PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT MATTERS



PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT AND THE TEACHER PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

ETFO FEEO

Your PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT

Professional judgement is an important concept for educators. The term "teachers' professional judgement" is defined in Section C2.5 of the Teacher/Occasional Teacher Central Agreement as:

> Judgement that is informed by professional knowledge of curriculum expectations, context, evidence of learning, methods of instruction and assessment, and the criteria and standards that indicate success in student learning. In professional practice, judgement involves a purposeful and systematic thinking process that evolves in terms of accuracy and insight with ongoing reflection and self-correction.

The Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) process is intended to promote teacher development for improved teaching and student learning. Within that objective, the process is also intended to promote collaboration and professional dialogue between the principal and the teacher. Teacher professional judgement is an essential component of that professional dialogue.

Local collective agreements **may** have additional language that further defines the occasional teacher evaluation/teacher performance appraisal process. Occasional teachers and teachers should consult their local collective agreement and seek clarification from their ETFO local president, as necessary.



Teacher Performance Appraisal for NEW AND EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

The legislative and regulatory requirements for the Teacher Performance Appraisal process are set out in the *Education Act* and in Ontario Regulation (O Reg.) 98/02, O Reg. 99/02, and O Reg. 266/06.

The *Teacher Performance Appraisal Technical Requirements Manual* (2010) details the requirements of the process for both new and experienced teachers. New teachers must achieve two satisfactory performance appraisals within the first 24 months of teaching to successfully complete the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP). Experienced teachers are on a five-year evaluation cycle (four years with no evaluation, the fifth year is the evaluation year).

The principal may conduct additional performance appraisals in a non-evaluation year if there are serious concerns related to a teacher's performance.

The components of the TPA are:

16 16 competencies based on five domains that mirror the Ontario College of Teachers' standards of practice (new teachers are appraised on eight of the competencies under three of the domains)



pre-observation meeting



classroom observation



post-observation meeting



summative report



performance rating

The administrator responsible for performing the TPA has considerable authority to judge whether a teacher has demonstrated the 16 competencies reported on in the assessment. However, there is a wide range of acceptable practices and means to demonstrate the competencies. The optional Log of Teaching Practice form (appendixes F and G in the Teacher Performance Appraisal Technical Requirements Manual) provides examples for ways each competency might be demonstrated in practice, along with the note, "The principal and teacher may add other examples of good teaching practices that they identify during the appraisal process."

The following are aspects of the TPA process in which there is NOT opportunity to exercise your professional judgement:

- ✗ The timelines and components of the appraisal process must be followed.
- ✗ The principal (or vice-principal or supervisory officer) will conduct the appraisal.
- ✗ The teacher must demonstrate the competencies.
- ✗ There must be at least one classroom observation.
- ✗ The teacher must sign to indicate receipt of the summative report.
- ✗ Professional growth strategies will be recommended in the summative report.

The following are aspects of the TPA process in which there IS opportunity to exercise your professional judgement:

- ✓ You can review the *Teacher Performance Appraisal Technical Requirements Manual*.
- ✓ You should have input into the scheduling of TPA meetings.
- ✓ You can request a meeting to discuss the summative report.
- ✓ You have the option of including your own comments on the appraisal in the summative report.
- ✓ You can exercise your professional judgement in how you demonstrate each competency (i.e., the specific practices and strategies used).
- ✓ You can choose to use the Log of Teaching Practice to help document your demonstration of the competencies.
- ✓ New teachers can choose whether to gather and reflect on parental and student input.
- ✓ Teachers can choose how to act on the professional growth strategies recommended.



ANNUAL LEARNING PLAN

The Annual Learning Plan (ALP) is a component of the TPA process for experienced teachers. The ALP provides an opportunity for you to reflect on your professional learning and growth throughout the year, and to collaborate with your principal on strategies to direct your professional learning between appraisals. You must update your ALP each school year.

New teachers are not required to complete an ALP. New teachers complete an Individual NTIP Strategy Form to plan, track, and record the NTIP induction elements they participate in. Upon successful completion of the NTIP elements, new teachers receive the NTIP notation on their Certificate of Qualification and Registration. The year following receipt of the NTIP notation, "new" teachers become "experienced" teachers and develop their ALP in the first year of their initial five-year evaluation cycle.

The following are aspects of the Annual Learning Plan in which there is NOT opportunity to exercise your professional judgement:

- ✗ The ALP must be updated each school year.
- ✗ A minimum of two professional growth goals are required.
- ✗ Teachers must include a proposed action plan and timelines for achieving the professional growth goals.
- ✗ In an evaluation year, the teacher and principal must review and update the ALP in a meeting as part of the performance appraisal process.



The following are aspects of the Annual Learning Plan in which you DO have the opportunity to exercise your professional judgement:

- ✓ The ALP is teacher authored and teacher directed.
- ✓ When setting your professional growth goals, you can consider your learning and growth over the year and the suggestions for growth in the summative report of your most recent performance appraisal. You may also consider school and board improvement goals.
- ✓ You decide which professional activities to include in the ALP action plan.
- ✓ You decide the timelines for carrying out the professional activities in the action plan.
- ✓ In non-evaluation years, you can choose to request a meeting with the principal regarding your updated ALP.
- ✓ You can review ETFO advice on the ALP.
- ✓ You decide if it is appropriate to gather parental and student input in developing, reviewing, and updating your ALP.



Related Resources about PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT

More information and resources about professional judgement are available in the Professional Judgement Matters series on the ETFO members' website.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions or concerns about teacher professional judgement, reach out to your school steward or ETFO local president. Staff in Professional Relations Services (PRS) at the provincial office are also available to help. We can be reached at 416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836.