

QUICK GUIDE TO

Evaluating Your School Leader

Broadly speaking, charter schools are managed by one of two entities: a chief executive or a management company. In either scenario, the board's responsibility is to ensure that management delivers results and the school performs according to its charter contract. Whatever the title given the school leader (i.e. superintendent, principal, school leader, president, executive director, director, manager, or administrator) it is important to establish clarity about roles and responsibilities—especially between the chief executive and the board. In either case, a management contract should exist between the board and the leader of its school, whether that be a person or a company. This contract should help form the basis for evaluating your school's leader.



Conducting the Formal Evaluation

In situations where charter schools are led by a chief executive officer, it is the responsibility of a charter school board to evaluate their performance. School leadership needs feedback on how they are doing, what is working, and what they need to adjust. School leadership evaluations should be based on specific and measurable goals that leadership has already reviewed and understands.

Formal evaluations are normally conducted annually but informal evaluations and feedback should be provided on an on-going basis so there are no surprises or misunderstanding about performance expectations. Feedback should be provided in the spirit of helping staff continuously improve so they can get better results for kids.



Choosing an Evaluation Tool

Texas law, 19 TAC 100.1101(b)(2) and 100.1033(b)(14)(C), requires that public-school boards evaluate their school leader at least once a year. Schools in Texas may choose which evaluation tool they would like to use. The Texas Education Agency has developed the Texas Principal Evaluation & Support System (T-PESS) which charter school boards may choose to assist with their evaluation. Information on T-PESS can be found at: <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/educator-evaluation-and-support-system/texas-principal-evaluation-and-support-system>.

Vanderbilt University has developed a research-based evaluation tool called VAL-ED that measures the effectiveness of school leaders by providing a detailed assessment of a principal's behaviors. You can access a copy of this tool at: <https://valed.resonanteducation.com>.



Components of a Formal Evaluation

Whatever system for evaluating the school's leader that your board chooses to use, it should make sure that system includes the following:

- An established evaluation policy;
- Objectives for what the board helps to accomplish through the evaluation process;
- A self-assessment to be completed before the leader's evaluation;
- An explanation of the type of evaluation method that will be used;
- A list of artifacts that should be considered in the evaluation, including previous evaluations, job description, board established goals, any action plans put in place, etc.;
- A description of data sources that will be used (i.e. student achievement data, financial data, operational data, information from internal sources (staff) and external sources (community stakeholders, etc.);
- Parameters on who conducts the evaluation (committee or the full board) and when and where the evaluation is conducted; and
- The ability for the leader to create an action plan after the evaluation is completed.



Providing Feedback

It is critical that the board share feedback from their evaluation with the school's leader. A school leader evaluation can serve as a valuable tool for beginning the dialogue between the board and the school's leader about ways to improve their leadership so that strong academic results can be maximized for kids. The board should commend the school leader for the areas in which they are performing well and they should assist the leader in developing an action plan for the areas in which they need to improve. It is important to make sure a school leader's performance goals and action plan are directly linked to the academic and financial performance goals of the school. Interim evaluation measures should be established to monitor progress towards completion of the action plan and time should be set aside throughout the year to discuss these interim measures with the school leader. The board should adjust the action plan throughout the year, based on the school leader's progress in meeting interim progress measures and goals.

