

# score to soar

moving  
teachers  
from  
evaluation  
to  
professional  
growth



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# Table of Contents

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>About the Authors</b> . . . . . | <b>ix</b> |
|------------------------------------|-----------|

|                               |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Introduction</b> . . . . . | <b>1</b> |
|-------------------------------|----------|

## *Chapter 1*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Understanding the Elements of a Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation and Growth Process</b> . . . . . | <b>5</b> |
|--|----------|

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Chapter Focus . . . . .                                       | 5  |
| Roles and Responsibilities of Supervisors . . . . .           | 6  |
| Essential Components of a Teacher Evaluation System . . . . . | 8  |
| Types of Teacher Contracts . . . . .                          | 11 |
| What Contract Status Means for Supervisors . . . . .          | 13 |
| Alternative Data Sources . . . . .                            | 14 |
| A Look Back . . . . .   | 18 |
| Chapter Summary . . . . .                                     | 18 |

## *Chapter 2*

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Defining Clear and Understood Performance Expectations</b> . . . . . | <b>21</b> |
|---|-----------|

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Chapter Focus . . . . .   | 21 |
| Four Common Teacher Evaluation Systems . . . . .                            | 22 |
| Strategies for Defining Clear Performance Expectations . . . . .            | 32 |
| Methods to Increase Clear, Detailed Communication . . . . .                 | 35 |
| Activities to Learn and Master the Teaching Performance Standards . . . . . | 37 |
| Strategies to Strengthen Inter-Rater Reliability . . . . .                  | 45 |
| A Look Back . . . . .   | 46 |
| Chapter Summary . . . . .   | 47 |

## *Chapter 3*

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Using Information From the Peer Coaching Process</b> . . . . . | <b>49</b> |
|---|-----------|

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Chapter Focus . . . . .  | 50 |
| When to Use Peer Coaching . . . . .  | 50 |
| Peer Coaching as a Part of the Teacher Growth and Evaluation Process . . . . . | 52 |
| Goal Setting . . . . .   | 53 |

|                           |    |
|---------------------------|----|
| Coaching Skills . . . . . | 59 |
| A Look Back . . . . .     | 69 |
| Chapter Summary. . . . .  | 70 |

#### Chapter 4

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Using PLC Information . . . . .</b>   | <b>.71</b> |
| Chapter Focus. . . . .   | 72         |
| Considerations for Using PLC Data . . . . .  | 72         |
| A District's Integration of PLC Work in Teacher<br>Growth and Evaluation . . . . . | 74         |
| A Look Back . . . . .  | 81         |
| Chapter Summary. . . . .   | 81         |

#### Chapter 5

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Using Portfolios . . . . .</b>                | <b>83</b> |
| Chapter Focus. . . . .                           | 84        |
| Components of a Professional Portfolio . . . . . | 84        |
| Portfolio Planning . . . . .                     | 86        |
| Completion of the Portfolio Process . . . . .    | 90        |
| A Look Back . . . . .                            | 90        |
| Chapter Summary. . . . .                         | 91        |

#### Chapter 6

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Using Student Feedback . . . . .</b>                    | <b>93</b> |
| Chapter Focus. . . . .                                     | 94        |
| Types of Student Feedback Information . . . . .            | 94        |
| How to Plan for the Use of Student Feedback Data . . . . . | 98        |
| Methods for Organizing and Analyzing the Data . . . . .    | 100       |
| A Look Back . . . . .                                      | 105       |
| Chapter Summary. . . . .                                   | 106       |

#### Chapter 7

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Using Student Achievement Data . . . . .</b>                      | <b>107</b> |
| Chapter Focus. . . . .   | 108        |
| Common Sources of Student Achievement Data . . . . .                 | 108        |
| Considerations When Using Student Achievement Data. . . . .          | 110        |
| Strategies for Collaborating With the Teacher. . . . .               | 111        |
| Factors to Consider When Dealing With Student Data Concerns. . . . . | 114        |
| A Look Back . . . . .  | 115        |
| Chapter Summary. . . . .   | 116        |

#### Chapter 8

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Conferencing With Teachers . . . . .</b>          | <b>119</b> |
| Chapter Focus. . . . .                               | 120        |
| The Need for Feedback . . . . .                      | 121        |
| Reasons Supervisors Should Use Conferences . . . . . | 121        |
| Conferencing Template . . . . .                      | 122        |
| Conferences Addressing Poor Performance. . . . .     | 126        |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| A Look Back . . . . .   | 128        |
| Chapter Summary. . . . .  | 129        |
| <i>Chapter 9</i>  |            |
| <b>Understanding and Addressing Marginal and Deficient Teachers . . .</b>                       | <b>131</b> |
| Chapter Focus . . . . .   | 131        |
| Definitions of Marginal and Deficient Performance . . . . .                                     | 132        |
| Types of Marginal Teachers . . . . .  | 133        |
| Identification of Marginal Teacher Types. . . . .   | 136        |
| Considerations When Addressing a Marginal or<br>Deficient Teacher . . . . .                     | 137        |
| Skills for Addressing Marginal and Deficient Performance. . . . .                               | 143        |
| Conferencing Strategies to Address the Marginal Teacher Types. . . . .                          | 148        |
| Suggestions for Tracking Teacher Performance . . . . .  | 150        |
| A Look Back . . . . .   | 152        |
| Chapter Summary. . . . .  | 152        |
| <i>Chapter 10</i>   |            |
| <b>Documenting the Contract Termination Process . . . . .</b>                                   | <b>155</b> |
| Chapter Focus . . . . .   | 156        |
| Proper Written Documentation . . . . .  | 156        |
| Possible Sources of Documentation . . . . .   | 158        |
| A Look Back . . . . .   | 165        |
| Chapter Summary. . . . .  | 165        |
| <i>Chapter 11</i>   |            |
| <b>Conducting and Delivering Summative Evaluations . . . . .</b>                                | <b>167</b> |
| Chapter Focus . . . . .   | 168        |
| Contributing Factors for Summative Evaluations . . . . .  | 169        |
| Multiple Data Sources . . . . .   | 170        |
| Levels of Performance and Experience. . . . .   | 174        |
| Caveats for Scoring Varied Performance Expectations<br>and Experience. . . . .                  | 177        |
| Teacher Involvement in Gathering Evidence and Reflecting<br>on Progress. . . . .                | 178        |
| Summative Evaluation Conferences . . . . .  | 178        |
| Chapter Summary. . . . .  | 181        |
| <b>Appendix A</b>   |            |
| Forms and Templates to Guide the Coordination of PLC and<br>Teacher Evaluation Process. . . . . | 183        |
| <b>Appendix B</b>   |            |
| Conferencing Tools and Templates . . . . .  | 193        |
| <b>References and Resources . . . . .</b>   | <b>209</b> |
| <b>Index . . . . .</b>  | <b>213</b> |

# Introduction

**S**upervision and teacher evaluation are topics at the forefront of U.S. education and leadership. Between 2010 and 2012, at least thirty-six states made some form of policy change to their teacher evaluation processes (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2012). These changes range from simply mandating yearly evaluations of all teachers to major changes in the ways teaching is measured. Some states have changed the criteria used to evaluate teachers, while others have increased expectations for principals to identify and deal with marginal and deficient teachers.

The increased focus on teacher evaluation comes at a time when principals are already dealing with a variety of other pressures, such as budget challenges, increased calls for accountability, mandates to improve student achievement and prepare students to enter new and increasingly demanding workplaces, demands from the public for more accountability for increased educational spending, and other factors. Principals will need to find ways to work with their teachers and develop their skills while also serving as evaluators. To that effect, this book has been designed for principals, department chairs, assistant principals, superintendents, teacher leaders, charter school directors, central office administrators, and others who have an interest in helping teachers learn and grow. For simplification purposes, we will refer to all of these (and other roles charged with helping teachers grow) as supervisors, since the term encompasses the dual roles of evaluation and professional growth.

Since the early 1980s, we have seen a variety of techniques and strategies suggested for measuring teachers' effectiveness and helping them grow professionally. While many of these strategies are based on sound research, some are presented as isolated, stand-alone techniques. Supervisors may learn one or two of them, but in order to gain a comprehensive set of skills,

these supervisors would have to attend countless workshops, read many books, and interact with various colleagues. For example, in some seminars, supervisors are taught that they should only coach their teachers. In other workshops, supervisors might learn how to manage the documentation required to build a case for contract termination. Because of the isolated nature of these models, it has become hard for supervisors to get an overview of multiple techniques in one location. This book serves that purpose.

The title, *Score to Soar*, was selected to highlight the changing requirements of supervisors' work with teachers to improve instruction and school effectiveness. Supervisors must find ways to not only rate their teachers on their teaching and learning practices but also use the information gathered in the supervision process to help their teachers become more effective. Similar to testing students without providing interventions to help them improve, rating teachers without facilitating their growth does nothing to improve their performance. In this book, we provide ideas that supervisors can use to go beyond simply measuring teacher effectiveness to actually increasing their effectiveness!

In some instances, only the teachers who are struggling receive attention from their principals. Helping all teachers meet minimum expectations is an important responsibility of supervisors, but there are teachers meeting this requirement who could benefit from support and encouragement to make their teaching even more effective. Without this encouragement and support, these teachers may stagnate, feel complacent, and even become disenchanted with the profession. Thus, *Score to Soar* provides supervisors with ideas and strategies to help all teachers grow, not just those who are not meeting the minimum standards.

One might think that supervisors in positions of authority directing teachers to make changes would be a successful way to ensure that professional improvement occurs. But telling people what to do does not always produce the kind of results we are looking for. Most of the strategies outlined in this book do not depend on simply giving teachers directives or telling them what to do. Instead, they are focused on clearly understanding the performance expectations and then explaining these expectations to teachers, providing the rationale for the use of evaluation strategies, and supporting teachers' use of effective teaching and learning practices.

In essence, supervisors help their teachers grow when they provide opportunities for them to learn and try new ideas. While teachers are trying these new ideas, supervisors can help them evaluate their effectiveness, determine possible refinements to their strategies, and then fine-tune them to ensure success. Many strategies we provide in this book align with existing teacher

evaluation systems, so supervisors can be more efficient in their work with teachers.

The book can be read in the order it's written, or supervisors can go to a specific chapter based on their needs or interests. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the supervision process and its typical components. Chapter 2 explores creating and following a clear framework to guide teacher evaluation. Chapter 3 discusses how to ensure peer coaching is a productive experience for teachers. Chapters 4 through 7 detail how to include several types of alternative data sources in teacher evaluation to provide a comprehensive view of teachers' performance and help teachers grow professionally. Chapter 8 describes how to conduct collaborative conferences with teachers throughout the evaluation process. Chapter 9 introduces the reader to types of marginal teachers and offers strategies for how to work with marginal and deficient teachers to improve their performance. Chapter 10 provides information necessary for pursuing the termination of a deficient teacher's contract if the teacher's performance has not improved. Chapter 11 offers supervisors information that will be helpful when delivering a final summative evaluation. Several sample templates are offered throughout the chapters and in the appendices as models to help you envision the practices we describe, and reproducibles are available online at [go.hbe.com.au](http://go.hbe.com.au) to assist you in implementing these practices.

As you read this book, you'll gain important insights and ideas to help you turn your teacher evaluation efforts into opportunities to provide teachers with the support and encouragement they need to grow professionally.



# Understanding the Elements of a Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation and Growth Process

*Elaine, the superintendent of a midsized suburban school district, was getting ready to meet with her administrative team to discuss the recent state legislation that mandated more rigorous teacher evaluation processes and standards. Elaine knew that some of her principals were doing a good job evaluating and supervising their teachers while others just seemed to be going through the motions with this important task. As she reviewed the mandates for the new legislation, Elaine noticed that many of the processes were already present in the district's existing teacher evaluation procedures. She wanted to highlight the areas that would be familiar to her principals while emphasizing the new areas of focus they would have to work on in order to be successful. She also wanted to lay out the plan to ensure staff members would be able to understand core expectations and know how they would be assessed and supported.*

**T**he dilemma Elaine faced is pretty common. As U.S. states and the federal government have increased their demands for effective teacher evaluation, many school districts have scrambled to determine how the new expectations can fit into existing structures and identify the areas where they need to design and implement new teacher evaluation strategies. It's crucial for supervisors to understand the various components and expectations of their school or district's teacher growth and evaluation process.

## Chapter Focus

In this chapter, you will learn the following.

- ▶ Roles and responsibilities of supervisors and how these roles relate to teacher evaluation processes



- ▶ Essential components for an effective teacher evaluation process and how these components work together to benefit teachers, including sources of data that are available to use in the supervision of teachers
- ▶ The types of teacher contracts
- ▶ What contract status means for supervisors
- ▶ Why supervisors might choose to use alternative data sources and how these data sources can positively impact teachers' professional growth

These points will help you move forward in the process of supervising teachers and challenging them to learn and grow.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Supervisors

Even though it may seem like the emphasis on teacher evaluation is new, throughout history there have been several eras in which accountability was emphasized. In the past, those in charge of teachers (local boards of education, superintendents, and principals) have served in roles that have varied from colleagues and coaches to quality-control supervisors. What we are seeing in 21st century teacher evaluation legislation is an increased focus on the principal's ability to measure and rate teacher performance. Even though the emphasis of the current legislation appears to be focused on the evaluation part of a supervisor's job, it is also necessary to focus on developing teachers' abilities to maintain and improve their levels of effectiveness. In essence, effective supervisors serve both as quality-control agents and as growth and learning facilitators.

These two roles require different approaches and skills even though their responsibilities are closely related. For example, in order to conduct the evaluation portion of their responsibilities, supervisors need to understand the school or district's performance expectations and be able to assess their teachers, judge the effectiveness of their performance, rate their skills, and use the data to assign a performance score. In order to facilitate teacher growth and learning, supervisors must also be able to determine where teachers need to improve, explain the needed skills, coach their teachers to higher levels of effectiveness, and support them during the growth process.

In addition to attending to teachers' growth individually, supervisors are expected to assess and develop the school as a whole. In order to satisfy this responsibility, supervisors use performance data to assess the essential teaching and learning areas, prioritize the most important needs of the whole staff, and then work to provide professional development and support for all staff to learn and be able to implement effective teaching strategies.

As the person responsible for the improvement of all teachers in the school, the supervisor must take the various levels of effectiveness into consideration and try to move all teachers along the continuum toward growth. We outline some of the major duties required of supervisors in table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Summary of Supervisory Roles

| Supervisory Role  | Major Processes Required of the Supervisor   |
|---|--|
| Evaluating, rating, or grading the performance of employees                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the teaching performance standards.</li> <li>• Determine the level of performance of individual teachers on teaching performance standards.</li> <li>• Prioritize the teaching performance standards that are most important or essential based on the student learning needs within the school or district.</li> <li>• Determine the gap between the actual and the desired teaching performance.</li> <li>• Determine the likelihood that the teacher can learn the skills to close the gap between the actual and expected performance.</li> </ul>  |
| Gathering information to assist in the development of individual employees                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the teaching performance standards.</li> <li>• Prioritize the teaching performance standards that are most important or essential based on the student learning needs within the school or district.</li> <li>• Determine the level of performance of individual teachers on teaching performance standards.</li> <li>• Identify the difference between the teacher's performance and the required level of performance.</li> <li>• Identify the skills or strategies needed in order to meet the teaching performance standards.</li> <li>• Identify the resources needed to help the teacher gain the skills necessary to reach the teaching performance standards.</li> </ul>                     |
| Gathering information to assist in the development of a group of employees or the entire school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the teaching performance standards.</li> <li>• Prioritize the teaching performance standards that are most important or essential based on the student learning needs within the school or district.</li> <li>• Determine the level of performance for the entire group regarding the teaching performance standards.</li> <li>• Identify the difference between the group's performance and the required level of performance.</li> <li>• Identify the skills or strategies needed in order to help the group meet the teaching performance standards.</li> <li>• Identify the resources needed to help the group gain the skills necessary to reach the teaching performance standards.</li> </ul> |