Brief #10: Multiple Data Sources

DOCUMENTING TEACHER PERFORMANCE WITH MULTIPLE DATA SOURCES

Use of Multiple Data Sources
Documentation is the process of recording sufficient information about the teacher’s performance to support ongoing evaluation and to justify any personnel decisions based on the evaluation. The basic question is: How will the teacher demonstrate performance of the identified standards?¹ The complexity of professional roles in today’s schools requires a performance evaluation system that reflects that complexity of the job. Given the complexity of teacher’s work, attempting to document the work with one method or data source simply is not sensible or feasible. Peterson et al concisely provided the rationale for using multiple data sources in teacher evaluation when they stated, “no single data source works for all persons...because good teaching comes in a variety of forms and styles.”² Multiple data sources enable the supervisor to obtain a more accurate picture of performance and assist the teacher in increasing student success.

Using multiple data sources in the teacher evaluation process offers numerous advantages over single source data collection processes³. Some of the advantages are:

- A more complete portrait of a teacher’s performance.
- Data collection in more naturally occurring situations. Integration of primary and secondary data sources in the evaluation.
- Greater objectivity and reliability in documenting performance.
- Documentation of performance that is more closely related to actual work.

- More teacher support and involvement in teacher evaluation when they feel that it is pertinent to their own performance and fair in its use of information in their individual case.

What Data Sources Will Be Included in the Recommended Virginia Teacher Evaluation System?

Required:
Two types of data sources are required according to the Code of Virginia. They are observation and student academic progress.

Observation: The Code of Virginia § 22.1-253.13:5 states that teacher evaluations shall include regular observation and evidence that instruction is aligned with the school’s curriculum. Evaluations shall include identification of areas of individual strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for appropriate professional activities. Evaluators are encouraged to conduct observations by observing instruction and work in non-classroom settings.

Student Academic Progress¹: The VDOE Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria incorporate student academic progress as a significant component of the evaluation while encouraging local flexibility in implementation. Some recommended ways to measure student academic progress include:

- Student Achievement Goal Setting: Goal setting focuses attention on students and

¹ Student academic progress will be discussed further in Part 4 and Briefs #15-#17.

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instructional improvement based on a process of determining baseline performance, developing strategies for improvement, and assessing results at the end of the academic year.

- Additional data sources on student academic progress that are perceived as appropriate by the local school divisions.

Suggested:
The following information sources are recommended for consideration in the VDOE Virginia Teacher Evaluation Guidelines to document teacher performance more comprehensively and accurately. These suggested documentation sources for teacher evaluation can be used for both probationary and continuing contract teachers.

- Document Logs: A document log includes artifacts that provide documentation for the teacher performance standards. The document log should emphasize naturally occurring artifacts from teachers’ work (i.e., lesson plans, instructional units, student assessment).
- Self-Evaluation: Self-evaluations reveal the teachers’ perceptions of their job performance.
- Other data sources that are perceived as appropriate by the local school divisions.

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**How will Multiple Data Sources be used in the Evaluation?**

Some teacher standards are better documented through classroom observation (e.g., Instructional Delivery or Learning Environment) whereas other standards may require additional documentation. For example, Standard 2 – Instructional Planning - may necessitate review of the teacher’s lesson plans and Standard 4 - Assessment of and for Learning - may necessitate review of the teacher’s classroom assessments.

Such evidence often is collected by the teacher and presented in a document log as a compliment to the supervisor-conducted observations.

These data sources are not stand-alone, but are complementary to each other and should be integrated in the process of evaluation to provide a richer portrait of teacher performance. The flaws of one data source are often the strengths of another, and by combining multiple methods, evaluators can make more solid judgments regarding teacher performance and make decisions that are supported by multiple type of data. For instance, when compared to other assessment methods (e.g., observations, Student Growth Percentiles), document logs can contain a variety of materials that reflect many of the tasks of teaching (either within or without the classroom) and provide evidence related to standards of performance.

According to the Guidelines for Uniform Performance and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, school divisions have the discretion to generate their own way of combining multiple data sources. Since teachers have different job responsibilities and perform in different circumstances, they should not be evaluated in the same way. Local school divisions should ensure that data sources included are available and appropriate for specific teachers.

Good evaluation and supervision uses a combination of data sources to gauge teachers’ performance on each of the identified seven standards. In contrast with traditional teacher evaluation systems which depend on checklists and obligatory yearly classroom observations, the Guidelines intend to use different data sources to engage teachers in ongoing assessments that continually provide feedback and the opportunity
to examine knowledge, practices, and effectiveness so that they may continue to grow as professionals.


