administrators to fill the task because the times have changed. It is a much more consuming job if you want to do it right because of the numbers of people coming and going. It is not like the past when you had a few to do.

- And I think as a district we prepared for it in some ways with a formal mentor program being implemented. We saw it coming in a lot of ways. I think this could be another way to adjust to that. The climate has changed, there is a lot more turnover, it means a lot more evaluation for everybody more than 10 years ago.

- And those evaluations mean more when you have new people. Those people are more important to get the feedback to. Generally speaking, they need a lot more of it.

- And, they need a lot more time and attention, which is well deserved.

- I think it is key to look at your population of teachers that you are hiring and to see their needs when you have this TAP document.

- M-Are there anything that teachers can be doing to help with the evaluation process?

- You know, that is interesting because I have had some issues with that. Maybe it is because I am new and did not give enough direction with it. One of the documents that the staff was supposed to turn in...I don't know what it is called. Their feedback...the pre-evaluation. For a staff of 12, I got 4. So on their end on what they are supposed to be doing. Even in terms of the goals and things, I was knocking on people's doors to get those goals in because they were not doing it. And, who's responsibility. I mean, ultimately, who's responsibility is that, mine or theirs? So that was kind of...some of this has been really good because it has forced me to look at what the expectations are and kind of clarify it. I feel that I have taken the ownership and teachers have not.

- I think possibly there to to be honest, maybe we need to be more clear with deadlines because I have some of the same problems with things getting turned in. When I send out an email and say, hey, I need it by this date or else, then you are generally going to get it, but you need to sorta put that pressure on sometimes.

- The time crunch is one thing, but the timing that it has happened this year. If I remember correctly, people were asked to do goals at the beginning of the year. And then, a little while later, they were asked to do the self-evaluation with the magic marker form. And that one, I don't remember when it came out, but it seemed to come out at a really bad time for a lot of people. There were things reining down or something. And a lot of people were not too friendly with that form. They were not happy to be asked to do another one. But, I think that if that one had been put out with the please write down the expectations of your goals for us, that might have helped some of the new people clarify, oh ok, this what I
need to do. Ya know, in order to do an excellent job I am looking at this and this and this.

- Now that you mention that one...was that this fall, the highlighting?
- Yes
- People did find that to be, as much as it seemed to be relatively quick, where you are...

- Well there was so many standards to judge yourself on. It was very time consuming and when you got to self-rating yourself is very hard at times. Well, this is really where I am really good and you know the few things that you are really good at, but you are supposed to go through everyone of the standards. Maybe it would have been better if people picked out their five strongest standards and their five weakest and what they felt they need to work on. I think the idea of looking at everyone of them was hard.
- Maybe identify...Individual teachers could do this or do this as a school, a point of emphasis for the year. One of those standards every year and rotate it. Maybe it took away, I can imagine it taking away from the goal setting process just because it was another thing on people's plates. I would view the goal setting as much more important than what that document was about.
- That highlighted document was stressful for teachers in that..I talked to some teachers who said if I highlight one that shows that I really need improvement. Is someone going to say, boy this teacher is not really great in these areas.
- Kind of like the Blue Ribbon Survey. The I don't know rating is that going to be a negative?
- Right...And if someone said and rated themselves highly on one of those, is someone going to say oh this teacher is complacent and he or she needs to improve. But I think that one thing that teachers can do to help the evaluation process is if they receive some feedback or criticism in a particular area, and that teacher is working on that, then call the observer and say, "Next Tuesday I am going to be working on this something that you specifically said that I needed to improve on. Come on and take a look." Or "I am trying something new that I have not tried before. I would love to get your feedback."

- And I think a key there is, however, that is done on an informal basis so that it is not a threatful situation and that is where you really get the growth. I know my very first year of teaching, I was actually asked how things were going and I had a class where there were a lot of discipline problems and I asked my department head to come in and take a look to see if he could help me. It did up as a negative in my evaluation. And I never invited my department head back to my classroom again to help me with a problem because I was afraid that it would become a negative. You have to make sure that you don't when someone is striving and working in that area that you don't make it threatening so that they withdraw.

- You go in there with no pencil and paper. It is the trust that you develop between observer and the teacher too, to know that you can take risks, you can try things and if it does not work out, oh well, you can go back to what you were doing before.
• The things that resonate with me is the trust and the observation and assessment. I thing the observation is where you say these are the things that you are looking for. Where the assessment is more potentially judgemental.
• It is like a rehearsal versus a performance. A rehearsal, make your mistakes, find ways to make it better, it is a constant process. The performance you put it out there.
• M-You need to distinguish between the observation and the evaluation.
• And the need for, in some cases, informal observations that are not necessarily written up and turned in to the evaluator who will be doing the evaluation. A chance to have some informal communication between the person and yourself. If there is a real problem there, you need to formalize it. I need to come in and see an example, if it is a real problem situation. But I think that sometimes you can get a lot more growth if you can keep it that less formal basis first. But, for the real measure down the road.
• I was thinking about suggestions and should we do veterans every other year. And I agree with what people say that the informal is less threatening and people tend to be more comfortable doing what they are doing like walking in without a pen or a pencil. It may be a suggestion for the veteran teachers. Now, if it is not every other year and it is an informal observation without pen or pencil and you just sit in the back and double check and appreciate what they do and recognize what they do along with a walkthrough that you are going to do with everybody and writing it down. Make it informal for a veteran teacher, because I think it is important for you to go to see, but that does not mean that you have to write it down every time for a veteran teacher. Plus, I think that it would exhibit trust by not having to write it up. In other words, you know that you almost are questioning them by putting pen to paper and doing that.
• You know in our role, we are constantly observing teachers even though that is not formal observations. We are in the department with them. We are having lunch with them, discussing teaching. You are in the classrooms all the time. So you see the atmosphere, you talk to their students and you know. There are hundreds of ways that we are observing, giving feedback to teachers. We don’t want this to come across as we go in there once a year, write up the document. It really is an ongoing process.
• A lot of that really doesn’t change with the document and the TAP process

  k. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process?

• If I was teaching two periods instead of three periods as in the past, it would give more time to spend more time on it. If there was anything else that would help the process that would be it.
• I don’t want to volunteer for any more meetings, but I don’t think that I was fully prepared. Not that I am interested in more meetings.
• Maybe some training?
• Yeh, Yeh
• Even working with a veteran who has done it.
- We had some training with the walkthroughs and I am glad that we did that, but you know, nobody had actually told me how to do a formal observation. You know, I have a lot of experience with informal, but how do you bridge, how do you bring all the formal stuff to the informal? How do you do that next level of stuff? I truly believe that this year has been more baptism by fire.
- I can agree with that, but I know that any of the more experienced department heads would have been absolutely fine with anything that I asked. Again, it is the time crunch.

1. How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?

- Would you repeat that?
- M-Sure..(reads that)
- You know, I would say that we have a pretty good system going. I off the top of my head can’t say, gee, what can we do better. I think people are doing a better job in the classroom. I think that one thing that we have mentioned already is to have workshops on areas that we are concentrating on, improving and changing are very helpful. The one difficult again is getting the time to get to it.
- This may not be directly to the teacher evaluation process but we talk about workshops. We have workshops on curriculum and technology and not as frequently on teaching strategies and instruction. I know at department meetings same thing...projects are curriculum based. There are a lot of those things being passed around. We usually do not have the time to talk about instruction. What constitutes good instruction and good assessment? Those would be great conversations if you can integrate teacher sharing and I know that we have the teacher sharing day, where we get some of that, but it is something that we can do on a more frequent basis.
- Did they have a class on differentiated instruction this year?
- Yes and the have the project based learning this year.
- But it would be nice if those are courses are incorporated into the schedule so that everyone has the opportunity to have access to it. Instead of, well you have to sign up for it. Like it is almost like a theme and it is something that we would like to do as a school with some of these half days and delayed openings and we will be having someone coming in. Just discussion on that and it would be kind of nice to have a thematic approach. It does not have to be K-12, it could be 9-12. We could seek teachers input and given the population of new teachers that we have if would be necessary to improve their teaching.
- And as a new teacher, the focus really be on learning the curriculum that sometimes you forget how to use the curriculum and differentiate. The TAP document does not help you differentiate or teach a curriculum. Sometimes visiting another class or a walkthrough or sometimes someone says, gees, try this. What is critically important in instruction.
- That is actually a couple things that I can see, not necessarily with the teacher evaluation system, but getting people to do more sharing of ideas is crucial.
know that I have tried having people to use the X drive on the computer to share activities that you do. It has not happened as much as I would like yet.

- You need to provide the time to be able to do that.
- There was a time with the peer… I forgot the second name… peer coaching where people were getting into each other’s classrooms and that was kind of a neat change of ideas, but again, it is tough for teachers to get the time to do that.
- I think it happens, but it is so much on the fly.
- We have been lucky in the grant in the particular area, a lot of the workshops have been content based, but also very much tied into instructional strategies that you could use with that content. We are kind of lucky because we are tied into Primary Source who does a lot of things in our area that content to instructional strategies.
- Again, that should be offered in every discipline, not one. You are lucky, you have the grant. Science has the vertical team. But other people do not have those advantages to talk about curriculum. It should be for the whole school and if you want to talk about interdisciplinary and communication, you have to have everybody have the same advantages, experiences, and exposures. They need to have chances to share with each other, not just segregated in little pockets of things going on. Even with technology some people are so advanced, where others at the beginning stages and we are in the same building. We should be helping each other.
- The expectations in technology have sometimes been quite different. You have been here, you should know this by now. Some people are different because we moved in two stages. Looking at the time situation, if we keep those late start days, that might be a good place to use these things because we will hopefully bright, chipper, and ready to go! Another place is not what we have finished the curriculum committee meetings in the district that may be another place. The teacher sharing day was well received for workshops and ideas. That is another good place to share.
- Another way that evaluation influences instruction and you mentioned this point earlier. Maybe, I think it ties into what number 2 said, if we could identify a single area in a point of emphasis for instruction. It might seem that a year a lot to commit to the use of summarizers or some type of strategy but it is really not. It actually is much superior to a single workshop where there is not an opportunity for a follow through, practice and refinement and it might seem like we are not accomplishing that much for the year, but really, the sum of effect, especially for those people who are here four, five six years, would be a benefit to have an opportunity to really to really adopt a new strategy and add to their tools.
- M-So you are saying that workshops can provide that instructional base for teachers, but you want them to have the application to really put it in place?
- Yes, and by making it a point of emphasis, you would have to. Maybe it would begin with a workshop with a follow through maybe during one of those late start days. There is follow through to get teachers to see other teachers and watch how they implement that instructional strategy. Teachers would know every observation in that given year would definitely include that area as a point of emphasis.
• Because what will happen at a workshop is that you see great ideas and you really want to do them and you get caught up in your day to day flow and you get caught up and you can’t put that idea that you had in. Whereas you knew that if this is a point of emphasis, I have to make sure that I do it. It would become part of your practice and once it becomes part of your practice, it will start.

• I think too what would be helpful. This year, there was so many good things going on, we as teachers and department heads always found out last minute what they were. It is not to say our input is important and their decision-making but it is that communication. What is the plan this year and can we seek input to provide suggestions and rank the suggestions. For example, here are three suggestions that central office is looking at these are the most important and why. Because I felt that on those half days that we did not know what we were doing from one day to the next and what topics we were doing and had no input in it. Okay, you are doing this. I think if people have a part of the process and here are three choices choose one and that we have some input that we know the direction that we are heading and going. People buy into more of these piecemeal things. This time is this and this time is that and there is no direction. It is scattered and we need to know this is the emphasis, we sought your input and let move as a school to do this. It has more meaning to it. It just seems like this year there was more things and there all important and we need to prioritize. What is important? Because what is time and there is not enough time to do it all. So, what really are the key things? Maybe list them and seek input from the staff and get the direction so that we feel we are part of it. The decision can be made and that is fine, but at least we can be a part of it and we have a direction that we can go.

m. That covers the areas that I wanted to ask. Is there anything that you care to add?

• I just with #2 and #4 we started the discussion about the TAP process and we ended with instruction. The running theme with the advisory group and the steering committee and things that you use terms like everybody storms the ideas and then they get used, there is change and it is coming down again. It always comes down to what you put on the plate, and what you take off the plate. And as we talk about the TAP process being here to stay and the ultimate use is to improve instruction and the teacher’s ability to improve their own skill set while also teaching kids. How do we tie in effectively what your goal is, what you theme is, and how not to put too many pieces on that plate. So that you don’t have those strands that feel really scattered.

• I think to come back to an area of emphasis it is that a teacher would have a goal that is clearly, that every teacher would have a goal that is connected to an area of emphasis. And then, that would tie in their goals very much with the process.

• Just to add before I forget…Technology is a tool. And I am concerned that will be the emphasis with new teachers coming in with instruction. To use the technology is the tool for your instruction rather than the goal is technology. I think that differentiation is crucial. Instruction is first, not technology. Technology is not the goal.
- And instruction drives curriculum. But we all have curriculums. We have been working to develop those strands, K-12, a clear curriculum and those pretty much are up and going. It is our assessment and instruction that we need to look at.

- Just another thought that I had. I think when with new documents that it has made it clearer and teachers have been evaluated on and there is has been positive for the teachers to get all of the information on the document that they get. I still think that the most valuable part is still the comment section or as I think as when I am evaluated, I still think that it is ultimately more helpful and means more than uh, than the rubric.

- I would agree that the rubric sets up the framework to allow for the written comments. It is the written comments that carries the message
I. Introduction

Good Afternoon:

My name is Dr. Christine Redford and I will be conducting today’s focus group session. The purpose of this focus group session is to gather data on your perceptions of the teacher evaluation process or TAP that is used in this school district. This data will be used as part of Seton Hall researcher, John Doherty’s dissertation which will be measuring the perceptions of teachers and administrators in the implementation of a standards-based evaluation system. You have received a copy of the signed consent form for this focus group session. This focus group session is being recorded. As you can see, we have an assistant moderator present at the session to handle any logistical issues such as refreshments, audio recording equipment, and taking some notes of key phrases.

You will be identified only by a number and the category of focus group that you are participating. This focus group contains administrators from (elementary, middle, or high school).

The answers from all of the people we interview will be combined for the results of the dissertation. Nothing you will say will ever be identified with you personally. As we go through this session, if you have any questions about why I am asking something, please feel free to ask. This focus group is completely voluntary and you may leave at any time during the focus group session.

This session is a group discussion on the questions that will be presented. I will begin each question by asking one particular person the question. You will be identified by the number that is located in front of you on the tent card. Other participants will then have the opportunity to give their answer once the first person has answered the question. You may include additional information throughout the discussion at any time.

Are there any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions)
I am now going to begin asking you the questions.

II. Questions

a. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process or TAP in Reading?

- There are several. Obviously, to improve teaching and instruction for most people. I think we talked about it with the administrators a concept that we had as we were playing with the TAP process and building it and reviewing it and rebuilding it, it is to keep an eye on teachers and evaluation so that teachers perform to certain standards. Maybe there is another career for them.

- Yeh, as number 1 said, the whole piece about improving instruction and defining instruction. The other is that it gives us data on what type of professional development we can and should be providing for our teachers. Another piece is that we assured that teachers are maintain current skills and research and applying it in the classroom. A third piece is the strong for teacher to teacher to make sure that there is a level of assurance that to be a teacher in Reading, you have to be high quality and that the safeguard for us as administrators is the impact that it has on our students, but also to maintain the professional culture of what it means to be a teacher in Reading then to attain pts.

- Another idea is to standardize with administrators from across the district. And, uh I think one that is down the list a little bit, but that I enjoy is the nitty gritty of the teachers class where they are encouraged and you work in a relationship to talk about what is happening in the class. With our experience, we have the experience to give feedback. We are working with teachers new to the system. We are working with veterans, obviously, with positive strokes. Most of the veterans that I run into really would like some feedback on specifics. There is one good question on the TAP in the observations on what thing would you like the observer to focus on today. And, obviously that is a good answer because you as the observer can give specific feedback to a teacher. I go back to my point which is that it sets up a relationship, a supportive relationship, but still as you work on it, it becomes an honest relationship that you can talk about the nitty gritty.

- And that common language, I think to that is one that it is not the benefit if you take a look at the standards are, that it is just not what the observations are or the evaluation at the end of the year, but the common language gives us an understanding and a dialogue throughout the year from teacher to administrator, administrator to administrator, and teacher to teacher.

- I would agree with number 1 in terms of that it establishes positive role between teacher and administrator to the point of almost a collegial role. And I also think the way it is set up with almost like a rubric-like set up for each standard, I think that it is clearly defining each standard and the different steps in the process. I think if a teacher aspires to improve, you are always hoping
that maybe you can always get the E status, exceeding the standard, so I think the rubric is clearly defined ultimately the outcomes.

- One other purpose might be, I don’t know if it is a purpose, but just the way we do it, the teachers are more involved. I mean the teachers have more involvement in the beginning, the middle, and the end. It is just not observing a class and the administrator writing an evaluation, like #3 said, it is a good intake.

- It is almost a model for self improvement.

- Yeh. The ownership they have in the process, where as, it used to be 100% our end and 0% their end. Now, it is where our observations validate the teachers perceptions or find where there is gaps. So that front end piece about the goals and the back end piece about their evaluation summary at the end of the year. I think the ownership that the teacher has the following year when they set up their EBO’s

b. The current TAP process has been in place for 2 years. During that time, what have you noticed are some of the positive effects of the program?

- I think it is concrete and specific and that is the result of the standards based. The discussions that we had this year with the administrators, with the training, with the Jerry Goldberg helped with the department heads from our end brought a level of consistency from...I think we had the level of consistency from the three of us, but with all of the administrators and the department heads along the way. Again the whole piece about standards-based. Do they meet it and then if they don’t or go beyond then it gives us the opportunity to comment on it as well. It is a nice blend.

- I think the last two years we have made it ours and taken ideas from our national experts. It is a key thing and the teachers have seen that we have made it ours. So it is specific, it is professional, it is purposeful, it is meaningful and I think part of that, part of that is the teachers suggested that the administrators worked on it for two or three days, the teachers said that you are missing this one spot and we said you are absolutely right. So, the teachers are a part of that.

- The instrument itself is very valuable, but I think the preconference and the post conference enables you to put it to dialogue; for teachers and administrators to dialogue and I like the fact that we do it basically throughout the year and focus on a classroom lesson with the preconference, the classroom observation, and the post conference throughout the year whether is through walkthroughs, impromptus, or just talking to the teacher. And then at the end of the year the teacher has an opportunity to provide us some input as does the department chairperson, so you have that connection because the department chairperson is very close to the teacher in terms of everyday performance and then the post conference is a very valuable means to communicate and dialogue and once again, work collegially.

- I am not sure that we mentioned it yet. I like the striation, the four different levels and each one is specific. Each level is very positive and we looked at the wording, just a word here or a word there. Ah, what is it...Progressing toward the
standard. I mean teachers can accept that because it is not a criticism. Technology. You are progressing because you cannot throw it on the line that you have mastered it or exceeding it or anything like that. So, meeting the standards, it is an E. It is positive and it gets at different levels.

- I think that framing about the positive nature of the comments gives room to assess people. The other piece is the value of the discussions that we have had about which standard we are looking at and what we are trying to identify in each of the standards. Those are very valuable discussions that we have had over the three years from where we took a couple of different models, Danielson, Saphier, and so forth and as #1 pointed out, we made it our own. I think all of those efforts were very very valid and I think the ends justify it. All that work.

- It is still another thing, it is organic. If I used it correctly, the self-assessment. A teacher came up to me, we have a form, the self-assessment form and it was a little mind boggling, a little confusing. It was another step in the right direction and a teacher realigned it so it would be a box method. A teacher came up with that. So they know that it is changing for the better. And I think that gives a positive spin too.

- Moderator-So is it more like a rubric?

- Yes. Before you had a through k and it was a-k for meeting and a-k for exceeding and you had to go up. For some reason it is so much easier to go across and color in the one that you think you are. And a teacher came up with that!

- Moderator-So is that used by everybody?

- It will be next year. It is a matter of who has it on the computer, we have to find it. We can just copy it but... John probably has it.

c. Now that we have talked about the strengths of the TAP, what have you noticed are some of the weaknesses of the TAP process?

- I think reinforcing that this is an instructional and improvement instrument and process. I think that sometimes teachers look at the E’s and the M’s and P’s and sometimes there is a tendency... Progressing is not bad, P is not bad. Ah, you are working toward it, but sometimes teachers who are being observed and formally evaluated still have some concerns about, “oh a p... how is that going to look?”. And I think that all teachers think that they are good in some certain areas and you would like that reflected in an “E”, exceeding, and I think that teachers are becoming more and more comfortable with administrators giving the E’s, M’s, and P’s. I still think that is a little bit of a concern. I do think that many times in the preconference and the postconference you can really help a teacher improve and give suggestions and strategies that might even be more impactful then designation on this report.

- I have special education and some of the standards or indicators do not apply. Some do. They might be in the learning center lesson, but some of them don’t apply because they are working with different students.

- One other thing... One area... four standards. I think the one about, I mean the four main areas. One of the areas is outreach to community and I think that one is hard, not hard, but basically it talks about how the teachers reach out to parents
and community and things such as the telephone, email, Edline...those are pretty basic. But, other than that, I think all of the teachers do much of all the same types of things. So I find with that category, especially the bottom part, with each category when it talks about comments, I am finding that I am writing the same comments about that particular category because there are only so many ways to reach out to the community and the parents. And, most people tend to follow suit to those.

- Moderator-Now what about some of the things about assessment. Do you find that hard to evaluate or you usually do not go in when they are assessing.

- Those ones that are the summative, they are, as number three points out about outreach to the community and then you look at assessment. They are global and require more intimate interactions and observations on a frequent and consistent basis. I think that because of the size of the high school, the level that can best evaluate that would be the department heads and that is why when we do the evaluations we work in concert with the department heads on feedback as far as what their observations and evaluations are as we do the summative evaluations. But, for our level we just do not have the frequency and intimate contact to know or make a real true assessment on that. But with clarity, with clarity of presentation or something like dealing with a difficult situation in class we might be able to see that...How a teacher reacts...we can see that in an observation.

- I don’t know how to frame this, so it may take a bit, it seems like...two things. In another school system that I was in, the teacher came with a pack of papers, the teacher would turn in, this would happen in the English department, the teachers would turn in a pack during several times during the semester a stack of papers and they were graded. In another school I was in, they would take your lesson plan book, they would take a test. It almost seems long ago. It sounds old fashioned, but, do we have that in Reading? Do we not have that in Reading? It seems that we can almost move into that as I go into a second idea here before a teacher would dig through a file and say where is that test and I need to keep everything together. But, with the technology...I have math department that can go boom boom and get me anything I need really quickly. But, I hope that the TAP would give us other assessments, good question, because they ask the questions, can we answer them reasonably with some credibility, and we would show some things and open that discussion. So maybe, a little history needs to be gone through here. We have gone through some tough times in education where we had to go through all of that cutting in the 80’s and 90’s and I think that Reading is like any other school system in the throes of evaluation in terms of what is strong and what does the research show. I think we are on a little bit of the cutting edge now and I think the next step is, this is what I am doing in class. I am seeing things on the wall which I admire and like, but what do the kids say? What do the kids say for a test? Have a talk with the teacher, I have not asked the history teacher, how long do you take to get these papers back? Which would be a natural thing? What is it, when was it assigned, what is a top quality paper look like, how do you get these back? We need to emphasize that, because that is a catch that does not come up on our evaluation but that is a cutting problem for issues that people want to talk about.
• Those are the things that we bump into or bump into us.
• Moderator: Tell me about that because what I found with new teachers is they often saw the evaluation process as the self-evaluation and the observations and that was it as far as they were concerned. Whereas, the veteran teachers saw the big picture more. So how...
• That is that part, whether it is a new teacher coming to Reading or a teacher new to Reading, the whole piece about not keeping a day ahead of the kids, but not knowing being a first year teacher new to Reading, what does the first year bring, what does the second year bring. Looking at those benchmarks, so that if you are a department head coming to observe me or the principal or the assistant principal to observe me, you look at those benchmarks and they are sorta looked at as checkmarks. As opposed to a veteran teacher if I could compare and contrast, say a first year teacher that I had to observe this year as opposed to a teacher that came in with 8 years experience, the one with the eight years experience had the whole global perspective about the dialogue about what is on the TAP document and you are looking at the big piece and looking at the data and looking at the big piece and then looking at the data...where I found that real novice teachers you are looking at them as a checkoff. What did I get on this and what did I get on that...Sorta like taking a multiple choice test and an open response essay test. I think there is more appreciation for the veteran with experienced teachers.
• That is because they understand the process as a profession. There are certain things that newbies are not going to have until the fifth year when that classroom management is polished.
• And what you look at and say that is good in October, you may not say is acceptable in May type of thing. And as the continuum swings....
• It may be a good idea for the protégés to have a one piece process. In other words, here is the TAP process, but here is a one page you can expect this in October, November, December and be very specific. This is what we do with evaluation, this is a sit down...although it is in the TAP document. Some people just need a crib sheet.
• Moderator-So number 1, do you think it would be helpful to have a meeting midyear to have the teachers show you what they are doing with assessment or some of the papers that they are doing and have a discussion...is that what you mean?
• I think it would be a great idea, but we would all have to agree on that, because Reading is very vulnerable to well it is happening here, but it is not happening here. I mean, it can happen within a school, but the high school is bigger.
• Moderator-You mean how is that going to be managed?
• Right. There is a positive outlook now, so I don’t think it is going to be a big deal.
• Moderator-How many teachers are there at the high school?
• About 80, but the situation now, as it is in other schools that we have such a large percentage of teachers who are non-PTS, so they have to be evaluated every year. Whereas, 6, 7, 10 years ago, it was every other year. That is a hidden piece.
• Can I go back to one benefit of the TAP program that I did not mention before? I like the fact that there is no rating system for the teachers. I have been in a couple
of other school systems where you have put teachers in the categories of exceptional, very good, good, you know that type of thing. When you start having titles and designations of performance, I think that affects the instructional improvement type of instrument, it is more of an evaluative one. And I understand that you call this an evaluation, but I think that once you start putting categories and evaluations unless a person is truly exceptional. I am glad that this instrument doesn’t do that. It addresses the individual categories with the E’s and the M’s and the P’s, you are getting a good overall rating, to the effect that you can say that this teacher is exceptional. And I am glad that this instrument does not have that.

- I agree. That is the whole piece about this being a standards based because it is sorta like a kid taking a test and the kid ultimately saying, well what did I for a grade. Okay, we are not giving a number or rating, the focus is on the standard instead of, where do I stand?

- The timing is perfect because a lot of the administrators are new in the last five or six years. So we are open to new things, the teachers are open to new things. If you had a veteran administration, people are pushing this, but it is seen as needed and it goes with designing backwards because we are designing the end and now we are moving towards the beginning. Plus, people have worked so hard, John included, getting this going. People see the value of it. It is not like central office is pushing it. I think that it is a positive thing and it has meaning to everybody.

- Yes, I want to second that. By having the meetings with the department heads this year, plus the administrators throughout the district, we are all different and we are all evaluating through a different set of eyes, however, I think we all came on the same page in terms of looking at all of the different set of categories highlighting what we should all be looking for, so I think there is some consistency throughout the district and I think that is good. There still is some subjectivity, but there is consistency throughout the administration.

  d. What are some ways that you have noticed that the TAP has changed teaching in your school?

- Pride. Pride in the sense that they want to move from...how do I get this? How do I move from here to here? So we had to pull this out to say this is what this says. This is what I would look for and this is what you would look for. But the thing is, there is another point here that by doing this in the beginning part of the self-assessment in the beginning of the year we do a better job at it because I am discovering it now, but if the self assessment here is saying that I am progressing, then I will ask or they may ask how can I get up to meeting the standards, how can I get up to exceeding the standards? This is done every two years so this is a long time. So to make it effective, you have to get it done within the year. So I don’t think that we are there yet, but there is a pride in the teachers. Some teachers were asking at the end to department heads and administrators how can I get to exceeding. Well, that is still two years away, but this is what we would look at.
• This has brought specificity and the thing is its its gotten concrete and it has gotten specific. It is the standards based piece. And we have been able to focus in the discussion on the parts of the lesson and how they can improve. I don't want to say it is more scientific, but it is scientific. We don't want to lose that perspective between the art and the craft. Okay, but the craft piece is the scientific piece about these are the specific things that you can do to enhance instruction and this is what connects the artful piece about people's natural talents.

• Moderator-So do you notice some things are changing? Has the specificity caused people to post goals more often or objectives? Are they improving or seeing changes in their bulletin boards? Are you noticing activators and summarizers?

• I think what we are seeing is how everything ties into together. Also, we look at what is out there on Edline. What teachers are posting as far as goals. I think it is a different type of specificity, okay than what we saw for the last four or five years. It teaches the teachers to focus on what they want to accomplish. I think you are now starting to see where people are starting to put their goals for each specific class up on the board and how they can post them on Edline. It gives us the broader view on how one lesson ties into another lesson. The other piece is that in the transition with so many retirements in the last four or five years there is a change on how teachers are trained and I think most are being trained in that standards based model. So the timing is a hand and glove type of thing in that how does it work, how does it work?

• I would agree. I think that it is especially beneficial to the younger teachers in that they are on cycle for the first three years. I think that the administrators and the department chairpersons have all been in the classrooms, they all experience observing the classroom and observing instruction, so I think they have a lot of ideas on the strategies and I think that younger people, people just starting out can really learn and I can tell you of one or two young teachers who are doing something well and don't even realize that they are doing something well and you have commented on they are very receptive to some suggestions or some strategies to improve it. And even the veteran teachers have come to me and they told me that they had not thought about something that I had brought up and that cycle.

• This year I had three veteran teachers...they did not bomb out in their teaching, but they took risks and tried things and it was fun to talk about afterwards. I thought that part of my job was not to let them think that it was as bad as they thought it was, but it wasn't. But, from a veteran to a veteran and it really was the first time I have worked with this, but it came out in the observation and the teacher was more worried than he had to be. Because with the observation sheet we did not have to handle it that way. Did they take risks? That is the key thing. All three took risks and that was interesting. I don't think that I have ever had that in all my evaluations I don't think I have ever had that many teachers partially bomb out. It was easy to pick up the pieces. It was easy to talk about. They weren't waiting for the observation to bomb them out, we talked about it. So, I don't know if that fits in.
Moderator-So that post conversation is important is that what you were saying?

Moderator-That piece is an important point because I think in the past and it may not have been this way at the high school, but every evaluation was an end to itself. Now, we can look at previous years to see what is being carried over.

I think 10-15 years ago that was one moment in their lives during the year and it was an isolated event. I think the other piece, going back to the standards based piece because it is so prevalent and in the forefront of everybody’s mind and there is more structure to the goals that there is going to be more dialogue in each of the different departments. These are the things that we talk about and these are the things we value so we will be connectivity even if it is an off cycle year for them.

We had the department heads over the last couple of days in the end of the year meetings. Part of it was there goals and but also some of it was about the department and the teachers and the progress of the new teachers. And I think part of it is that we have all gone through are focusing our language on the TAP language and I think it is a valuable discussion for us to have with each of the department heads and it gives us something to mark in the sand about does each teacher move along as fast as expected or further than expected.

On a different venue, the way that #3 and #1 picked up the teachers with a lot of the teachers. You are doing a lot of the initials, but the TAP process so improvement might be the way that the TAP process has originated and the way that we are using it, we might be getting rid of, not getting rid of, moving teachers who are not meeting the standard in their first or second year a little quicker. So, then the people that are there are veterans who are thinking Reading, who are working Reading, so the thought, the mental outlook is that this is positive. Because we are not getting, I’m picturing history and what we have heard in the past, I don’t know how we would have handled that teacher who is really messing up. I don’t think we have a lot of teachers messing up.

I think that model that you pointed out of me taking the first years, then if I say thumbs up or thumbs down, that is the first level. But, then when you two go and do it the second year, it gives a different set of eyes, say what were you thinking, what was I thinking about that type of aspect of their teaching. They cut it or they don’t cut it. Then the other piece is the validation about the second time you get to see it when they are a third year teacher. It seems like the ones that we have moved on have either been first year or third year, you know, the ones that we deemed that we did not want to continue.
e. What effect do you think the current teacher evaluation process has had on the professional growth of teachers in your school?

- Moderator-Do you think it has made them want to take more classes, learn about some of the things that are on the TAP?
- I don't know if I would say it is the TAP but as much of the environment. I mean the younger teachers, not the newbies, but the ones in the first half of their profession are looking for pd, they know that it is part of it, they have so much to learn, they realize that, and in the past where you were on your own, I think that it is required by the systems to provide that professional development and more consistent yearly professional development. I mean the TAP program, number 2 said, showed that we needed professional development, it pointed out. But, I think a lot of the teachers are improving on their own, so I am not sure that they are improving to be good doobies as much as they are professionally improving. It is really needed these days.
- Yeh, I think that it is the profession. Is this the thing that has led that or is it the vehicle that has allowed us to focus on professionalism. I mean, even like with the new building, it is sorta like the expectations has risen and everybody has to be more mindful. It is up and its open and upfront. People weren’t professional, but I think it is much more transparent for people who are really concerned about their professionalism as opposed to ones that aren't. And I think that 90% of them really buy into that piece of being transparent and professional.
- The technology supports that. It is tough to hide. You know, its funny, we have not spoken to other school systems, but I don't know how they are doing it. There are probably some in good stead like we are, but there are others are battling to where we were before. I wonder.
- I think the quality of our staff is such as number one just alluded to that I think we have a good staff, but I do know that in the last few years even before this TAP process sometimes in a preconference or in a postconference if a teacher was struggling with classroom management then maybe the teacher going to a workshop, I would suggest some workshops that he or she could attend. I would consider that even professional development. Or even suggest that the teacher sit in on another teacher’s class to improve. This year we were in a situation where I and the department chairperson felt that one teacher’s depth of knowledge in a certain subject area could be improved and I know we addressed this in the post conference recently. That teacher has already committed to taking a course this summer and has also made it known that he or she is going to be reading some more books and resources in that particular subject area. So, in a sense, I don’t agree with number 1 in that it really is tied into the TAP, necessarily. But, I think in the discussions with the teachers that it can enhance or encourage a teacher either he or she is doing it himself or herself or maybe the consensus is that he or she should explore these avenues.
- What you are moving into is a lot are feeling the pressure of getting their professional development points through DOE for certification. So that has
been a positive. It was a negative first in the way that it was handled, and
everything and so slow to come by and they are working on that, but people
are taking classes for their pdp's and they are teaching classes or taking
classes and that is helping the TAP too. So they are improving, but it is not
the TAP this making them improve.

f. What are some of the ways that you have noticed that the current TAP has
seemed to change student achievement in your school?

• Well, I am a firm believer that if a teacher is promoting learning and is able to
present good teaching, then obviously, it is going to benefit the students.
Though, if this instrument is helping the teacher improve his or her
instruction, then that ultimately improves the learning process for the teachers
and the students in the classroom. Ah, and I think that this TAP does do that.

• I think that sometimes...that it is that transparent piece where kids want to
make sure that there is evenness and want to ensure that there is not
unevenness between kids experiences from one teacher to another teacher. I
think that teacher who is sort of, the TAP piece is standards based and the
classroom piece is standards based and there is that engagement. I think that
the kids are pretty good consumers and they find out if they are not getting
what they should be getting. So I think that sometimes kids can say that to
teachers and give that feedback to the other. It pulls the whole organization, I
would like to think that it pulls the whole organization up. Student feedback
is an important part about engagement whether the teacher focuses on clarity
or presentation. I don't know if substantively I can say this, that or the other
thing, but that is my general impression.

• I think even the rubrics and the teachers have become familiar to those and I
think of how the teacher makes connections to prior learning or makes the
learning meaningful, relevant, and lifelong and those rubrics are part of each
standard. That is what constitutes good learning. Connecting prior learning to
what you are learning now. Able to make students realize that it is
meaningful to them, that it is relevant to them and that is all components of
good learning. They are all clearly stated in the different rubrics and different
standards. So, once again, the teachers know that, they become familiar with
that, comfortable with that, working toward that. I think it all becomes
beneficial to a positive learning environment in a classroom setting.

• I am uncomfortable with that because I think that there is a lot of hope and a
lot of feeling, but I don't know if I have evidence to prove student
achievement. I mean you look at tests down the line. I don't want to open up
a can of worms or open up another avenue but it seems important. That has
always been the purpose of TAP was student achievement, but how do we
through the TAP process see that correlation. Do we? I mean is that the next
step in the TAP process?

• That may be the next step into the transition into it. It might be because it is
the second year that we might be so current that we could be mindful and have
those senses. But, do we have the concrete data, what is the concrete data to make that determination.

- There are two parts to that, because if the TAP process has given us confidence and has give the teacher confidence to talk about that, then that is something that the teacher won't be afraid to be measured. It will always come down to, it has always been a bugaboo. Am I going to be judged about how my kids...now, I want to take the honors classes because I don't want to kids to get bad scores. So, it does open up discussion. If the TAP process is going in the direction that it is a strong professional development type evaluation, then it might be...maybe that is the final hill to climb.

g. In your opinion, what effect do you notice that the current teacher evaluation process has had on school improvement in your school?

- It is the whole notion of professionalism that this is concrete and specific. And the consistency as we go from room to room. I think the prior document and the prior process was so open-ended that we could be looking at different things depending upon what the circumstances were, so I think that this consistency, I think it brings concrete things for us to focus on. I think that is part of the whole professionalism piece.

- The mentor program...the key to that the research showed that the teachers got into curriculum and instruction faster because if they knew where to hang their hat, they knew where to get their books, they knew the names and they knew the daily time schedule, then they could move into teaching faster. I think what this does, is that it allows the school to improve because this is where we are headed. We are not worried about how you feel about it or if you read or if you have to be introduced, you know coming into the school that this important. These are the things that we have to work on professionally. I think that the committee has jumped ahead with those plans because we have teachers who are going to personalize the high school, teachers who are going to look for technology, you know, use technology to support teaching strategies instead of just technology to be the highlight of the show.

- There is buy-in too, there is no resistance. I have not seen any resistance or talked about any resistance about what this process does, what this process does for everybody as far as the credibility to be able to call the balls and strikes.

h. From your perspective, how has the TAP process seemed to improve your effectiveness as an administrator?

- I think that it is more efficient, because we have it right there in front of us. It is an organizer for us in that it allows us to frame our thinking about the evaluation piece. So I think it is about being concrete and specific. It gives us the piece about consistency. But, you know, we can pick it up and put it down and you know we don't touch it for three weeks. But, we don't lose a beat from one teacher to another. The other thing is that I think it brings consistency to the conversations that we have with our post evaluation conferences with the
teachers, the department heads have with their post evaluations, and how we pull together the summative piece. The document and the process forces continuity.

- I think that I um, I wish I had more time to do this because I love to do this, being in the classroom and being an instructional leader and seeing what takes place in the classroom and different things that are going on and being able to help people with suggestions sometimes formally in a postconference or preconference vein or sometimes informally too. I think that is all great stuff and that makes me a better administrator because, once again, I am back in the classroom and I am seeing good learning taking place. I wish that we could do that more, but that it is a key proponent of our jobs and sometimes it gets pushed a little bit aside when we have other things on our plate, but I think we have to be careful not to allow that to happen and to make the unit of instruction and talking of instruction with teachers a priority.

- It was like night and day, where as a coup of years ago we were just checking off things and I don’t even know what that means.

- Yes, there were pieces that were like I don’t even know what this means.

- It is very specific and very exact and I think our credibility is better and we know what we are talking about. It is a product we believe in, which makes it a little bit more efficient, as well as, purposeful and meaningful. Professionally meaningful comes to mind again. But, a couple years ago, you were checking things off and hurt feelings and things like that... was it a recommendation or a c. I mean, some people put their souls into that, but it was a stepping stone, so we are on the stairs a little higher.

- I think it underserved people, not disrespected them, but people worked so hard that they were looking for concrete and it was so ambiguous that what does this really mean.

- And you wanted to see how important it was, we always had to say this is to help your teaching, this is to help student achievement, but we were farther away from believing that than now.

- And I think the document is so broad and so specific about what we can see in a classroom, the depth and breadth of it is I guess what I am saying. The other one, there were ones that were just going through lessons and it was not applicable and you would be putting n/a for three out of five things because you didn’t see it, but it was a good lesson. But it wasn’t... the depth and breadth of it is more richness to the process.

i. For those of you that have experience with the old TAP process, which was in effect from 2003-06, how do the two systems compare?

- It is more focused, specific, up to date, it is current, it gives concrete feedback.

- One thing that I think is interesting is the one from 2003, I think the narrative was more important. But, now with this one, the rubrics are so clearly delineated and you can really focus on some strengths, and recognize those with an E or an M or whatever the case is. I think it has shifted and I think the narrative at the end of each of these standards just supports the clearly stated rubric and so I think it has shifted and probably better because now teachers can have something to grab a
hold of. You just said that they excel or exceed in this or are meeting the standards. But, I think it has shifted in the importance of the narrative of three or four years ago to the rubrics now.

j. If the Massachusetts Board of Education asked for your suggestions to improve teacher evaluation, what would you say?

- I think that the whole piece of how we worked and that this has been a process that worked by the district leadership, by principals, but also by the teachers. It is a process where everyone comes to the table and says listen this is what we are trying to get at, we are trying to improve instruction. As number 1 implied we are sort of working backwards design model about what are we looking for and how are we going to get there. And I think the specificity. You know, I just think that speaks to the professionalism. What does it mean to be a teacher? Fifteen years ago, I loved kids that is why I went into teaching. But now, it is different, it is the whole professional piece. I don't know if it is a cultural shift or an economic shift and the pressures that are put on us in schools, but I think it is the pieces to be as specific as we can. You know, just like we are looking for concrete data in student assessment. We are looking for that concrete data. I think that is what the TAP document does for us.

- I am going to combine the last two questions. I think I am not familiar with it or remember the creation of the last one. It went out to committee, the committee looked at it, then, the committee came back and said, what do you think? I think there was more worry about the teacher association was ok with it. It seemed like you had to watch this and you had to watch that and it seemed like now there is a definite change in thinking where it is part of a whole, it is a part of, number 2 said it, the backward design. It has a place in our system, so that student achievement, if we really believe in student achievement, this is got to be tied in some how and instructional strategies are tied in some how, school culture is tied in some how. It is a component instead of being off by itself and an extra thing to fire somebody. We want to give someone a pat on the back. It is more professional. The point that I wanted to make is that I am not sure and I don't want to hurt feelings or anybody, but the way that it was created before, sent out by committee. This one went out for days, updating with data, research...it went through the teacher's committee, it went through administrators, it went through again, it went through not just the leaders of the association, it went through the leaders, it went through the departments. People knew what the heck it was about and they had input into it. I think that was a big difference.

- Moderator-As you know since you were probably the writers of the TAP, you know that Reading had a lot of say in that, but one of the things that the Massachusetts Board of Education has a say in is how often teachers are evaluated and what that would look like. For instance do you think that all teachers should have the same TAP process or would it be better for them to do a portfolio or key on one thing that they want to focus in on?

- I think that is one of the attractive pieces about the TAP is that you at what you want to aspire to. You don't want to lose that consistency of dialogue. If they
want to integrate the specificity with the portfolio that would be great. The other piece is that I don’t think each one necessarily has to be on that same cycle of formal evaluation. I think that with non-PTS it is critical to do those first three years every year, but a three year cycle may be the appropriate type of thing, but develop other mechanisms where there is assurances that we are communicating what the goals are and what movements are going on in the class. But the other piece is that it forces us to get into everybody’s classrooms every other year so one is the piece about the observation and evaluation piece. The other piece is that if it was every three years we could do that with walkthroughs and everything else and ingrain that more in the district. Because I still think we are transitioning that piece of the classroom and the evaluation.

- But it is... We worry about what the DOE says, but it is kinda like MIAA where we can have stronger rules if that is what we feel like. Our leadership is saying, we want to be better, this is how we are going to be better. We can’t wait for the MIAA because they worry about everybody. DOE is worried about everybody and in some cases, I think we have to take care of ourselves. What do we need. We are knowledgeable educators we have experience. We have some real smart people in the system. Why not use them in the right direction. That keeps our standards higher than just playing to the DOE standards.

- My concern is that we have to do with the DOE minimum standards because schools that don’t tend to business like Reading does, that you have to do, that you sort of myopic and this is sort of what you do as opposed to other districts who don’t, so what you have is that they put in more stringent guidelines, sort of like the 90-90 piece. Ok... setting that as the capstone piece.

- I wish it were possible, it is so time consuming... in businesses you have an annual report, an annual review. It would be nice to do it yearly... not the TAP process, but every other year, but every three years may be too long. Maybe we can sit down in the future and create have a self-assessment and talk about it, you are going to be in and out of classes so you may not have a formal observation, but just to touch base so they know there is an interest there. I don’t want them seem building up every two years. That can become a falsehood where the teacher says, “well to improve my technology, I better do it this year because I am going to be evaluated.” Or “Well, I don’t have to worry about it this year because I am not going to be evaluated.” I don’t want to get into that mentality. It is too early in the system... we may be there in a couple of years, we may not be. It depends.

- Moderator-Just talk to me about walkthroughs because #2 you said something and I am not sure that I caught it all. Maybe if you just talk about those for a minute.

- Picking up the pieces from what #1 said it is picking up the dialogue about what is going on in the classrooms. I think meeting it out is what #3 referenced it as to the part of wanting to get into the classrooms, we enjoy, okay, forcing, forcing, forcing it into our calendar each week.

- It was discussed at the TAP sessions with Jerry Goldberg, ah, the walkthroughs, can you apply what you have seen in a walkthrough to the formal evaluation or the classroom component or the end of the year for evaluation. Um, and there is some debate about whether walking through and you see something. Let’s say
you see something that surprises you in terms of what you thought it could have been done better. Is that reflected in your report ultimately or not? I don’t think we have the time to do it, but sometimes I thought it would be neat to come and observe a teacher two or three classes in a row. And, especially if it was during a unit, so you could see if it was introduced, you could see the learning taking place and the instruction and you could see ultimately see if the goals and objectives that the teacher had for that particular lesson were met. And, it is so difficult to do that because you might be observing a class that was part of a three week unit. But, if you could come two or three days to see the same teacher and the same students it could be very beneficial. But in terms of trying, probably not doable.

• More consistent more times, I agree, just not enough time in high school. I do think it can be done in a smaller school. I remember I did it in another school and you become part of the wallpaper. It is really kind of you know I think it would help us with discipline, you are always there and it would help a new teacher, they never know when you are going to come in through the door, it is a good thing, not a bad thing, but a comforting thing. I mean I had a situation a couple of weeks ago, it was timely, I was just coming in through the door and the teacher was very happy to see me. I handled the situation and stayed for the class a little bit. It seems so natural to do that. I wish that it could happen more.

• As number one alluded to earlier, sometimes you might observe a teacher and they might not be having his or her best day. And some teachers are good at the proverbial dog and pony show where they are on and they are on because they know that you are coming and they have a fantastic lesson which may not be indicative of what they always do, but as number 1 says, that can be maybe a teacher is trying something, it might not work, maybe you did not see the teacher at his or her best, but maybe that is the advantage of seeing a teacher for two or three days in a row or just at different times.

• I think that the TAP, I know where we are, I have seen less of a dog and pony show and people not thinking that they can wow us, you know, before it was what a creative lesson, but now, it is so concrete, ya but...where’s the beef?

• You possible can’t have with all of those indicators...every lesson is not going to have every indicator. So the teacher has to accept it, the reality is that it was a really good lesson, but you did not use technology or whatever, but it still could have been a good lesson. So the TAP supports what we want the district to have that openness and real teaching.

k. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the current TAP process?

• I think we are still in the break-in stage right now, so I am satisfied with it right now. You know, go through another cycle or two.

• I am not sure, ah, but a few years ago the department chairpersons were the ones at the end of the year who would do the end of the year summative evaluations and I think there might be some contractual issues about they are in the same teacher’s union with the teachers that they really can’t do that. It could raise its ugly head if it had to be used or part of a teacher not being asked back. However,
I still think that the department chairpersons are working with these people, they are in their rooms much more than we are, and I feel that they have a better pulse, a better handle of the instruction of their respective departments, and also with staff. And I still think that they would be better to assess in total a teacher's performance over the course of a year than we are.

- It is a sign of the times. There was a time that the department heads did that...now it has become a lot of work, because of contractual issues, because I think I don't think that we have that we have the relationship where it is commanding, you know it is like the department members see you as a teacher also, the department head, so its not like, I can't think of the right word, it is only dogmatic leadership. But, if they were to do this, I think it would give them more...The way the TAP is set up it would give them not more control, but influence...influence on each and every department member. I mean, where we are trying to cover 22-24, 24-26 evaluations a year, for each of us, the most that they would have with change over is 2-3, they might have 6. One department lost half their staff, but it seems like it really would be a professional upgrade. He or she would have the interest to do this and they would have the power, what is the word I am looking for...the responsibility. This is our department, I mean, instead of having department meetings. I think the department heads enjoy to throw it out to us to be the bad guys. But, I think the TAP brings out as number 3 said, the department heads are part of it more in a good way, in a comfortable way. If you were to defend if it was set up right, TAP was set up right, as we were going with this type, it goes along with these feelings, these professional feelings that we have now and we want to have a comfort level, but we want to call people to a task of accountability, but the department heads are in a better position with more influence and whether it be scheduling or knowing the subject. We may know teaching, but the three of us would say that is a good foreign language lesson class because of the teaching taking place, however, the department head last year told us her grammar was wrong...Her syntax, she was teaching the wrong thing. We would not have known that, but the department head should have, it would have been better served if the department head did that. Not that we could ever let go of that responsibility, we have to be a part of that, but to be more effective in a larger way.

1. How would you improve teacher evaluation used in your school so that it may be more effective in strengthening instruction?

- I think that it is being concrete and specific on a very consistent means. I think one of three are implied. What is the best structure for us at the high school and if the structure that we have right now is the best and the ties of the pulls of everything else in each of the jobs and whether it is contract or not. But, ultimately, we want to be consistent with our students and be consistent with our teachers in what is the best way of framing the structure with that. I think that we have a good document and a process, it is just how we structure it.
• Maybe, as we mentioned before, taking the step where we take a look at, maybe we are supposed to look at lesson plans as the whole lesson plan book, but people don’t have lesson plan books. You can see anything you want.

• Moderator-Assessments, lesson plans, SMART Board presentations

• If we really are going to do it, has to be full immersion. We don’t have the capacity to do full immersion right now.

• I know that some schools have instruments that evaluator could come up with commendations and recommendations. Sometimes I feel that is good, but sometimes I don’t want to get into that, because I think that you can get into a lot of that in the post observation discussion and the conversation that you don’t necessarily have to put it in writing. If you were to improve the evaluation instrument by coming up with recommendations, that might zero right in on certain areas but I still think that the rubrics cover that and someone is really exceeding or progressing towards the standard, I think that is saying it. I can see that sometimes I would not necessarily want to put something in writing as a recommendation, I would still talk to the teacher about and I know that would help him or her, but you are not formally putting it down.

m. That covers the areas that I wanted to ask. Is there anything that you care to add?

• I would feel that we are on the right track, I guess. The nitty gritty a year and a half, two years ago, not going through the same thing, but there is so much to reach, so much to pull together. So my compliments to everyone who pulled it together, because it seems more efficient, concise, purposeful, it seems like we are headed in the right direction to make it a valuable part of our district, that is for sure.

• Chris are you sure if this is pretty much it now, because when this came into vogue a few years ago, we worked as a group for three days and came up with it. And, last year we refined it and honed it a little bit and touched it up a little bit. Do you know if this is pretty much it or are we going to meet again in a three day retreat and still look if we want to add or delete? I guess that is what I would question if this is the way it is going to be, the instrument now or subject to fine tuning?

• Moderator—I don’t know what the retreat is going to hold, but any document, if it is a living document, should constantly be revised and refined and tweaked a little bit and have some changes. You know some of the things that we emphasize now, I would guess that it would become so much of a repertoire for people, you know, like activators and summarizers, that you don’t need to have them on the document and maybe we would look at other things that are more meaningful.

• So, if that would be the case, my suggestion would be periodically to review it, and see what is applicable, what is not applicable, make it better, what is not needed.

• Thank you both, it is a real task.

• One other note...minor...It seems like in the evaluation piece we are missing information at the top. Like you even need to flip through to see who the
evaluator is, where it should be at the top. I think the old one had it that way. Plus to reduce the size of some paper. It is a minor point, but if we did that.

- Transition to some electronic way of doing it. That way it would be more of utility piece of doing it in the class. Whether it would be a hand held or whatever it would be a good step forward for us.
APPENDIX J
Appendix J

Tap Standards for Effective Teaching
Appendix J

TAP Standards for Effective Teaching

A. Planning and Preparation for Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The teacher:</th>
<th>Meeting the Standard</th>
<th>Progressing Toward the Standard</th>
<th>Does Not Meet Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding the Standard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Has an outstanding command of the subject area and has an extensive knowledge of how students learn it best.</td>
<td>a. Knows the subject matter well and grasps how students learn it best.</td>
<td>a. Either knows the subject matter well or is somewhat familiar with it, and has some ideas of ways students might learn it.</td>
<td>a. Has little familiarity with the subject matter and few ideas on how to teach it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Has a well-defined plan for the year that is tightly aligned with state/district standards and assessments.</td>
<td>b. Plans the year so students will meet state/district standards and be prepared for all assessments.</td>
<td>b. Plans with some consideration about how to cover state standards and test requirements this year.</td>
<td>b. Plans lesson by lesson and has little familiarity with state standards and tests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Plans all units &quot;backwards&quot; with state/district standards, essential questions, learning outcomes, and higher-order thinking skills in mind.</td>
<td>c. Plans most curriculum units with state/district standards, learning outcomes, and higher-order thinking skills in mind.</td>
<td>c. Plans lessons with some thought to larger goals and objectives.</td>
<td>c. Plans with little or no consideration for long-range curriculum goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Plans diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments to closely monitor student learning.</td>
<td>d. Plans formative and summative assessments to measure student learning.</td>
<td>d. Drafts unit tests as instruction proceeds.</td>
<td>d. Writes final tests shortly before they are given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Displays continuing search for best practices and anticipates student misconceptions/confusions and plans how to identify and overcome them.</td>
<td>e. Anticipates and addresses misconceptions and confusions that students might have.</td>
<td>e. Has a limited understanding of ways that students might become confused with the content.</td>
<td>e. Proceeds without considering misconceptions that students might have about the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Designs lessons with clear, measurable goals closely aligned with standards and district curriculum maps.</td>
<td>f. Designs lessons focused on measurable outcomes aligned with unit goals, district curriculum maps, and state standards.</td>
<td>f. Plans lessons with unit goals in mind. Does not use district curriculum maps consistently.</td>
<td>f. Plans lessons aimed primarily at entertaining students or covering textbook chapters. District curriculum maps are rarely used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Designs highly relevant lessons that will continually motivate, engage, and challenge all students in active learning.</td>
<td>g. Designs lessons that are relevant, motivational, and likely to engage students in active learning.</td>
<td>g. Plans lessons that will catch some students' interest and perhaps get a discussion going.</td>
<td>g. Plans lessons with very little likelihood of motivating or involving students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Designs highly effective lessons using all components of district approved standards based learning materials.</td>
<td>h. Designs effective lessons using core components of district approved standards based learning materials.</td>
<td>h. Plans lessons that involve a mixture of good and mediocre learning materials which may or may not be district approved.</td>
<td>h. Plans lessons that rely mainly on mediocre and low-quality textbooks, workbooks, or worksheets that are not district approved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Designs exemplary lessons that simplify complex tasks and consistently address all learning needs, styles, interests and developmental levels.</td>
<td>i. Designs high quality lessons that break down complex tasks and target most learning needs, styles, interests, and developmental levels.</td>
<td>i. Plans lessons with some thought as to how to accommodate student learning needs, styles, interests, and development levels.</td>
<td>i. Plans lessons with little or no thought as to how to accommodate student learning needs, styles, interests, and developmental levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Masterfully uses room and seating arrangement, materials, and displays to maximize student learning.</td>
<td>j. Organizes classroom furniture, materials, and displays to support unit and lesson goals.</td>
<td>j. Organizes furniture and materials to support learning, but with limited displays to support learning.</td>
<td>j. Does not effectively use the arrangement of the room, materials and/or displays to support learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Designs exemplary lessons that utilize available technology.</td>
<td>k. Designs effective lessons that utilize available technology.</td>
<td>k. Designs lessons that utilize available technology.</td>
<td>k. Does not design lessons that utilize available technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher:</td>
<td>Meeting the Standard</td>
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<td>Does Not Meet Standard</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Is direct, specific, consistent, and tenacious in communicating and promoting very high expectations.</td>
<td>a. Clearly communicates and consistently promotes high standards for student behavior.</td>
<td>a. Announces and posts classroom rules and consequences.</td>
<td>a. Comes up with makeshift rules and consequences as events unfold during the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Shows warmth, caring, respect, and fairness for all students and builds strong relationships.</td>
<td>b. Is fair and respectful toward students and builds positive relationships.</td>
<td>b. Is fair and respectful toward most students, building some positive relationships.</td>
<td>b. Is sometimes unfair and disrespectful to the class; tends to favor some students over others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Gains all students’ respect and creates a climate in which disruption of learning is unthinkable.</td>
<td>c. Fosters respect and handles disruption effectively.</td>
<td>c. Gains the respect of some students but there are regular disruptions in the classroom.</td>
<td>c. Is not respected by students and the classroom is frequently chaotic and sometimes dangerous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Utilizes highly effective practices that take into account social emotional needs to successfully develop positive interaction skills.</td>
<td>d. Utilizes effective practices that take into account social emotional needs to successfully develop positive interaction skills.</td>
<td>d. Demonstrates limited practices that often result in lecturing to students the need for good behavior, and/or making a public example of misbehavior.</td>
<td>d. Uses inappropriate practices that blame students for their poor behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Involves students in developing and successfully maintaining class routines and procedures throughout the year.</td>
<td>e. Teaches routines and procedures and has students maintain them all year.</td>
<td>e. Tries to train students in class routines and procedures, but many are not maintained.</td>
<td>e. Does not teach routines and procedures, resulting in a chaotic classroom environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Successfully develops students’ self-discipline, self-confidence, and a sense of responsibility.</td>
<td>f. Develops students’ self-discipline and teaches them to take responsibility for their own actions.</td>
<td>f. Tries to get students to be responsible for their actions, but many lack self-discipline.</td>
<td>f. Is unsuccessful in fostering self-discipline in students; they depend on the teacher to behave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Takes a proactive approach by using highly effective classroom management strategies that create a positive and focused learning environment for all students.</td>
<td>g. Has effective classroom management strategies that create a positive learning and focused environment for all students.</td>
<td>g. Has limited classroom management strategies and has difficulty maintaining a positive learning and focused environment.</td>
<td>g. Has few classroom management strategies and constantly struggles to establish a positive learning and focused environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Masterfully utilizes instructional time by maintaining lesson coherence, momentum, and seamless transitions to maximize classroom instruction.</td>
<td>h. Fully utilizes instructional time by maintaining lesson coherence, momentum, and smooth transitions.</td>
<td>h. Loses some instructional time during class and/or the school day.</td>
<td>h. Loses a great deal of instructional time due to confusions, interruptions, rough transitions, inappropriate activities, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Is alert, poised, dynamic, and self-assured and addresses all discipline problems in a proactive manner.</td>
<td>i. Confidently and effectively addresses all discipline problems.</td>
<td>i. Attempts to prevent discipline problems but sometimes minor issues escalate into major problems.</td>
<td>i. Is ineffective in identifying and preventing potential discipline problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Inspires students to behave appropriately through a highly effective system that is linked to intrinsic rewards.</td>
<td>j. Motivates students through an effective system to behave appropriately without depending on external rewards</td>
<td>j. Uses extrinsic rewards in an attempt to get students to cooperate and comply.</td>
<td>j. Uses inappropriate extrinsic rewards unrelated to student behavior.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### C. Delivery of Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Exudes high expectations and tenacity and convinces all students that they will master the material.</td>
<td>a. Conveys to all students: This is important, you can do it, and I’m not going to give up on you.</td>
<td>a. Tells students that the subject matter is important and they need to work hard.</td>
<td>a. Tells students that they need to work hard to do well in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Empowers students to be risk-takers and believe that through effective effort, they will get smarter.</td>
<td>b. Communicates to students: it’s okay to take risks and make mistakes; effective effort, not innate ability, is the key.</td>
<td>b. Tells students that making mistakes doesn’t mean they’re not smart, they can learn from errors.</td>
<td>b. Doesn’t recognize students feeling embarrassed when they make mistakes in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Shows students exactly what’s expected by providing essential questions, rubrics, learning objectives, and exemplars/models.</td>
<td>c. Gives students a sense of purpose by clearly communicating learning objectives and providing assessment criteria.</td>
<td>c. Does not always clearly communicate learning objectives so that all students understand and/or does not always provide assessment criteria.</td>
<td>c. Begins lessons without giving students a sense of where instruction is headed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Grabs students’ interest and makes connections to prior knowledge, experience, and reading both in and outside of the classroom.</td>
<td>d. Activates students’ prior knowledge and captures their interest in each unit and lesson.</td>
<td>d. Tries to make the subject interesting and relate it to things students already know.</td>
<td>d. Does not capture most students’ interest or make connections to their lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Regularly uses varied modalities to present material clearly and explicitly, makes strong connections, and uses vivid language.</td>
<td>e. Presents material clearly and explicitly, makes connections, and uses appropriate language.</td>
<td>e. Inconsistent in use of explanations, appropriate language, and examples to present material.</td>
<td>e. Sometimes uses language and explanations that are confusing or inaccurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Continuously engages and challenges all students in focused work and discourse and guides them to become independent active learners and problem-solvers.</td>
<td>g. Engages all students in focused work and discourse in which they are active learners and problem solvers.</td>
<td>g. Attempts to get students actively involved but some students are disengaged.</td>
<td>g. Mostly lectures to passive students or has them labor through textbooks and worksheets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Skillfully differentiates and scaffolds instruction to accommodate the needs of all students.</td>
<td>h. Differentiates and scaffolds instruction to accommodate the needs of all students.</td>
<td>h. Attempts to provide differentiated instruction with limited or little success</td>
<td>h. Fails to provide for differentiated instruction for students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Skillfully adapts lessons and units to utilize teachable moments and clarify misunderstandings.</td>
<td>i. is flexible about modifying lessons to take advantage of teachable moments and address misunderstandings.</td>
<td>i. Is overly focused on implementing lesson plans and sometimes misses teachable moments and misunderstandings.</td>
<td>i. Is rigid and inflexible with lesson plans, fails to take advantage of teachable moments, and does not recognize student misunderstandings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Has students summarize and internalize what they learn and apply it to real-life situations.</td>
<td>j. Has students summarize what they learn and apply it to real-life situations.</td>
<td>j. Has students summarize what they learn and sometimes asks students to think about real-life applications.</td>
<td>j. Does not have students summarize what they learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Displays knowledge of typical developmental characteristics of the age group, exceptions to the pattern, and the extent to which student follows patterns.</td>
<td>k. Displays thorough understanding of typical, developmental characteristic of age group, as well as, exceptions to general patterns.</td>
<td>k. Displays generally accurate knowledge of developmental characteristics of age group.</td>
<td>k. Displays minimal knowledge of developmental characteristics of age group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Uses technology seamlessly in an effective, efficient manner to deliver instruction.</td>
<td>l. Uses technology in an effective, efficient manner to deliver instruction.</td>
<td>l. Uses technology sporadically in an effective, efficient manner to deliver instruction.</td>
<td>l. Rarely or never uses technology to deliver instruction.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## D. Monitoring, Assessment, and Follow-Up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The teacher:</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Communicates clear criteria for proficient and advanced work, including rubrics and exemplars, so that students internalize them.</td>
<td>a. Communicates criteria for proficiency, including rubrics and exemplars of student work.</td>
<td>a. Tells students some of the qualities that their finished work should exhibit.</td>
<td>a. Expects students to know (or figure out) what it takes to get good grades.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Uses a variety of high quality assessments before and during each unit, and accurately uses and interprets student data to continuously monitor student learning.</td>
<td>b. Uses a variety of assessments before and during each unit, and accurately uses and interprets assessment data.</td>
<td>b. Uses a limited variety of assessments before and during each unit or sometimes misuses or misinterprets assessment data.</td>
<td>b. Rarely or never uses assessments before or during each unit or frequently misuses or misinterprets assessment data.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Continuously checks for understanding, unscrambles confusion, and gives specific, helpful feedback.</td>
<td>c. Frequently checks for understanding and gives students helpful feedback if they seem confused.</td>
<td>c. Occasionally asks questions to see if students understand.</td>
<td>c. Rarely checks for understanding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Effectively directs students to set ambitious goals, self-assess and monitor, and take responsibility for their progress.</td>
<td>d. Directs students to set goals, self-assess, and know where they stand academically at all times.</td>
<td>d. Sets goals for students and/or occasionally expects students to set some goals</td>
<td>d. Sets few or no goals for student learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Frequently posts students’ work with rubrics and commentary and uses it to motivate and direct effort.</td>
<td>e. Regularly posts students’ work to make visible and celebrate their progress with respect to standards.</td>
<td>e. Posts some high quality student work as an example to others.</td>
<td>e. Posts little or no student work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Immediately uses interim assessment data to fine-tune teaching, re-teach, and help struggling students.</td>
<td>f. Uses data from interim assessments to adjust teaching, re-teach, and follow up with failing students.</td>
<td>f. Looks over students’ work to see if there is anything that needs to be re-taught.</td>
<td>f. Looks over student work to see if there are any lessons for the future.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Takes responsibility for students who are not succeeding and follows up tenaciously with extra help so that they reach proficiency.</td>
<td>g. Takes responsibility for students who are not succeeding and consistently provides them extra help.</td>
<td>g. Takes some responsibility for students who are not succeeding and provides some opportunities for extra help.</td>
<td>g. Takes little or no responsibility for students who are not succeeding and provides little or no opportunities for extra help.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Consistently works with colleagues to effectively identify students who need specialized diagnosis and makes appropriate and timely referrals.</td>
<td>h. Works with colleagues to refer students for specialized diagnosis and extra help.</td>
<td>h. Inconsistently works with colleagues, refers inappropriately or not in a timely manner.</td>
<td>h. Either fails to refer students for services, refers students who do not need it or does not take responsibility for meeting student needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Analyzes and tracks over time formative and summative assessment data, draws conclusions, shares them with others and takes appropriate action.</td>
<td>i. Analyzes formative and summative assessment data, draws conclusions, shares them with others and takes appropriate action.</td>
<td>i. Records students’ grades or progress and notices some general patterns for future reference.</td>
<td>i. Records students’ grades or progress and moves on with the curriculum.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Consistently reflects on the effectiveness of teaching and works continually to improve.</td>
<td>j. Reflects on the effectiveness of lessons and units and constantly works to improve them.</td>
<td>j. At the end of a teaching unit or semester, thinks about what might have been done better.</td>
<td>j. When a teaching unit or lesson doesn’t go well, dismisses the experience without reflection.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Consistently provides high quality feedback on all assignments and assessments in a timely manner and ensures students use the feedback effectively in their ongoing learning.</td>
<td>k. Provides feedback on all assignments and assessments in a timely manner and usually ensures that students use the feedback effectively in their ongoing learning.</td>
<td>k. Does not always provide feedback on assignments and assessments in a timely manner and/or sometimes ensures that students use the feedback effectively in their ongoing learning.</td>
<td>k. Frequently does not provide feedback on assignments and assessments in a timely manner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Consistently and effectively uses technology to monitor, assess, and follow-up on student learning.</td>
<td>l. Regularly uses technology to monitor, assess, and follow-up on student learning.</td>
<td>l. Sporadically uses technology to monitor, assess, and follow-up on student learning.</td>
<td>l. Rarely or never uses technology to monitor, assess, and follow-up on student learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### E. Family and Community Outreach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The teacher:</th>
<th>Meeting the Standard</th>
<th>Progressing Toward the Standard</th>
<th>Does Not Meet Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Communicates and demonstrates great sensitivity and respect for family and community culture, values, and beliefs.</td>
<td>a. Communicates respectfully with parents and is sensitive to different families' culture, values, and beliefs.</td>
<td>a. Attempts to be sensitive to the culture, values, and beliefs of students' families.</td>
<td>a. Is often insensitive to the culture, values, and beliefs of students' families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Communicates to parents an in-depth knowledge of their child and a strong belief he/she will reach standards.</td>
<td>b. Communicates to parents a genuine interest and belief in their child's ability to reach standards.</td>
<td>b. Informs parents that he or she cares about their child and wants the best for them.</td>
<td>b. Does not communicate to parents knowledge of their child or the child's ability to reach standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Provides parents clear, accessible learning/behavior expectations, curriculum updates and exemplars of proficient work through a variety of means (i.e. newsletter, Edline)</td>
<td>c. Provides parents clear, succinct expectations for student learning, curriculum updates and behavior for the year.</td>
<td>c. Provides parents only with a list of classroom rules and the syllabus for the year.</td>
<td>c. Does not provide any learning and behavior expectations to parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Ensures that parents receive positive news about their children first, followed by any problems and/or concerns.</td>
<td>d. Promptly informs parents of behavior and learning problems, and also updates parents on good news.</td>
<td>d. Lets parents know about problems their children are having but rarely mentions positive news.</td>
<td>d. Seldom informs parents of concerns or positive news about their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Frequent involvement of parents in supporting and enriching the curriculum.</td>
<td>e. Updates parents on curriculum and suggests ways to support learning at home.</td>
<td>e. Sends home occasional information about the curriculum and/or suggestions on how parents can help their children with schoolwork.</td>
<td>e. Rarely if ever communicates with parents about the curriculum and/or ways to help their children at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Assigns highly-engaging homework, gets close to a 100% return, and provides prompt, rich feedback.</td>
<td>f. Assigns appropriate homework, holds students accountable for turning it in, and gives prompt feedback.</td>
<td>f. Assigns homework, expects parents to get their child to complete it, and sometimes provides delayed feedback.</td>
<td>f. Assigns homework with low expectation for student completion, and rarely provides timely feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Immediately and successfully addresses parent concerns and makes parents feel welcome any time.</td>
<td>g. Responds effectively to parent concerns and makes parents feel welcome in the school.</td>
<td>g. Is slow to respond to some parent concerns and/or exhibits an unwelcoming demeanor.</td>
<td>g. Does not respond to parent concerns and/or makes parents feel unwelcome in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Provides parents detailed feedback on their child's progress, through electronic communication (i.e. email and Edline), conferences, report cards, progress reports, and informal conversations.</td>
<td>h. Provides parents feedback on their child's progress, through electronic communication (i.e. email and Edline), conferences, report cards, progress reports, and informal conversations.</td>
<td>h. Uses minimal methods of communication (i.e. report card conferences) with parents on how their child can improve.</td>
<td>h. Gives out report cards and expects parents to follow up on areas that need improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Is successful in contacting and working with all parents, including those who are hard to reach.</td>
<td>i. Attempts to contact all parents and is diligent in contacting hard-to-reach parents.</td>
<td>i. Attempts to contact all parents, but tends to communicate mainly with the parents who are most accessible.</td>
<td>i. Makes little or no effort to contact parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Uses parent and community volunteers in a highly productive manner and secures additional resources.</td>
<td>j. Uses parent and community volunteers and secures additional resources.</td>
<td>j. Makes an attempt to seek out parent and community volunteers and additional resources.</td>
<td>j. Does not seek out parent and community volunteers and additional resources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## F. Professional Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The teacher</th>
<th>Exceeding the Standard</th>
<th>Meeting the Standard</th>
<th>Progressing toward the Standard</th>
<th>Does Not Meet Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Values and demonstrates the importance of a teacher's attendance and punctuality.</td>
<td>a. Values the importance of a teacher's attendance and punctuality.</td>
<td>a. Does not value the importance of a teacher's attendance and punctuality.</td>
<td>a. Has poor attendance and punctuality.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Keeps meticulous paperwork and conscientiously meets all deadlines and professional responsibilities.</td>
<td>b. Keeps accurate paperwork and meets deadlines and professional responsibilities.</td>
<td>b. Sometimes makes errors in paperwork and/or misses deadlines and/or responsibilities.</td>
<td>b. Frequently makes errors in paperwork, misses deadlines, or fails to submit required paperwork or adheres to responsibilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Consistently demonstrates professional demeanor and maintains appropriate boundaries.</td>
<td>c. Consistently demonstrates professional demeanor and maintains appropriate boundaries.</td>
<td>c. Usually acts in a professional manner and/or usually respects boundaries.</td>
<td>c. Frequently acts in an unprofessional manner and/or violates boundaries.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Is ethical, honest, and above-board, uses good judgment, and respects confidentiality.</td>
<td>d. Is ethical, honest, and above-board, uses good judgment, and respects confidentiality.</td>
<td>d. Sometimes uses poor judgment, is less than completely honest, and/or violates confidentiality.</td>
<td>d. Routinely acts in an unethical manner, uses poor judgment, is dishonest, and/or violates confidentiality.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Assumes leadership roles of teacher teams, committees, and school activities.</td>
<td>e. Actively participates in teacher teams, committees and school activities.</td>
<td>e. Minimally participates in teacher teams, committees and school activities.</td>
<td>e. Is not invested in the work of committees and/or school activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Frequently contributes valuable ideas and expertise that further the school's mission.</td>
<td>f. Is a positive team player and contributes ideas, expertise, and time to the overall mission of the school.</td>
<td>f. Occasionally suggests an idea aimed at improving the school.</td>
<td>f. Rarely ever contributes ideas that might help improve the school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Informs and strategizes with the administration around issues and concerns.</td>
<td>g. Keeps the administration informed about concerns and asks for help when it's needed.</td>
<td>g. Occasionally share concerns with the administration or ask for help.</td>
<td>g. Internalizes concerns or constantly complains, and is not open to help.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Actively seeks out feedback and suggestions and uses them to improve performance.</td>
<td>h. Listens thoughtfully to other viewpoints and responds constructively to suggestions and criticism.</td>
<td>h. Is somewhat defensive but does listen to feedback and suggestions.</td>
<td>h. Is very defensive about criticism and resistant to changing classroom practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Collaborates regularly with colleagues to plan units, share ideas, and analyze interim assessments.</td>
<td>i. Collaborates with colleagues to plan units, share teaching ideas, and look at student work.</td>
<td>i. Meets occasionally with colleagues to share ideas about teaching and students.</td>
<td>i. Meets infrequently with colleagues, and conversations lack educational substance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Embraces and shares effective practices with fellow professionals, workshops, reading, the Internet, etc.</td>
<td>j. Seeks effective teaching ideas from supervisors, colleagues, workshops, reading, the Internet, etc.</td>
<td>j. Keeps an eye out for new ideas for improving teaching and learning.</td>
<td>j. Is not open to ideas for improving teaching and learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Takes a significant leadership role in professional development.</td>
<td>k. Seeks out opportunities for professional development, implements appropriately in a classroom and shares with colleagues.</td>
<td>k. Participates in professional development activities with limited impact on classroom practice.</td>
<td>k. Engages in minimal professional development activities when convenient or required with no impact on classroom practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Has supportive and cooperative relationships with colleagues and seeks out leadership opportunities to positively contribute to the vision and direction of the school.</td>
<td>l. Has supportive and cooperative relationships with colleagues and consistently contributes to a positive school culture.</td>
<td>l. Maintains cordial relationships with colleagues that the school or district requires.</td>
<td>l. Has relationships with colleagues that are negative or self-serving.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>