

# U.S. Virgin Islands Evaluator's Manual for the Instructional Feedback Observation

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## INTRODUCTION

During 2009-2010 school year, the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) embarked on a large-scale initiative to improve the quality of education in the Virgin Islands. As part of this initiative, VIDE designed the VIDE Employee Effectiveness System (EES) to support the growth and effectiveness of all education employees throughout the territory. Evaluation processes for principals and assistant principals were designed as part of the VIDE EES and include principal and assistant principal instructional feedback observations.

Principal and assistant principal observation offers powerful information about school leadership performance (Reeves, 2005; Waters & Grubb, 2004). Such observations should focus on routine leadership tasks that have great potential for improving teaching and learning. Observing what principals or assistant principals do and say during teacher interactions following a formal teacher observation of a classroom lesson offers powerful information about a school leader's<sup>1</sup> skill level at helping individual teachers improve their practice and raise student achievement scores.

Observing principals or assistant principals giving instructional feedback to teachers provides performance information on an essential and required aspect of instructional leadership (Clark, Lotto, & McCarthy, 1980; Conley, 1991; Goldring et al., 2009; Knapp, Shields, & Turnbull, 1993; Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2006). Most school leaders are now required to evaluate and provide feedback on teacher effectiveness during annual formative and summative teacher-evaluation conferences. As a result, a school leader's feedback to teachers can influence the quality of instruction in a school.

Although certain teacher evaluation systems may be well designed, these systems will not be effective unless school leaders who evaluate teachers follow procedures and provide teachers with data-based feedback on performance in a manner that supports collaboration, planning, and development (Clark & McCarthy, 1983; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Research indicates that school leaders vary in the quality and impact of performance feedback given to teachers (Balcazar, Hopkins, & Suarez, 1986; Kluger & DeNisi, 1998; Shute, 2007). These variations occur in three areas: trustworthiness of feedback data, focal point of feedback (i.e., task-centered versus person-centered), and the way that feedback is provided (i.e., constructive criticism versus blaming). By implementing a structured process of observing principals or assistant principals and evaluating their instructional feedback conferences with teachers, principal and assistant principal evaluators<sup>2</sup> have new opportunities to help make instructional feedback to teachers more consistent and the impact on classroom performance more reliable. Observing and providing feedback to principals or assistant principals on their work with teachers, therefore, holds potential for improving instructional quality.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, school leaders refers to principals and assistant principals who are responsible for conducting teacher classroom observations as part of the teachers' evaluation process.

<sup>2</sup> In the U.S. Virgin Islands, district superintendents evaluate principals assigned to schools in their districts, whereas school principals evaluate the assistant principals assigned to their schools. Throughout the document evaluator refers to either the superintendent evaluating a principal or the principal evaluating an assistant principal.

## ABOUT THIS MANUAL

### **The U. S. Virgin Islands Evaluator's Manual for the Instructional Feedback Observation**

(Evaluator's Manual) provides an overview of the process for observing a principal or assistant principal who is providing instructional feedback to a teacher after a formal teacher classroom observation, which, in the U.S. Virgin Islands, occurs during a teacher post-observation conference. The Evaluator's Manual provides forms, tools and resources that evaluators,

*The forms and tools in this document require training before use to generate fair, valid, and reliable scores and ratings of a principal's or assistant principal's performance in providing instructional feedback.*

principals and assistant principals need to complete an instructional feedback observation. The Evaluator's Manual and content are only to be used when observing a principal or assistant principal during a teacher post-observation conference, when a principal or assistant principal and teacher meet to discuss the teacher's classroom observation and the principal or assistant principal provides feedback, scores, and information on planning for improvement.

The evaluator's observation of a principal's or assistant principal's instructional feedback practice will be fair and consistent only to the extent that the preparation and procedures outlined in the Evaluator's Manual are followed. A minimum of two instructional feedback observations are required as part of the principal evaluation process, and one instructional feedback observation is required as part of the assistant principal evaluation process. The second assistant principal's observation is focused on another aspect of the assistant principal's school leadership practice.

## THE PERFORMANCE LEVEL RUBRIC: THE FOUNDATION

The evaluator assesses the degree to which principals or assistant principals are strong teacher evaluators and specifically provide teachers with actionable feedback. Key questions to consider include:

- What does good instructional feedback look like?
- What is the difference between instructional feedback that seems to generate no change and instructional feedback that leads to steady improvements in teacher practice?
- What effective practices do instructional leaders use in generating collaborative, productive conversations with teachers about their performance?

**The Instructional Feedback Observation Performance Level Rubric** (see appendices) describes key practices that principals and assistant principals should use when reviewing observation results and providing feedback during post-observation conferences with teachers. The rubric translates these practices into five concrete behavioral indicators (evidence use, professional interactions, differentiated questioning, leading conversations, and written feedback) that are described across four levels of performance (Unsatisfactory, Basic, Proficient, and

Distinguished). Evaluators use this rubric as the foundation for the instructional feedback observation process.

The rubric provides evaluators, principals and assistant principals with a common language and framework for discussing individual strengths and weaknesses and for identifying concrete steps to improve instructional feedback. The rubric also helps the evaluator to more efficiently assess the quality of feedback that principals or assistant principals give to teachers and ensure that scores are evidence based. Figure 1 shows the behavioral indicators for the instructional feedback observation.

Behavioral Indicators for Instructional Feedback



Figure 1. Behavioral indicators for instructional feedback. This figure lists the indicators related to delivering effective feedback to school leaders

The rubric uses a four-point scale to score performance:

1. **Unsatisfactory.** The principal or assistant principal demonstrates the *practices and behaviors that are minimally necessary* to provide teachers with useful instructional feedback.
2. **Basic.** The principal or assistant principal demonstrates basic levels of proficiency and a *partial command of the practices and behaviors* necessary to provide teachers with useful instructional feedback.
3. **Proficient.** The principal or assistant principal demonstrates basic levels of proficiency and a *full command of the core practices and behaviors* necessary to provide teachers with useful instructional feedback.
4. **Distinguished.** The principal or assistant principal demonstrates a *full command of the core practices and behaviors* necessary for providing teachers with useful instructional feedback and demonstrates *additional practices and behaviors* to ensure that teachers receive the support necessary to improve their instruction and achieve professional goals.

The performance descriptions that define each level are purposely developmental and focus on informed practice. By describing concrete practices and skills at different levels of performance, the rubric enables evaluators to gather precise performance data and use those data to give feedback to principals or assistant principals. Practices and skills described in the *proficient* and *distinguished* categories can be used to build on strengths or to strategize ways to improve in areas of weakness.

The Instructional Feedback Observation Performance Level Rubric addresses Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standard 2: “An education leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 14). In addition, the Instructional Feedback Observation Performance Level Rubric aligns with the Five Essentials of School Leadership Framework, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1.

*Alignment of the Five Essential Practices of School Leadership and the Instructional Feedback Observation Performance Level Rubric*

Aligning Leadership Practice 2: Focus on Learning and Principal Observation Rubric					
Behavioral Indicator	Indicator 2.1A Improve the Instructional Program	Indicator 2.1B Improve the Instructional Program	Indicator 2.1C Improve the Instructional Program	Indicator 2.2 Support Teachers’ Development of a Positive Classroom Climate	
1: Evidence Use					
2: Professional Interactions					
3: Differentiated Questioning					
4: Leading Conversations					
5: Written Feedback					
Aligning Leadership Practice 3: Manage Organizational Systems and Principal Observation Rubric					
Behavioral Indicator	Indicator 3.1B Manage the Organizational Structure	Indicator 3.1C Manage the Organizational Structure	Indicator 3.2A Lead and Develop Personnel	Indicator 3.2B Lead and Develop Personnel	Indicator 3.2C Lead and Develop Personnel
1: Evidence Use					
2: Professional Interactions					
3: Differentiated Questioning					
4: Leading Conversations					
5: Written Feedback					

## OVERVIEW OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL FEEDBACK OBSERVATION PROCESS

The instructional feedback observation process is organized into five steps: prepare, collect, analyze, discuss, and plan and managed through TalentEd, the VIDE electronic human resources performance management system. Figure 2 provides an overview of the steps.



Figure 2. Overview of the Five Steps for an Instructional Feedback Observation

## Step 1: Prepare

Evaluating instructional feedback requires attention to planning and careful preparation to ensure all participants have the knowledge, skills, and materials required to complete the observation process with fidelity. Observing instructional feedback must be done carefully and requires that all parties agree to and understand the purpose of the observation. Respecting and ensuring confidentiality is a central concern in observing a principal or assistant principal providing instructional feedback to a teacher during the teacher post-observation conference. Teachers rightfully may not wish to have a third party present when receiving formal feedback from their principal or assistant principal. The presence of an evaluator during the teacher's post-observation conference could influence both participants and their interactions in unexpected ways. In addition, teachers understandably may be concerned that information about their performance is being made available to the evaluator.

It is important that principals, assistant principals and teachers involved in the observation are fully informed and understand the purpose and importance of the observation, when it will occur, how long it will take, how the evaluator will be involved, and the expected outcomes. It is particularly important that teachers understand that the *principal* or *assistant principal* is being observed by the evaluator will be observing the *principal's* work, not the teacher and his or her work.

### **Confidentiality**

*Principals and assistant should have the opportunity to conduct an instructional feedback conference in a confidential manner. The information collected by the evaluator should not be made available to anyone except the principal or assistant principal being observed. Similarly, the collection of teacher evaluation data are confidential and is used by the evaluator only to give formative feedback to the principal or assistant principal being observed.*

*The teacher is a participant in the instructional feedback observation and is not being evaluated; the evaluator's scoring of the principal's or assistant principal's performance during the teacher post-observation conference should never be used to influence a teacher's evaluation results.*

### **Schedule**

The evaluator and principal or assistant principal work together to schedule the observation and post-observation conference. The principal or assistant principal should select



conferences with new and experienced teachers or teachers whose evaluation ratings are both high and low. The evaluator will want to observe a principal or assistant principal providing instructional feedback in these varied settings to ensure that the principal or assistant can give effective feedback meets teachers' different individual needs. Although coaching low-performing teachers is often a core focal point in instructional leadership, giving good instructional feedback to the strongest teachers is equally important in helping principals and assistant principals to continually improve and to reaffirm a culture of learning and professional growth among administration and instructional staff. Because this observation focuses on instructional feedback given to a teacher, be sure to select conferences in which the focus will be on sharing instructional feedback should be selected rather than addressing disciplinary or other issues. All scheduling is completed through TalentEd.

### ***Obtain Consent***

The principal or assistant principal who is being observed is responsible for obtaining teacher consent for the evaluator to observe the principal or assistant principal during the teacher's post-observation conference. The principal or assistant principal notifies the teacher beforehand and explains that the principal or assistant principal will be observed during the teacher post-conference and that the purpose is to evaluate the principal or assistant principal, not the teacher. **The Instructional Feedback Observation Teacher Consent Form** (see appendices) is used to obtain teacher consent and the teacher's signature is electronic through TalentEd.

### ***Share Context***

The context of the teacher post-observation conference being observed is important, so the principal or assistant principal provides the following documents related to the teacher's observation to the evaluator:

- Teacher Pre-observation Form SY 15-16 completed and submitted by the teacher before the classroom lesson was observed
- Observation notes taken by the principal or assistant principal during the teacher classroom observation
- Teacher Observation Danielson Framework for Teaching SY15-16 form which was used to score the teacher classroom observation. (This form should have been saved in TalentEd using the Save Progress button, not the Save & Submit button)
- Teacher Post-observation Reflection Form SY15-16 completed and submitted by the teacher before the classroom lesson was observed

### ***Review***

It is important that the evaluator, as well as the principal or assistant principal, understand the five behavioral indicators for instructional feedback. Evaluators, principals and assistant

principals should study the Instructional Feedback Observation Performance Level Rubric as well as the Instructional Feedback Observation Scoring Form (which contains the rubric and is used for scoring) to gain a full understanding of behaviors related to providing effective instructional feedback. The Behavioral Indicators Quick Reference Guide (see appendices) is provided as a quick reference tool to use when needed.

## Step 2: Collect

Collecting and recording accurate information is essential when evaluating performance. In particular, a detailed observation is more likely to result in accurate and fair performance scores and is also more likely to be technically sound and legally defensible.

### ***Set the Right Tone***

It is important to establish a positive tone for the observation and that all participants feel comfortable about the process. The evaluator and principal or assistant principal should ask the teacher if he or she has any questions about the process. Verify consent by asking the teacher's verbal permission for the evaluator to sit in on the post-observation conference and to obtain a copy of any documentation used as part of the conference. The evaluator should be positioned where he or she can clearly see the principal or assistant principal, the teacher and their interactions. The evaluator should avoid sitting so close that he or she becomes part of the post-conference; however, the evaluator should sit close enough that he or she can clearly see and hear everything.

*The evaluator is like a fly on the wall, being as unobtrusive and unnoticeable as possible. He or she should not become involved or participate in the session, and should refrain from making any verbal or facial expressions that could be interpreted by the principal, assistant principal or teacher.*

### ***Take Detailed Notes***

Before the observation session begins, the evaluator should note the context of the situation that is being observed. In particular, notes should be taken about the teacher's level of experience, the students' prior achievement and achievement goals, school-specific initiatives for curriculum and instruction that may be relevant to the instructional feedback, and other factors. As much information as possible should be gathered so that the situation can be clearly described in the observation summary and the behavior of the principal or assistant principal can be evaluated within the context.

Notes are taken using the notes feature of the Instructional Feedback Observation Scoring Form in TalentEd, the Running Record Template (see appendices), or some other note taking tool. If **not** using the notes feature of the Instructional Feedback Observation Scoring Form, notes will need to be in TalentEd in order to complete the observation process. The evaluator takes as many notes as possible so that summaries are detailed and accurate;

however, he or she should be careful to balance note taking with observing nonverbal gestures and interactions between the teacher and principal or assistant. Describe what the principal or assistant principal says, what the teacher says, and what information or materials are used during their interactions. Pay careful attention to capturing the questions the principal or assistant principal asks, the teacher's responses, and the sources of evidence that the principal or assistant principal and the teacher include in the discussion.

Describe any outcomes of the post-observation conference, such as any follow-up actions to be taken by the principal or assistant principal, or the teacher. Note any relevant outcomes that may provide information about the principal's or assistant principal's performance or could have an impact on the principal's or assistant principal's future performance—for example, if additional coaching or feedback conferences are set-up with a teacher. Following are general tips for taking observations notes. Table 2 shows an example of note taking.

- **Focus only on the principal's or assistant principal's comments, questions, or references to classroom data or student-teacher interactions.** Do not think about or score the principal or assistant principal on other aspects of his or her practice that are not observed. Otherwise, critical information may be miss or extraneous information could be included that could impact scoring.
- **Record only information that is observed.** Do not assume that other practices are occurring, and do not "fill in the blanks" on missing behaviors or information. Record and score only what you observe, and do not include information from teachers or other school administrators that cannot be verified or has not been observed. Relying only on what is observed, results in more accurate and fair evaluation of instructional feedback practice.
- **Avoid incorporating extraneous performance.** The focus should be on the actual performance of the principal or assistant principal being observed. Avoid incorporating the performance of other individuals. In addition, the outcomes of the performance should not be incorporated into scoring unless these outcomes *reflect the instructional feedback performance of the principal or assistant principal.*

Table 2.

*Example of Observation Notes using the Instructional Feedback Observation Running Record Template*

Principal says or does.....	Teacher says or does.....	Coding
<p>At preconf, you mentioned trying to use grading rubrics with your kids. Risky—with observer in room. Admire you took that risk.</p> <p>How has that evolved?</p> <p>Really? You didn't seem thrown off. Telling me about your planning?</p> <p>So, think about how you prepared, where do you think you were on the rubric?</p>	<p>Took 2 days to develop the student rubric. Longer than I thought.</p> <p>Combined rubrics from 2 classes into single rubric, made copies and handed out to each class. But meat of rubric developed by each class. Students grasped the lesson, seemed to like it.</p> <p>I think it went well, think I was proficient.</p>	

### ***Gather Additional Evidence***

After the observation, the evaluator gathers additional information by reviewing the teacher observation forms provided by the principal or assistant principal and any other documents or forms used during the observation session. Behavioral indicator 5 requires the evaluator to assess how the principal or assistant principal has provided written feedback. This can be determined using teacher observation documents to verify that the correct evidence was accurately presented to the teacher.

### **Step 3: Analyze**

Analyzing the observational information that was collected is an essential step in the principal and assistant principal evaluation processes. The evaluator allocates time soon after the observation to reflect upon the notes taken and additional information gathered. All notes and any relevant materials are reviewed before assigning scores using the Instructional Feedback Observation Scoring Form in TalentEd. To accurately analyze notes, carefully read the observation notes, interpret the data, and compare them with the performance level

descriptors. Spending this additional time reviewing materials is essential if the evaluator wants to accurately evaluate the principal's or assistant principal's performance.

### Coding

Using the five behavioral indicator labels (*Evidence Use*, *Professional Interactions*, *Differentiated Questioning*, *Leading Conversations*, *Written Feedback*), the evaluator codes the notes and other information as evidence for the specific behavioral indicators. The evaluator should refer often to the Behavioral Indicators Quick Reference Guide to make decisions about what information in observation notes applies to each of the behavioral indicators. Table 3 is an example of coded notes.

Table 3.

Example of Coded Observation Notes

Principal says or does.....	Teacher says or does.....	Coding
At preconference, you mentioned trying to use grading rubrics with your kids. Risky—with observer in room. Admire you took that risk.		<i>Evidence Use</i>
How has that evolved?	Took 2 days to develop the student rubric. Longer than I thought.	<i>Professional Interactions</i>
Really? You didn't seem thrown off. Telling me about your planning?	Combined rubrics from 2 classes into single rubric, made copies and handed out to each class. But meat of rubric developed by each class. Students grasped the lesson, seemed to like it.	<i>Differentiated Questioning</i>
		<i>Leading Conversations</i>
So, think about how you prepared, where do you think you were on the rubric?	I think it went well, think I was proficient.	<i>Written Feedback</i>

### Scoring

The evaluator uses the Instructional Feedback Observation Scoring Form in TalentEd to score the observation. The evaluator reviews the performance level descriptors for each indicator, refers to all coded notes for evidence, and makes judgments about the level of performance observed. By comparing the performance observed and recorded with the level of performance, the evaluator should be able to assign one of the four ratings (Unsatisfactory, Basic, Proficient, and Distinguished) to each indicator. The evidence is summarized in the box below the scoring.

For Behavioral Indicator 5 (Written Feedback), the evaluator reviews the teacher observation documents provided by the principal or assistant principal, or that was collected after the observation. The evaluator consider the following questions and note any relevant information for formative feedback:

- Are the examples or data that the principal or assistant principal cited during the post-observation conference accurately reflected in the teacher observation forms?
- Did the principal or assistant principal provide feedback on the most important aspects of the teacher's performance, as detailed in the observation forms? In other words, did the principal or assistant principal fail to discuss any key deficiencies or unique strengths that are documented in the forms?
- Is there any evidence that the principal or assistant principal misinterpreted data or evidence when communicating feedback to the teacher?

The evaluator then determines the scores for each indicator and marks the appropriate radio button on the Instructional Feedback Observation Scoring Form in TalentEd. When assigning a score, the evaluator should be sure to examine the behavioral anchors for a higher and lower value than the score he or she thinks should be assigned. This approach will help to target which scoring should be given. The following tips provide additional guidance on scoring:

- **Depth:** to what extent was the interaction limited, perfunctory, or superficial versus sustained, in-depth, and meaningful?
- **Frequency:** are the majority of the interactions at one performance level, or is there a mixture? Use counts taken from your notes to help guide your performance level selection. This is particularly important for Indicator 3: Differentiated Questioning.
- **Duration:** is the interaction or practice you observed relatively short or long in proportion to the total amount of time you observed?

Once completed, the evaluator should save the completed Instructional Feedback Observation Scoring Form in TalentEd using Save Progress . This way the evaluator can use additional informaiton from the principal or assistant principal post-observation conference to finalize the scoring.

## Step 4: Discuss

The evaluator must conduct a post-observation conference with the principal or assistant principal after each instructional feedback observation. At this meeting, the evaluator discusses the observation, provides summative feedback, and discusses scoring decisions with the principal or assistant principal. Guiding questions for the post-instructional feedback observation conference (see appendices) are provided to help guide the conversation.

Giving a principal or assistant principal good feedback, especially when combined with regular coaching, helps a principal or assistant principal identify and develop behavioral adjustments or

skills that are crucial for improving leadership practice (Goldring et al., 2009). Just as principals and assistant principals often vary in their skill levels at delivering instructional feedback to teachers, evaluators often vary widely in their level of comfort and their training for providing feedback and coaching to principals or assistant principals. The following strategies will assist in giving formative feedback to a principal or assistant principal:

### ***Prepare for the Discussion***

- Review observations notes and scores.
- Determine the principal's or assistant principal's major areas of strengths and weaknesses that were demonstrated in the instructional feedback observations. Use the coded notes as evidence.
- Ask the principal or assistant principal to reflect on his or her performance at providing instructional feedback.

### ***Conduct the Discussion***

- Meet with the principal or assistant principal in a private and comfortable office to discuss the results of the observations and the ratings.
- Prompt the principal or assistant to share his or her reflections. Do not explicitly discuss and compare your scores with the principal's or assistant principal's reflection; however, when the principal's or assistant principal's reflection of his or her performance on an indicator is significantly different from the score, ask the principal or assistant principal to describe his or her interpretation of the behavioral indicator and how he or she feels it was reflected in his or her performance during the instructional feedback conference. Draw on observation notes to clarify any misunderstandings the principal or assistant principal may have about a behavioral indicator and base the conversation on strengths or weaknesses that the principal or assistant principal may have overlooked in his or her own reflection.
- Reinforce the principal's or assistant principal's strengths. Diligently cite evidence from observation notes that highlight what the principal or assistant did particularly well during the teacher post-observation conference.
- Build on the principal's or assistant principal's self-reflections and the evidence in observation notes to discuss areas of weakness and specific practices and behaviors that were not demonstrated. Ask the principal or assistant principal to reflect on how he or she might approach the particularly challenging aspects of the previous teacher post-observation conference in a different way in future conferences.
- Use the evidence in the teacher observation forms and observation notes to point out instances where the principal or assistant principal made good use of evidence during his or her explanations. If inconsistencies or deficiencies in the principal's use of the teacher observation evidence was encountered, point these out and ask the principal or assistant principal to explain his or her reasoning.

- If applicable, note any progress (or lack thereof) that the principal or assistant principal has made in areas identified as an area for growth in previous post-observation meetings.

## **Step 5: Plan**

Helping principals and assistant principals to develop clear goals and feasible plans for improving their instructional feedback skills is a crucial step in the evaluation process (Finnerty, 2008; Hooijberg & Lane, 2009; Whitmore, 2004). After providing the principal or assistant principal with feedback during each post-observation meeting, the evaluator should set aside time to assist in developing strategies and identifying resources to improve any areas of weakness. A variety of resources, strategies, and exercises should be offered for each behavioral indicator to help the principal or assistant principal map out a strategy for improvement.

## **CONCLUSION**

Implementing the observation process with fidelity will ensure accurate, fair evaluation results. The results will lead to growth and support for all principals and assistant principals. Information, forms and resources are available on the VIDE EES web portal at <http://tle.vide.vi>. Other support for evaluators, as well as principals and assistant principals is available by contacting the VIDE Division of Human Resources or the Division of Curriculum and Instruction. A complete contact list of supports is on the home page of the VIDE EES web portal.




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## APPENDIX



## Instructional Feedback Observation Performance Level Rubric


Behavioral Indicator 1: Evidence Use				
Indicator	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
	<p>The principal or assistant principal provides the teacher with completed evaluation forms in writing.</p>	<p>The principal or assistant principal centers the conversation on evidence collected during the classroom observation.</p> <p>The principal or assistant principal accurately connects evidence with appropriate standards and indicators and uses vocabulary from the instructional framework.</p>	<p>The principal or assistant principal considers the teacher's interpretations of the observation evidence.</p> <p>The principal or assistant principal encourages teachers, either during pre-observation<sup>3</sup> or post-observation meetings, to bring additional evidence to determine effectiveness of observed teaching and learning.</p>	<p>The principal or assistant principal integrates observation evidence with teacher-provided evidence (e.g., student work related to observed lesson).</p>

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<sup>3</sup> Evaluators can gather evidence for this indicator during their pre-observation meetings with the principal or by reviewing the principal and teacher's pre-observation meeting forms.

Behavioral Indicator 2: Professional Interactions				
Indicator	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
	<p>The principal or assistant principal shows he/she is listening by making eye contact with the teacher throughout the meeting.</p> <p>The meeting environment allows the teacher and principal or assistant principal to view and edit documents.</p> <p>The principal or assistant principal provides undivided attention and minimizes disruptions.</p>	<p>The principal or assistant principal and teacher use respectful language, listen to each other when speaking, and respond to each other's viewpoints.</p> <p>The principal or assistant principal checks in with the teacher to ensure understanding and responds to the teacher's perspectives and needs.</p>	<p>The meeting is conversational and balanced, with the principal or assistant principal providing multiple opportunities for both the teacher and principal or assistant principal to discuss observed instructional practices.</p> <p>The principal or assistant principal engages with the teacher's responses by paraphrasing the teacher's statements to acknowledge, clarify, summarize, or help organize the teacher's thoughts.</p>	<p>The principal or assistant principal encourages and responds positively when the teacher pushes back on the principal's or assistant principal's suggestions or interpretations.</p> <p>The principal or assistant principal engages the teacher in conversation about taking instructional risks, and provides assurances that risk will be supported.</p>

Behavioral Indicator 3: Differentiated Questioning				
Indicator	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
	The principal or assistant principal asks factual questions that require the teacher to describe or name aspects of practice, but moves on without expanding on the teacher's comments.	The principal or assistant principal asks reflective questions that prompt the teacher to reflect on evidence and the rubric, and to explain his or her thinking.	The principal or assistant principal asks questions that help the teacher connect the observation feedback to student learning and prompt the teacher to brainstorm potential improvements or alternative strategies.	The principal or assistant principal asks questions that prompt the teacher to reflect on the feasibility of potential improvements or alternative strategies and their implementation in the classroom.
Behavioral Indicator 4: Leading Conversation				
Indicator	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
	The principal or assistant principal prepares for the conversation by identifying meeting goals and developing a short outline for the meeting.	The principal or assistant principal paces the conversation to focus primarily on no more than two areas of growth and two areas of strength based on observation evidence and framework indicators.	<p>The conversation culminates in concrete action steps to improve practice immediately.</p> <p>The principal or assistant principal identifies resources that the teacher can access to improve in identified areas for growth and strength (e.g., colleagues, professional development, communities of practice, print and online resources).</p>	The principal or assistant principal discusses the actions that school leadership (e.g., principal, other administrators, teacher leaders, instructional coach) will take to support the teacher in improving performance.

Behavioral Indicator 5: Written Feedback				
Indicator	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
	<p>The observation summary and scoring forms are complete and reference evidence collected through the observation process.</p>	<p>The written feedback references practices, evidence, or other information collected during the observation process as a rationale for ratings on each standard.</p> <p>The written feedback includes positive comments about the teacher's instructional performance.</p> <p>The written feedback uses vocabulary from the instructional framework.</p>	<p>The written feedback identifies at least one area of growth and one area of strength for instructional improvement.</p> <p>The written feedback clearly states actions that the teacher can take for instructional improvement and identifies timelines and evidence (in the professional growth plan).</p>	<p>The written feedback clearly states the actions that school leadership (e.g., principal, or assistant principal, other administrators, teacher leaders, instructional coach) will take to support the teacher in improving performance.</p>

## Behavioral Indicators Quick Reference

**Instructions:** The following graphic summarizes the core “look-fors” for each behavioral indicator in **Tool 3: Performance Level Rubric and Rating Form**. Use this “Quick Reference” in coding and analyzing data captured in **Tool 2: Information Collection Form**.

### 1. Evidence Use

- Centers the conversation on observation evidence
- Accurately aligns data to the framework and uses framework vocabulary
- Encourages teachers to bring additional evidence
- Integrates and considers teacher-provided evidence

### 2. Professional Interactions

- Provides focused attention (e.g., eye contact, minimizes disruptions)
- Uses appropriate communication skills (e.g., respectful language, listening, checks for understanding) to create a balanced conversation
- Encourages teacher voice and instructional risk-taking

### 3. Differentiated Questioning

- Asks factual questions (name or describe practice)
- Asks reflective questions that prompt explanation of thinking
- Asks questions that help create connections or brainstorm new strategies
- Asks reflective questions that examine the feasibility of new strategies

### 4. Leading Conversations

- Sets goals and outlines a plan for the conference
- Paces the conversation intentionally to focus on high priority feedback
- Ends conversation with concrete action steps and suggested resources
- Identifies school leadership actions to support the teacher’s growth

### 5. Written Feedback

- Completes observation forms and references evidence in scoring
- Uses instructional framework vocabulary and identifies areas for growth and areas of strength with concrete action steps for further improvement
- Identifies school leadership actions to support the teacher’s growth



## Instructional Feedback Observation Teacher Consent Form SY15-16

You are receiving this request because the superintendent or other observer would like to observe your principal or assistant principal providing instructional feedback during your teacher post-observation conference. We are asking that you voluntarily consent to allow the superintendent or other observer to observe your post-observation conference with the principal or assistant principal. The following information will help you to make an informed decision:

1. The purpose of the observation is to assess the principal's or assistant principal's practices as instructional feedback providers only. Your actions are not being evaluated in any way.
2. The observation will occur during the entire post-observation conference.
3. All observation notes will be kept confidential, and are intended to support principal or assistant principal instructional leadership growth only.
4. Your participation in the observation is your voluntary choice. We do not want you to feel uncomfortable with this request. If you choose not to participate, you will not be penalized in any way.

If you have additional questions about this request, please contact your principal or assistant principal, or superintendent office.

Please select one of the following choices and electronically sign and return the form to the requestor through TalentEd.

☐ **Yes!** I am willing to participate in the principal or assistant principal observation, which occurs during my teacher post-observation conference.

☐ **No.** I am not willing to participate in the principal or assistant principal observation.

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Signature

---

Date

---

Print Name

## Instructional Feedback Pre-Observation Checklist SY15-16

The principal or assistant principal that is being observed gathers the following documents and provides them to their evaluator<sup>4</sup> before the he or she observes the principal or assistant principal providing instructional feedback during a teacher's post-observation conference.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. A copy of the signed teacher observation consent form, which will allows the evaluator to observe the teacher post-observation feedback session that the principal or assistant principal will be conducting.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. A copy of the following completed teacher observation forms for the teacher that the principal or assistant principal will be providing instructional feedback to during the teacher's post observation conference that the evaluator will be observing:
  - Teacher Pre-observation Form SY 15-16 completed and submitted by the teacher before the classroom lesson was observed
  - Observation notes taken by the principal or assistant principal during the teacher classroom observation
  - Teacher Observation Danielson Framework for Teaching SY15-16 form, which was used to score the teacher classroom observation. (This form should have been saved in TalentEd using the Save Progress button, not the Save & Submit button)
  - Teacher Post-observation Reflection Form SY15-16 completed and submitted by the teacher before the classroom lesson was observed

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<sup>4</sup> In the U.S. Virgin Islands, district superintendents evaluate principals assigned to schools in their districts, whereas school principals evaluate the assistant principals assigned to their schools. Throughout the document evaluator refers to either the superintendent evaluating a principal or the principal evaluating an assistant principal.

## Instructional Feedback Observation Running Record Tool

This tool can be used by the evaluator to take notes during an observation of a principal or assistant principal providing instructional feedback to a teacher during his or her teacher post-observation conference. It is can also be used to code the notes after the observation. Notes are coded for specific behavioral indicators detailed in the Instructional Feedback Observation Performance Level Rubric (see appendices).

Remember: The evaluator is like a fly on the wall, being as unobtrusive and unnoticeable as possible. He or she should not become involved or participate in the session, and should refrain from making any verbal or facial expressions that could be interpreted by the principal, assistant principal or teacher.

Principal says or does.....	Teacher says or does.....	Coding

## Common Rating Errors and How to Avoid Them

When observing and scoring a principal's or assistant principal's job performance, evaluators can easily make errors that reduce the accuracy and objectivity of the ratings. These errors also can limit the validity, fairness, and reliability of ratings. For accurate performance appraisal, it is essential for evaluators to minimize these errors as much as possible.

Following is a list of several common rating errors. In addition to a brief definition of each error, this list provides some general suggestions for minimizing their impact on evaluator scoring. Please examine these errors and refer back to them periodically during your scoring to avoid making these errors.

### Central Tendency

**Definition:** A rater evaluates the principal or assistant using points on the middle of the scale and avoids extremely high or low ratings.

**How to avoid this error:** Make sure to pay careful attention to the behavioral anchors that define job performance at each scale point. Compare information about a principal's or assistant principal's performance with these behavioral examples. Also, keep in mind that behavioral anchors are examples. Thus, if a principal or assistant principal does not display every single behavior for a particular rating, this situation does not prevent you from using that rating.

### Contrast Effect

**Definition:** A rater directly compares the performance of one principal or assistant principal to the performance of another principal or assistant principal. This contrast effect is exacerbated when the performance levels of the compared principals or assistant principals differ significantly. This effect may lead to higher ratings for above-average principals or assistant principals and lower ratings for poorer performing principals or assistant principals.

**How to avoid this error:** When making performance ratings, do not compare principals or assistant principals. Instead, compare the performance of principals or assistant principals to the anchors on the scoring scale.

### Focusing on One or Two Incidents

**Definition:** A rater bases ratings on a few particularly effective or ineffective principal or assistant principal behaviors. As a result, ratings of performance are based on just a few instances rather than on the full range of that principal's or assistant principal's behavior.

**How to avoid this error:** Although some principal or assistant principal behaviors—such as very effective or very ineffective behaviors—may stand out in your mind, remember to take into account the full range of performance you observe. Taking detailed notes and frequently referring to the performance dimensions, especially the behavioral indicators, can help to avoid this error.

### **Frame of Reference**

**Definition:** A rater's personal performance standards inappropriately take the place of the job requirements outlined by the school or district.

**How to avoid this error:** Carefully examine the rating scale for each dimension. In particular, you should focus on the behavioral anchors associated with each performance level. Prior to making your ratings, review the official job description for the principal or assistant principal position. Try to avoid incorporating your personal standards or feelings about what should constitute effective job performance.

### **Halo Error**

**Definition:** A rater allows ratings on one behavioral indicator to influence ratings on another behavioral indicator.

**How to avoid this error:** Remember that behavioral indicators are independent. Therefore, your ratings on one behavioral indicator should not influence ratings on another behavioral indicator. Instead, consider a principal's or assistant principal's performance on each behavioral indicator separately. Use only information that is relevant to the behavioral indicator that you are rating.

### **High Potential Error**

**Definition:** A rater gives higher ratings to a principal or assistant principal than he or she actually deserves. The higher rating is given because the rater believes that the principal or assistant principal has the potential to one day be an excellent principal. Alternatively, this error also could occur when a rater believes that the principal or assistant principal has low potential; in this situation, the rater gives that principal or assistant principal lower ratings than he or she deserves.

**How to avoid this error:** Remember to consider *all* instances of an employee's *actual* job performance. Ratings should be made based only on an employee's behavior. Ratings should not be made based on an employee's anticipated improvements or declines.

### **Leniency and Severity**

**Definition:** A rater gives mostly high (lenient) or low (severe) ratings to a principal or assistant principal in a manner that is inconsistent with the principal's or assistant principal's actual performance.

**How to avoid this error:** Make sure to pay careful attention to the scale anchors when making your ratings. Also, review the anchors in order to understand how performance is defined at each scale point. You should not try to intentionally be an “easy” or “hard” rater.

### **Recency Bias**

**Definition:** A rater is inclined to remember recent events better than those that occurred in the past. In this situation, the rater often places greater emphasis or weight on what a principal or assistant principal has done most recently. This error results in ratings that are often based on a smaller sample of work.

**How to avoid this error:** When making performance ratings, consider all of the principal’s or or assistant principal’s performance over the entire rating time period. This approach will help to ensure that a complete group of behaviors is considered. Remind yourself that the level of performance at the beginning of the time period is just as important as more recent performance.

### **Similar-to-Me Bias**






**Definition:** A rater provides higher ratings to principals or assistant principals who are similar to themselves, and lower ratings to principals or assistant principals who are dissimilar. A related bias occurs when raters allow how much they like or dislike a principal or assistant principal to influence the principal’s or assistant principal’s performance ratings.

**How to avoid this error:** Avoid incorporating personal feelings or perceptions about a principal or assistant principal into your performance ratings. Only actual job performance should be used to make ratings, and other pieces of information should not be used.

## Instructional Feedback Observation Scoring Form

For each indicator, select a performance level (Unsatisfactory, Basic, Proficient or Distinguished) that best reflects the principal's or assistant principal's specific practice and behaviors based on evidence collected during principal's or assistant principal's instructional feedback observation. Use the cumulative rubric provided and document evidence.






### Behavioral Indicator 1: Evidence Use \*

1=Unsatisfactory	2=Basic	3=Proficient	4=Distinguished	Not Observed
 <p>The principal or assistant principal provides the teacher with completed evaluation forms in writing.</p>	 <p>The principal or assistant principal centers the conversation on evidence collected during the classroom observation. The principal or assistant principal accurately connects evidence with appropriate standards and indicators and uses vocabulary from the instructional framework.</p>	 <p>The principal or assistant principal considers the teacher's interpretations of the observation evidence. The principal or assistant principal encourages teachers, either during pre-observation or post-observation meetings, to bring additional evidence to determine effectiveness of observed teaching and learning.</p>	 <p>The principal or assistant principal integrates observation evidence with teacher-provided evidence (e.g., student work related to observed lesson).</p>	 <p>If the component is not observed during the principal or assistant principal observation, no score is assigned or used in the total domain score.</p>

Evidence:

Document the evidence collected during the principal or assistant principal observation and used to rate this indicator. \*

Behavioral Indicator 2: Professional Interactions \*






1=Unsatisfactory	2=Basic	3=Proficient	4=Distinguished	Not Observed
 <p>The principal or assistant principal shows he/she is listening by making eye contact with the teacher throughout the meeting. The meeting environment allows the teacher and principal or assistant principal to view and edit documents. The principal or assistant principal provides undivided attention and minimizes disruptions.</p>	 <p>The principal or assistant principal and teacher use respectful language, listen to each other when speaking, and respond to each other's viewpoints. The principal or assistant principal checks in with the teacher to ensure understanding and responds to the teacher's perspectives and needs.</p>	 <p>The meeting is conversational and balanced, with the principal or assistant principal providing multiple opportunities for both the teacher and principal or assistant principal to discuss observed instructional practices. The principal or assistant principal engages with the teacher's responses by paraphrasing the teacher's statements to acknowledge, clarify, summarize, or help organize the teacher's thoughts.</p>	 <p>The principal or assistant principal encourages and responds positively when the teacher pushes back on the principal's or assistant principal's suggestions or interpretations. The principal or assistant principal engages the teacher in conversation about taking instructional risks, and provides assurances that risk will be supported.</p>	 <p>If the component is not observed during the principal or assistant principal observation, no score is assigned or used in the total domain score.</p>

Evidence:

Document the evidence collected during the principal or assistant principal observation and used to rate this indicator. \*








Behavioral Indicator 3: Differentiated Questioning \*

1=Unsatisfactory	2=Basic	3=Proficient	4=Distinguished	Not Observed
 <p>The principal or assistant principal asks factual questions that require the teacher to describe or name aspects of practice, but moves on without expanding on the teacher's comments.</p>	 <p>The principal or assistant principal asks reflective questions that prompt the teacher to reflect on evidence and the rubric, and to explain his or her thinking.</p>	 <p>The principal or assistant principal asks questions that help the teacher connect the observation feedback to student learning and prompt the teacher to brainstorm potential improvements or alternative strategies.</p>	 <p>The principal or assistant principal asks questions that prompt the teacher to reflect on the feasibility of potential improvements or alternative strategies and their implementation in the classroom.</p>	 <p>If the component is not observed during the principal or assistant principal observation, no score is assigned or used in the total domain score.</p>

Evidence:

Document the evidence collected during the principal or assistant principal observation and used to rate this indicator. \*






Behavioral Indicator 4: Leading Conversations \*

1=Unsatisfactory	2=Developing	3=Proficient	4=Distinguished	Not Observed
 <p>The principal or assistant principal prepares for the conversation by identifying meeting goals and developing a short outline for the meeting.</p>	 <p>The principal or assistant principal paces the conversation to focus primarily on no more than two areas of growth and two areas of strength based on observation evidence and framework indicators.</p>	 <p>The conversation culminates in concrete action steps to improve practice immediately. The principal or assistant principal identifies resources that the teacher can access to improve in identified areas for growth and strength (e.g., colleagues, professional development, communities of practice, print and online resources).</p>	 <p>The principal or assistant principal discusses the actions that school leadership (e.g., principal or assistant principal, other administrators, teacher leaders, instructional coach) will take to support the teacher in improving performance.</p>	 <p>If the component is not observed during the principal or assistant principal observation, no score is assigned or used in the total domain score.</p>

Evidence:

Document the evidence collected during the principal or assistant principal observation and used to rate this indicator. \*

Behavioral Indicator 5: Written Feedback \*

1=Unsatisfactory	2=Basic	3=Proficient	4=Distinguished	Not Observed
 <p>The observation summary and scoring forms are complete and reference evidence collected through the observation process.</p>	 <p>The written feedback references practices, evidence, or other information collected during the observation process as a rationale for ratings on each standard. The written feedback includes positive comments about the teacher's instructional performance. The written feedback uses vocabulary from the instructional framework.</p>	 <p>The written feedback identifies at least one area of growth and one area of strength for instructional improvement. The written feedback clearly states actions that the teacher can take for instructional improvement and identifies timelines and evidence (in the professional growth plan).</p>	 <p>The written feedback clearly states the actions that school leadership (e.g., principal, other administrators, teacher leaders, instructional coach) will take to support the teacher in improving performance.</p>	 <p>If the component is not observed during the principal or assistant principal observation, no score is assigned or used in the total domain score.</p>

Evidence:

Document the evidence collected during the principal or assistant principal observation and used to rate this indicator. \*

**Total Instructional Feedback Observation Score**

*Average of all five behavioral indicator scores*

Field value will be calculated upon Save Progress.

**Evaluator Feedback: \***

Attachment #1 [Delete](#)

Attachment #2 [Delete](#)

Attachment #3 [Delete](#)

If the attachment will not upload properly, [click here](#) to try the alternate version.

## **Instructional Feedback Post-Observation Guiding Questions**

### **Instructions**

The post-observation conference is convened after each principal or assistant principal observation. The post-observation conversation (a) encourages principal or assistant principal reflection on instructional feedback practice in light of performance evidence, (b) provides principals or assistant principals performance feedback from their evaluator, and (c) explains how observation results will be used to support continued growth.

The following questions are provided as a resource to guide the post-observation discussion.

### **Questions**

1. To what degree was the teacher post-observation conference typical of the principal's or assistant principal's practice of providing instructional feedback to teachers? What, if anything, was not typical?
2. To what extent did the principal or assistant principal meet his or her goals for this teacher post-observation conference, both in terms of work to support this teacher's growth and efforts to improve instructional leadership?
3. Reflecting upon this teacher post-observation conference, what does the principal or assistant principal consider as strengths in terms of providing instructional feedback?
4. Reflecting upon this teacher post-observation conference, what does the principal or assistant principal consider his or her growth areas, or areas for improvement, in providing instructional feedback?
5. What supports does the principal or assistant principal think are needed in order to improve his or her instructional leadership in the area of providing instructional feedback?



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