



Creating “Quick Look” Tools and Resources for Educators

Problem:

We recognized a need to decrease anxiety and address questions regarding the structural components of the new teacher evaluation system. In completing our second year of our new educator evaluation system, we would like to see less energy devoted to “figuring out” the system and more effort allotted to self-reflection, progress monitoring, and effective feedback.

Solution:

The evaluation system requirements need to be communicated through a streamlined and easily referenced format. We decided to create “quick look” documents that would be available to all participants in the system through the district website in the Spring of 2015 and distributed as hardcopies in the Fall of 2015. In addition, continuous training needed to be provided to the evaluators to increase their level of comfort with the new system and target calibration across the 12 schools.



Suburban public school district in Norfolk County.
Level 3 District.

STEPS

- 1 Framework visual**
We developed a “Tree” visual to communicate the framework, purpose, and philosophy that drive the evaluation system. This visual includes our mission statement for the evaluation system, representation of the growth process, and the components that support the individual’s growth.
- 2 Timeline visual**
We developed a “quick look” timeline that highlights all deadlines during the evaluation process. This reference would decrease time and effort devoted finding the dates embedded in the contract and eliminate the frustration associated with this work.
- 3 Evidence suggestion visual**
We developed a “quick look” evidence suggestion visual to decrease questions around what is appropriate evidence. This visual will support teachers in identifying classroom strategies that they already use that can support their evaluations.
- 4 Teachers 21 training**
We offered Teachers 21 training to all new administrators in the district and any that felt they could benefit from a refresher. The training focused on the evaluator’s capacity to produce effective feedback that was uniform across the many schools and departments.



Reflections on the Process:

Our participation in the PLN has produced both intended and unintended products. In looking back on the experience, we have grown from the open dialog. Without the neutral forum that the PLN provided, in which administrators and membership leaders could communicate and solve problems, our tangible products would not have been created. We would also have continued in a cycle of devoting energy to “busy work” versus effective reflection and feedback.

“Our team was empowered to address underlying problems through targeting, improving some of the smaller and more manageable components of the system, and engaging in honest dialog.”

Maggie Murphy, CFCE Coordinator

Our decision to be honest with each other regarding our frustrations has led to understanding the resource deficits that will continually plague the effectiveness of our evaluation system. While this experience has increased our capacity to optimize the impact with the resources currently available, we will need to continue engagement and communication with district and town leaders regarding the under-resourced system. An unintended product of this experience is that we can engage in these discussions with a united voice.

Overall, our experience with the PLN has resulted in time-saving tools for participants and a baseline of knowledge for evaluators. It has helped us decrease the frustration associated with the busy work of the new educator evaluation system and created an environment which enabled honest dialog. The PLN team was empowered to address underlying problems through targeting, improving some of the smaller and more manageable components of the system, and engaging in honest dialog. We look forward to using the “quick look” tools for this upcoming year’s evidence and evaluation deadlines.

