



Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan Reflections

Oswego CUSD #308

Oswego CUSD #308 (Oswego, IL) adopted, adapted, and implemented the Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan as its model for principal evaluation during the 2012-2013 school year. Below, Principal of Southbury Elementary School, Lindsay Allen, and Director of Teaching and Learning, Dr. Carla Johnson (who evaluated Mrs. Allen), offer their reflections on the process below. Mrs. Allen's comments are in black while Dr. Johnson's comments are in red.

What went well or as expected?

I really enjoyed the QUALITY conversations I had with my evaluator since it was based on real observations within the school setting. We are all so busy and don't always have the time to visit schools, talk to one another, etc. This evaluation process makes it mandatory for the two of us to collaborate and gave meaningful discussions on how to improve students' learning throughout the school year. I enjoyed the mentoring I received from my evaluator, and I feel as though I grew in the domain areas upon which I was focusing throughout the year.

The quality conversations I had with the principals I worked with regarding instructional leadership were priceless. We had targeted discussions using the rubric as a guideline and then elaborated using real, on-the-job examples. These honest discussions led to discoveries that are guaranteed to make a difference. I found this process to be so much more enjoyable as well. The energy, creativity, and "aha" moments of this process caused evaluation to be much more appealing than in the past.

Anything unexpected or to look out for?

The only thing that was an issue was gathering relevant information in regards to student growth. The timeline does not work well with our district testing (ISAT, MAP, etc.), so I don't know how effective the data really is if we truly aren't comparing the same students from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

It was difficult to make the process "fair" in regards to student growth for this year due to the timeline. We had great data discussions because of it as we analyzed the data we DID have by mid-February, but I think to effectively assess instructional leadership per student growth the process needs to closely look at that component.

What would you look to improve next time?

Other than the timeline, nothing. I really enjoyed this experience!

In all my years of evaluating principals, I must say that this new process is my favorite! I think the improvement would be that the process would be not in its first year so we wouldn't all be wondering what's next and THAT would be the improvement. Learning the new forms and ensuring that everyone

understands the rubric, etc. is completed now so we can be comfortable with really digging into those great leadership discussions now - how exciting!

Any tips to help the evaluation process go smoothly and be as meaningful as possible?

You need to have an evaluator you trust and can speak openly with in order for this process to work well.

I think it is critically important that the evaluator is devoted to spending quality time to this process. You can truly feel the difference you are making and you can see the pride in the eyes of the principals regarding their role when you take the time to be invested fully as an evaluator. The principalship is such an awesome role in the field of education, and to have a tool that provides an opportunity like this for in-depth conversation about raising the bar for instructional leadership should not be taken for granted.