

IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE

EVALUATION AND SUPPORT GUIDELINES

The Student Success Act of 2011 designates evaluation and support guidelines for professionals that are differentiated by contract status (i.e., Probationary, Annual, Professional Services, and Continuing).

SUPPORT DIALOGUE (SD)

Two (2) formal tools are provided in IPEGS to improve performance. The first is the *Support Dialogue (SD)*, a school/worksite-level discussion between the administrator and the professional. A *Support Dialogue* begins the formal process of providing support and assistance when a professional's performance is unsatisfactory. However, *Support Dialogue* is neither required nor appropriate to address compliance issues pertaining to Performance Standard 7: Professionalism regarding rules, punctuality and attendance, after appropriate progressive discipline has been applied. The second is the *Improvement Plan*, which is more structured and meets the requirements of the Florida Statute related to notifying a professional of unsatisfactory performance. The *Improvement Plan* follows a *Support Dialogue* when the professional's job performance has not improved within the *Support Dialogue* time frame.

The *Support Dialogue (SD)* is initiated by the assessor at any point during the school year when the professional's performance is unsatisfactory. *Support Dialogue* is designed to facilitate discussion about identified performance standard(s) and to identify ways to address improvement. During the SD, both parties share what each will do to support the professional's growth. Mutually agreed upon supportive assistance activities and resources, including responsible parties who will provide support, will be identified.

If as a result of an observation, *the collective evidence indicates that the professional requires support in meeting the standard(s)* a SD is held within ten (10) calendar days of the observation. The professional is notified of a scheduled SD via the *Support Dialogue (SD) Meeting Notification Form* which must be issued no later than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the SD meeting. At this SD meeting, the professional has the right to union representation and/or may request a peer support professional who is mutually agreed upon by the professional and the assessor. The SD process is intended to be completed within a twenty-one (21) calendar day period, while the professional receives support and implements changes in his/her performance. After the twenty-one (21) calendar day period has elapsed, the same assessor must observe the professional again.

During the school year, when there is collective evidence that indicates a professional is in need of assistance and support to meet one or more of the performance standards in an effective manner (i.e., developing/needs improvement), the Support Dialogue process is not applicable; however, informal support is made available to the professional. It is incumbent upon the assessor to clearly communicate such to the professional at any time during the evaluation cycle when a professional's performance is deemed to require assistance and support. Through a collegial and supportive process, the professional and the assessor discuss these specific standards and what appropriate assistance and support will be provided. In addition, the professional, may seek other professional development/growth opportunities. It is the responsibility of the professional and the administrator to informally document the professional support and assistance process.

Professionals develop and improve their job performance over time and with support and assistance. Some professionals will need more time to develop and improve their performance to

ensure it reaches an effective standard of performance. Therefore, a professional may be considered “developing/needs improvement” for more than one evaluation cycle. However, to assess a professional as “developing/needs improvement” for more than one evaluation cycle, the professional must have been provided evidence in a timely manner throughout the evaluation cycle to allow the professional to seek and take advantage of opportunities to receive assistance and support for the purpose of improving his/her performance.

The following are sample guiding questions for the SD conversation.

<i>Sample Prompts for the SD Conversation</i>	
1.	Tell me about your instructional setting.
2.	What challenges have you encountered in addressing _____ (tell specific concern)?
3.	What professional development have you taken to address instructional delivery/student achievement? How does this align with your IPDP?
4.	What strategies have you tried to implement to address the concern of _____ (tell specific concern)?
5.	What support can I or others provide you? (may include the following types of assistance to the professional: professional development/ professional growth activities, shadowing, mentoring, peer review and/or modeling, support from the school site/regional center and/or district curriculum specialists)
The assessor shares some support ideas and asks,	
1.	What do you think of these ideas?
2.	Do you have any new suggestions for change?

Any subsequent observation to an unsatisfactory observation must start at the beginning of the class and last for the complete lesson. However, for classes extending beyond the standard elementary/secondary scheduled class/subject (e.g., block schedules, 3 hour auto mechanics, etc.), the assessor must have observed a lesson from the beginning of the class and remained for a minimum of one (1) hour. The following chart delineates Step 1 of 2 in the Support Dialogue process for improving professional performance.

Step 1 to Improve Professional Performance
Probationary/Annual Contract (AC)
Professional Service Contract (PSC)/Continuing Contract (CC)

Support Dialogue	
Purpose	For professionals who are in need of additional support, SD is initiated.
Initiator	Assessor Site administrator must contact the Region Center and the Office of Professional Standards.
Documentation	Observation of Standards Form (OSF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Examples/Evidence that clearly describe unsatisfactory deficiencies. ◦ The specific standards that are unsatisfactory and require assistance/support must be identified. ◦ The SD box must be checked “yes.”
Assistance	Assistance that may be offered, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The use of sample prompts for initial conversation ◦ Professional growth activities ◦ Shadowing, mentoring, peer review, and/or modeling
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional improves and no additional support is required or support continues through the informal professional assistance and support process, or • Professional has demonstrated some progress and the assessor may extend the time of the SD, or • No progress and performance is unsatisfactory — the professional is placed on an Improvement Plan (IP).

The desired outcome for engaging in SD is for the professional’s practice to improve. However, in the event that limited improvements in performance have been made, the assessor may extend the timeline of the Support Dialogue for an additional ten (10) work days. If the professional’s

performance is unsatisfactory, the professional must be placed on an Improvement Plan (IP). Once placed on an IP, the professional will be provided with a 90-Calendar Day Probation period to demonstrate that identified deficiencies have been corrected.

**IMPROVEMENT PLAN (IP)/
90-CALENDAR DAY**

If an assessor and a professional have completed Step 1, Support Dialogue, and performance is unsatisfactory, Step 2 is initiated. Step 2 is defined when a professional's performance is deemed unsatisfactory in any standard and the professional is placed on a 90-Calendar Day Probation/Improvement Plan (IP). (See *Improvement Plan* form in Part IV). Ideally, the desired outcome of an IP is to improve the professional's performance to an effective level. If the professional's performance does not improve to a developing or needs improvement or effective level, the result will constitute a professional not being recommended for continued employment. The following chart delineates the Improvement Plan (IP) process which is Step 2 of 2 in improving professional performance.

**STEP 2 to Improve Professional Performance
Annual Contract (AC)/Professional Service Contract (PSC)**

Improvement Plan	
Purpose	For professionals whose performance is unsatisfactory on one or more performance standards, an IP is initiated.
Initiator	Site Administrator Site Administrator must notify the Region Center and Office of Professional Standards.
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of two (2) Observation of Standards Forms (OSF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Examples/Evidence that clearly describe(s) unsatisfactory deficiencies ◦ The specific standards that are unsatisfactory must be identified ◦ The IP box must be checked "yes" for the second subsequent observation • Conference for the Record (CFR)-Notification and Summary • Improvement Plan (IP)
Assistance	Assistance may include, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ support from school site/ regional center and/or district curriculum specialist; ◦ continued support and assistance; ◦ peer/mentor assistance; ◦ professional development and/or other professional growth activities on specific topics; and/or ◦ other resources to be identified.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance improves to effective – recommended for continued employment, or • Performance improves to developing or needs improvement – recommended for continued employment, or • Performance is unsatisfactory – not recommended for continued employment.

¹ Note: Florida Statute §1012.34 provides guidance on the activities that occur in conjunction with the IP (See summary in Appendix A).

An IP may be implemented at any point during the year provided that the professional has had an SD and a minimum of two (2) observations. The IP is designed to guide a professional in addressing areas of concern through targeted assistance with additional resources. If a professional's performance is being observed by the site administrator designee, he/she consults with the site administrator on the need for an IP. During the Conference-for-the-Record (CFR), the site administrator, the assessor (if different), the professional, and the union representative (if applicable) may advance suggestions to the IP. At a subsequent meeting, when the summary of

the CFR is signed, the IP will be explained and signed. (The CFR meeting, CFR Summary meeting, and the IP initiation must be completed with signatures within ten (10) calendar days). The day after the IP is signed by the site administrator and the professional, the official start of the 90-Calendar Day Probation begins.

90-Calendar Day Probation/Improvement Plan (IP)

Instructional personnel whose performance is “unsatisfactory” are placed on a 90-Calendar Day Probation during which the Improvement Plan (IP) is implemented. The following charts delineate the procedures that are implemented as a result of unsatisfactory performance on one or more standard(s) for the annual contract, professional service contract, and continuing contract professionals, respectively.

In accordance with the Student Success Act and Florida Statute §1012.34, instructional personnel hired on or after July 1, 2011, are awarded a “probationary contract” for a period of one school year upon initial employment in a school district regardless of previous employment in another school district or state. Probationary contract employees may resign without breach of contract or be dismissed without cause. This “Probationary Contract Status” is not to be confused with procedures for the 90-Calendar Day probationary period IP for professionals who hold an Annual Contract or a Professional Service Contract described in this section.

INSTRUCTIONAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AND GROWTH SYSTEM
OBSERVATION OF STANDARDS FORM-TEACHER

Teacher: _____ Employee No. _____ School: _____
 Contract Status: Probationary Annual Professional Service Continuing Other _____
 Observation: 1 2 3 4 5 _____ Interim Teacher Incumbent Yes No _____
 Grade/Subject Observed: _____ Date: _____ Time: From _____ To _____

Assessors use this form to document the required annual formal observation of the teacher. The form may also be used to document a targeted performance standard, in which case "NA" is noted for the other standards. Evidence may be positive and/or negative examples. (For further explanation about the completion of this form, refer to the IPEGS Procedural Handbook.)

<p>PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2: KNOWLEDGE OF LEARNERS The teacher identifies and addresses the needs of learners by demonstrating respect for individual differences, cultures, backgrounds, and learning styles. FEAPs: 1, 2, 3, 4</p>	<p>Comment Required</p>
<p>PERFORMANCE STANDARD 3: INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING The teacher uses appropriate curricula (including state reading requirements, if applicable), instructional strategies, and resources to develop lesson plans that include goals and/or objectives, learning activities, assessment of student learning, and home learning in order to address the diverse needs of students. FEAPs: 1, 3, 4, 5</p>	<p>Comment Required</p>
<p>PERFORMANCE STANDARD 4: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY AND ENGAGEMENT The teacher promotes learning by demonstrating accurate content knowledge and by addressing academic needs through a variety of appropriate instructional strategies and technologies that engage learners. FEAPs: 2, 3, 4, 5</p>	<p>Comment Required</p>
<p>PERFORMANCE STANDARD 5: ASSESSMENT The teacher gathers, analyzes, and uses data (including FCAT state assessment data, as applicable) to measure learner progress, guide instruction, and provide timely feedback. FEAPs: 1, 3, 4, 5</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Not an observable standard – No comment required unless warranted.</p>
<p>PERFORMANCE STANDARD 6: COMMUNICATION The teacher communicates effectively with students, their parents or families, staff, and other members of the learning community. FEAPs: 2, 4, 5</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Not an observable standard – No comment required unless warranted.</p>
<p>PERFORMANCE STANDARD 7: PROFESSIONALISM The teacher demonstrates behavior consistent with legal, ethical, and professional standards and engages in continuous professional growth. FEAPs: 5, 6</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Not an observable standard – No comment required unless warranted.</p>
<p>PERFORMANCE STANDARD 8: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT The teacher creates and maintains a safe learning environment while encouraging fairness, respect, and enthusiasm. FEAPs: 2</p>	<p>Comment Required</p>

Comments/Specific Suggestions

If performance is unsatisfactory complete this section by marking the appropriate boxes.

Deficiencies noted in the following performance standard(s): 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Assessor Action: Support Dialogue Improvement Plan

Support Dialogue Successful

Support Dialogue (SD) Extension [One (1) extension up to ten (10) work days]

SD Extension: Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Signatures acknowledge the occurrence of the post-observation meeting and receipt of a copy of the observation form by the professional.

Teacher's Signature _____ Date _____

Assessor's Signature _____ Date _____

