



Using Technology to Improve the Process

Problem:

How do we, as administrators, carry forward the suggestions and recommendations that are made in the write-ups following classroom observations, as well as those made in the formative and summative evaluations? This issue is particularly challenging when we are tracking dozens of staff.

Solution:

We did not want to construct a system that created MORE work for administrators. We were looking to support our positive and thoughtful conversations with staff in a manner that underscored our interest in improving their practice. A suggestion or recommendation that was followed up on sent the message that the suggestion had value and needed further action. A “one and done” approach for a suggestion communicated not only the lack of value of that statement, but a diminished sense of purpose and focus for the entire evaluation.

STEPS

- 1** The administrative team (made up of the four building principals, the special education director and the superintendent) agreed that we could improve the evaluation system by closing the circle of suggestions/recommendations, discussion, and action, by creating a system whereby those suggestions and recommendations had greater visibility than the one-time statement in an observation or evaluation.
- 2** The individual principals experimented with spreadsheets and lists during their fall observations to ascertain the effectiveness of carrying forward this information.
- 3** We discussed our experiences at administrative meetings – the consensus was that these systems created more work, were time consuming, hard to manage...and not worth the effort.
- 4** One principal volunteered to work with the company that manages the educator evaluation software in an effort to design a more efficient system.
- 5** By the middle of February we had the prototype design for an additional form on our computer program that would automatically populate with the suggestions and recommendations for each teacher. This would allow the evaluator and educator the opportunity to maintain an on-going dialogue about ideas to improve classroom practices and to deepen the value of the evaluation.



Rural public school district in Franklin County.
Level 2 District.



Reflections on the Process:

This initiative came out of a question raised during a review of our evaluation system. As an administrative group we saw the benefit of following up on our suggestions and recommendations to the teachers, but were stymied by the number of evaluations. By discovering an efficient system to support those efforts we have begun to address the issue and continue in our determination to maintain robust and helpful conversations with the teachers.

"As we look at the professional culture elements of the Teacher Rubric, developing teacher capacity for observation, reflection, and feedback is vital!"

*Margot Lacey, Principal,
Leverett Elementary School*

