

Principal/Vice-Principal Performance Appraisal (PPA) Frequently Asked Questions

The following are frequently asked questions about:

- I. The Principal/Vice-Principal Performance Appraisal Model
- II. Evaluation Cycle and Scheduling
- III. Implementation
- IV. New Principals/Vice-Principals
- V. The Performance Plan and Annual Growth Plan
- VI. Goals
- VII. Methods and Indicators
- VIII. Rating
- IX. Human Resources

These questions and answers have been designed as a resource to complement the *Principal/Vice-Principal Performance Appraisal Technical Requirements Manual (2010)*. Users should refer to the Education Act and related regulations for actual governing legislation. In the event of any legal questions emerging from application of the Act and accompanying regulations, boards should refer to their own legal counsel.

Q Why isn't the Principal/Vice-Principal Performance Appraisal model the same as the Teacher Performance Appraisal model?

A PPA is based on the achievement of one or more goals whereas the TPA is based on the demonstration of competencies. Principals/vice-principals are appraised on their ability to set school goals and lead staff in achieving these goals. The model recognizes that principals/vice-principals are managers and instructional leaders whose professional responsibilities are different from teachers'. There are however, similarities between the two models including:

If an additional appraisal is conducted, the evaluation cycle would restart from the year in which the principal/vice-principal was evaluated (e.g. A principal's evaluation year is scheduled for 2015. If principal requests an additional appraisal in 2013 at his or her request, the next evaluation will be scheduled for 2018.).

Q Can an appraiser conduct an appraisal of a newly appointed principal/vice-principal in their first year in the role?

A No, a new principal/vice-principal has the opportunity to receive mentoring support in their first year before they are appraised. However, PPA does not limit the existing powers of a supervisor to intervene if a principal/vice-principal is not meeting expectations and requires increased support. In their first year, principals/vice-principals are required to develop an Annual Growth Plan in consultation with their supervisor.

Q Are new principals or vice principals who are hired from another board and have no previous experience as new principals or vice principals evaluated in their first year?

A New principals or vice principals who have no prior experience would be evaluated in their second year in the role and would be eligible to receive mentoring support in their first and second years.

Q If a vice-principal is promoted to principal after his or her first year in the role, when would their appraisal occur?

A The evaluation would occur in year two of the role. For example, a vice-principal hired in

Q What happens to the evaluation cycle when a principal or vice-principal is absent or on an extended leave?

A When they return from their leave, their cycle would resume from the point at which it was left.

Q What happens when the principal/vice-principal is on leave the year in which they are to be appraised?

A They will be appraised the year in which they return as a vice principal or principal.

Q If a principal or vice-principal moves to another school, are they required to have a performance appraisal?

A If a principal or vice-principal moves to a different school in the same school board, they remain on the same evaluation cycle that the board has established for the principal/vice-principal.

If a principal or vice-principal moves to a different school board (apart from a secondment), he/she is required to have a performance appraisal in his/her first year of employment with the board.

Q How should boards transition principals/vice-principals who are absent from their position for a period of time into the first evaluation cycle?

A The board may wish to take the expected term of absence into consideration when determining the initial evaluation year and consulting with the principal or vice-principal.

Q What is the requirement for conducting appraisals for principals/vice-principals who indicate they are retiring at the end of the year that is identified as their appraisal year?

A If the year is scheduled as an evaluation year for a principal or vice-principal, the principal or vice-principal must receive a performance appraisal in accordance with the requirements set out under Ontario Regulation 234/10. There is no exception for an experienced principal/vice-principal who plans to retire at the end of the year that is scheduled as his or her appraisal year.

appraisal, as well as effective practices. Additional supports such as PPA web casts will be available throughout the year through principal associations. Regional teleconferences will

V. The Performance Plan and Annual Growth Plan

Q What's the difference between the Performance Plan and the Annual Growth Plan?

A The Performance Plan is developed by principals/vice-principals in each evaluation year in order to demonstrate how they intend to achieve identified goals. The plan includes goals, strategies and actions, practices and competencies, as well as methods and indicators to measure attainment of the goals. The Plan will be used in conducting the assessment of the appraisee, leading to a performance rating.

The Annual Growth Plan provides a vehicle to plan the principal's or vice-principal's professional learning during the appraisal year and in the intervening years between appraisals. The Annual Growth Plan outlines the individual practices and competencies from the Ontario Leadership Framework. In an evaluation year the Annual Growth Plan is used to help the principal/vice-principal achieve the goals in his or her Performance Plan. In a non-evaluation year, the principal/vice-principal refers to the results and recommendations in the summative report from the most recent performance appraisal in reviewing or updating the Annual Growth Plan.

Q I am a new principal with a mentor. What's the difference between the Annual Growth Plan in PPA and the Learning Plan in mentoring?

A The Annual Growth Plan (AGP) is developed by principals and vice-principals every year beginning in their first year. It includes the leadership practices and competencies that will be the focus of the principal's or vice-principal's growth for that year as well as the professional growth activities principal or vice-principal will undertake to develop these practices and competencies. In the case of a new principal/vice-principal, mentoring would be listed on the AGP. It is signed by the principal or vice-principal and the supervisor every year, and each of them retains a copy.

The Learning Plan is developed as part of mentoring for a vice-principal or principal new to the role. It reflects the learning needs of the mentee and guides the mentoring process between the mentor and the mentee. It remains confidential between the mentor and the mentee and is not signed by the supervisor. If the mentee chooses, the Annual Growth Plan can be used as the Learning Plan.

Q Does the School Improvement Plan relate to the Performance Plan?

A The school improvement plan (SIP) is one of the documents, along with the Board improvement plan and provincial educational

Q In non-evaluation years, how is the Annual Growth Plan connected to a principal's/vice-principal's last appraisal?

A The principal/vice-principal is required to consider their last Summative Report, including recommendations made by the supervisor, when considering personal goals and activities for their current Annual Growth Plan. Consideration is also given to the Annual Growth Plan from the previous year and a principal's /vice-principal's actual growth over the past year

VI. Goals

Q My School Improvement Plan has five areas that we are required to complete--do I need to have five areas, and the same goals, for my Performance Plan?

A No, the Performance Plan requires one or more goals which take into account the School Improvement Plan.

Q My Performance Plan against which I will be appraised may not include many of the other things that I do to keep my school running effectively. How can my supervisor take all of these others things into account when doing my appraisal?

A The selection of one or more goals for the Performance Plan provides the opportunity for the principal/vice-principal to focus the appraisal on these key areas which the principal/vice-principal will make the priority for the year. It is understood that the role of principal or vice-principal includes a broad range of responsibilities and activities that must be carried out every year and for which the principal/vice-principal is accountable to the supervisor. The focused goals in the plan allow for more in-depth implementation to be done in priority areas.

Q Who writes the performance plan? Is the appraiser able to insist that I choose certain goals that he or she thinks that I should be addressing?

A The principal or vice-principal shall develop a Performance Plan in consultation with the appraiser. The appraiser and appraisee are to discuss and agree upon goals that are focused on improving student achievement and well being, that take into account the School Improvement Plan, the board improvement plan and provincial education priorities and that are measurable. By signing the Performance Plan, the appraiser indicates agreement with the goals identified.

Q How can I be appraised against goals related to student achievement when I don't have control over student results?

A The principal/vice-principal should endeavour to set goals that are realistic, achievable and measurable. The nature of principal leadership is such that the principal must work with staff to achieve goals together, as described in the Ontario Leadership Framework in the second domain, "Building relationships and developing people."

Sometimes there are factors that arise that make it difficult to achieve the expected results. The appraiser will take into account the demonstrated ability and willingness of the appraisee to implement actions to address the goals that were not achieved by him or her. The rating process, as described in Section 2.7 of the PPA Technical Requirements Manual outlines how the appraiser can take these into account when deciding the rating.

Q What if there are unforeseen circumstances that unfold that make it impossible for

the Summative Report. For example, if the Performance Plan includes a goal to increase student safety, a survey of students before and after the implementation strategies for this goal would be useful in outcomes.

Q If a principal/vice-principal is not able to meet one or more of their goals, should his

performance and follow up with the principal/vice-principal in order to provide on-going support.

The requirements of PPA are not intended to interfere with the appraiser's discretionary right to observe the principal's/vice-principal's practice, meet with principal/vice-principal to discuss performance, provide feedback to the principal/vice-principal, or support the principal's/vice-principal's growth and development at any time.

Additional appraisals can be conducted at the discretion of the appraiser if he or she considers it advisable in light of circumstances related to the performance of the principal/vice-principal. An appraiser will also have the opportunity to review the principal's/vice-principal's Annual Growth Plan annually to determine if further support is needed.

Q. After it is determined that a principal/vice-principal has received an *Unsatisfactory* rating and will be demoted/reassigned, is there any way to appeal the decision?

A. Boards are required to comply with all policies and procedures set out in the board's terms and conditions for the employment of their principals/vice-principals including procedures regarding reassignment and demotion Refer to PPM No. 152: Terms and Conditions of Employment of Principals and Vice-Principals.

In the case of dismissal, the PPA regulation requires boards to give the principal/vice-principal reasonable information about the reasons for the dismissal and an opportunity to make submissions to the board.

Q As part of my terms and conditions agreement there is third party assistance available to me if I am going to be reassigned or dismissed. Do I still have access to these options after I have received three consecutive unsatisfactory appraisals?

A Yes, the board would be required to comply with all policies and procedures set out in the board's terms and conditions for the employment of their principals/vice-principals.

Q. What is an example of principal/vice-principal "reassignment"?

A. An example of principal/vice-principal reassignment would include transferring a principal/vice-principal from one school setting to another (e.g. large school to a smaller school). Each principal/vice-principal will have different individual circumstances that need to be considered in the reassignment.

Q. Does the PPA regulation exclude the board of trustees from the decision-making process when considering the dismissal of a principal/vice-principal?

A. No. Recommendations to dismiss a principal/vice-principal must be approved by the board of trustees.

IX. Human Resources

Q In our board we have teachers who take on the role of "acting principal." Should they be appraised using the PPA process?

A As long as a teacher is considered a member of a teachers' federation, he or she is not to be appraised under the PPA model. However, he or she must participate in the Teacher Performance Appraisal process as it relates to his or her teaching duties.

Q Is a principal who is assigned to a school, and has teaching duties, required to participate in the teacher performance appraisal process?

A Principals are excluded from the definition of teacher for the purposes of the performance appraisal, and are therefore not required to participate in the teacher performance appraisal process. The board will determine how the principal performance appraisal will be conducted based on the individual's duties.

Q If a principal/vice-principal is dismissed as a direct result of PPA, does the board have to notify the Ontario College of Teachers?

A In the case of a dismissal as a result of PPA, a board is not required to notify the College. However, section 43.2 of the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996* requires employers to file a written report with the College, in the case of individuals that are dismissed or have their duties limited due to "professional misconduct" as defined in Ontario Regulation 437/97. This provision continues to apply in the case of principal/vice-principal misconduct.

Q What happens if an issue of professional misconduct is discovered during the PPA process?

A Part IX.1 of the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996*, "Reporting Requirements Related to Professional Misconduct," would apply to a situation where an issue of misconduct is discovered through the PPA process. Depending on the circumstances, a report would have to be filed by the school board with the College, pursuant to Part IX.1 of the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996*.

Q Does the PPA regulation interfere with the public's ability to complain to the College about a principal's/vice-principal's conduct, competency or their capacity to fulfill their role?

A The PPA regulation in no way limits the public's ability to make a complaint to the College under section 26 of the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996*.

Q In the case of an investigation into a principal's/vice-principal's misconduct, incompetence or incapacity, will the College be able to access his or her performance appraisal documents?

A Yes, Part VIII of the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996* "Registrar's Powers of Investigation" gives the College the authority to access documentation during the course of an investigation. Section 47 of the Act provides the College with a more general authority to access information, including performance appraisal documents, in the possession of a school board.