User Guide Excerpt

School ADvance™ Administrator Evaluation Users Guide Excerpt

NOTE: School ADvance provides licensed users with both a comprehensive School ADvance Educator Evaluation Design Manual and a complete School ADvance Users Guide for the training and use of the School ADvance Administrator Evaluation System. This 13 page excerpt from the full School ADvance Administrator Evaluation Users Guide provides reviewers with an abbreviated set of understandings and examples for the School ADvance Administrator Evaluation System. The full Users Guide (as outlined in the Table of Contents on pages 3 and 4 of this excerpt) is provided to all School ADvance users to accompany both initial training and ongoing support through on-line training modules and the Users Group.

Foreword

This guide provides licensed School ADvance users with critical information and guidance in using the School ADvance Administrator Evaluation System in ways that will increase user friendliness, reliability and satisfaction. Please review the entire guide as a preliminary step in preparing to use either the School ADvance Principal or Central Office Evaluation Rubrics, and other support tools and resources.

This guide is organized into **six sections**: **(1) Introduction to the School ADvance Administrator Evaluation System; (2**) **Introduction to the Evaluation Process and Cycle;** **(3) Year 1: Getting Started; (4) Year 2: Expanding Implementation; (5) Year 3: Full Implementation; and (6) Training and Support.** Each section provides detailed sub-sections for use of the School ADvance Rubrics and other support tools and resources with the goal of helping districts grow into full implementation in a comfortable and systematic manner. Individual districts may need to modify the three-year implementation plan to best accommodate conditions and circumstances in their schools. School ADvance will assist districts with this process through their membership in the Users Group.

Because implementation of an effective evaluation process is a systems issue, School ADvance also provides a separate Educator Evaluation Systems Design Manual that provides general guidance, tools, activities, and processes that will assist districts in systematically building a well aligned educator evaluation system in ways that reflect best practice and research supported principles. Both the School ADvance Users Guide and the School ADvance Educator Evaluation Systems Manual are available to all licensed School ADvance users without additional cost.

Initial training for School ADvance users includes a two-day orientation and Year 1 Implementation workshop, followed by access to on-demand, on-line training modules (see Year 1: Training and Support). Additionally, School ADvance provides ongoing support and additional training to districts that are licensed users of School the ADvance Administrator Evaluation System through the School ADvance Users Group (on a subscription basis–see Year 1: Training and Support for further information).

School ADvance recommends that all personnel who will be evaluated or who will evaluate other administrators using the School ADvance **System complete the initial two-day orientation and Year 1 implementation training.** We also recommend that districts set up a process through which all users **access and use the on-demand, on-line School ADvance training and support modules** as a source of supplemental training, review, and extended learning. Finally, we recommend that each School ADvance licensed district **maintain an annual membership subscription to the School ADvance Users Group** whereby representatives from the district can receive: (a) further assistance and troubleshooting for the School ADvance Administrator Evaluation System; (b) training and support to help align all aspects of the teacher and administrator evaluation process with research supported principles of effective educator evaluation systems; (c) training of trainers for supporting district users; (d) data and resource sharing with other users; and (e) access to new tools and resources as developed by School ADvance.

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Introduction to the Evaluation Process and Cycle

The graphic below illustrates the components of an effective Performance Review and Development cycle for school leaders. In Year 1, the process should begin with aligning the administrator evaluation rubrics with the administrator's job expectations. After year 1, the center blue box replaces the green job description alignment box. The Center box becomes the ongoing communication, engagement and dialogue about the administrator's work and progress in meeting established performance priorities (see Figure 2–next page).

Figure 1–The Evaluation Process and Cycle: Year 1

School ADvance
Administrator Evaluation System

Figure 2 – The Evaluation Process and Cycle: Year 2 and Ongoing

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                    Establish Process and
                    Schedule for Formative and
                    Summative Performance
                    Engagements

Update Summative                              Adjust Performance Priorities
Performance Profile and Overall               as needed to align with district
Performance Rating                            goals and priorities

                    Maintain Ongoing District
                    Performance Dialogue

Update and expand                             Update Formative
Performance Portfolio                         Performance Profile
Documentation

                    Update Growth Edges and
                    Personal Growth Plan
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In Figure 2, above, the yellow center box is a reminder that **individual administrator performance should be the focus of ongoing two-way dialogue between the evaluator(s) and the administrator.** In the case of the superintendent, this dialogue can be facilitated by the superintendent and the board president and should be fully aligned with the board and superintendent's ongoing district performance dialogue.

In a fully aligned process, **each administrator's performance dialogue is part of the bigger picture of the overall district performance dialogue**. Each administrator is responsible for compiling and organizing **performance evidence that illustrates the administrator's key work** and shows how that work aligns with district and school level goals as well as their own personal growth plan (PGP). The evidence can be made available to evaluators in a number of ways; e.g.; (a) through a web based evaluation management system that provides for the

upload of evidence linked to specific domains, factors, and characteristics of the School ADvance evaluation rubrics (e.g., Stages by Zimco offers such a feature as a part of their administrator evaluation management system. School ADvance has also provided limited license agreements to other vendors of on-line management systems, so districts should ask for further information); or (b) a stand-alone electronic portfolio organizer which can be populated with the evaluation rubrics and to which evaluator's have on-line access. Within either format, the administrator should be able to upload a full range of documents (including photos, graphics, video, documents, etc.) or be able to link to artifacts of the work that are already located in another electronic source (e.g., web pages, document files, data bases, etc.).

Superintendent and board engagements and superintendent/central office engagements with each other and building administrators should be used as regular opportunities to share work in progress on the priority goals and performance areas and share data and other evidence that assist in tracking progress. This **regular and ongoing sharing of action plans, accomplishments, and data to monitor progress** can be used to further refine school improvement and performance improvement plans and to keep evaluators apprised of the status of each administrator's areas of performance responsibility.

School ADvance also offers a guide for **distributing evaluation activities across the year with a minimum of beginning, mid, and end of year conferencing**. Additionally, the dialogue that accompanies the ongoing interactions described above facilitates focused attention on the performance priorities and continuous improvement of practice, while providing opportunities to identify where an administrator may need support or further direction and/or encouragement. Ultimately, the goal is to achieve a "no surprises" summative evaluation while supporting a formative process that actually results in performance growth and improvement.

The **Formative Performance Profile is developed by the administrator** through; (a) self-assessment process using the full detailed rubrics; (b) evaluator observations; and (c) the performance portfolio containing feedback, artifacts of the administrator's work, and evidence of impact. The Formative Performance Profile (FPP) serves as a guide for the administrator and evaluator to jointly develop an initial **Personal Growth Plan (PGP) around priority performance areas**. The **Summative Performance Profile (SPP) is jointly developed by the administrator and the evaluator(s) based on the priority performance targets and using the summary rubrics and performance portfolio documentation.** The performance portfolio should include: (a) documentation provided by the administrator; (b) documentation provided by the evaluator; (c) feedback from identified stakeholders; and (d) data illustrating progress on priority performance goals.

School ADvance provides a format for establishing three separate ratings for each administrator:
a. **Essential:** A Priority Performance Rating (PPR) based on the performance profile (supported by the administrator's performance portfolio, self-assessment, and

evaluator's observations) in the areas of the summary rubrics established as priority performance areas (These priority performance areas can be a combination of basic performance essentials and areas that align most directly to the priority improvement outcomes).

b. **Optional:** An Overall Performance Rating (OPR) based on the performance profile (supported by the administrator's performance portfolio, self-assessment, and evaluator's observations) in all areas of the summary rubrics. This rating provides administrators recognition for expanding their performance repertoire beyond the established priority performance areas.

c. **Optional:** A Performance Growth Rating (PGR) based on the Priority Performance Profile (PPP) and/or the Overall Performance Profile (OPP). This rating provides administrators additional recognition for their rate and degree of performance and practice growth.

If two or all three of the ratings are used, the district must determine how the two or three ratings will be translated into one performance rating for the purposes of meeting State reporting requirements. For instance, the district might treat each of the three ratings as having equal weight. Thus, an early career (developing) administrator could have a Minimally Effective (ME) Overall Performance Rating (OPR); an Effective (E) Priority Performance Rating (PPR); and a Highly Effective (HE) Performance Growth Rating (PPG), resulting in a final combined rating of Effective (see illustration below).

Figure 3 – Illustration of Blended Summative Rating:
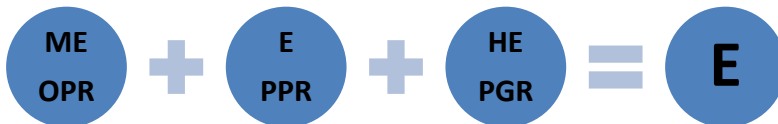
How and Why the Performance Evaluation Tool Matters

A well-constructed performance evaluation rubric or rating scale provides objective measures for interpreting an educator's practice **against research supported standards and elements of practice that have been associated through repeated studies as having some level of relationship to organizational outcomes** (in the case of teachers and administrators, primarily student outcomes). The Michigan educator evaluation statute and the Michigan Council on Educator Effectiveness call for the use of rubrics rather than rating scales, as rubrics provide a ready way to distinguish among levels of effectiveness for each performance factor or characteristic.

The well-researched and constructed rubric **represents a broad array of performance factors or characteristics** for each domain of teacher or administrator performance. Since the research base for teacher and administrator performance is broad, a comprehensive set of performance factors and characteristics is also broad. Additionally, a **well-constructed rubric also translates each of those research supported factors or characteristics into clearly observable and/or documentable descriptors** for each level practice development. These descriptors **provide performance reviewers the means for achieving rater reliability and avoiding the subjectivity of value or opinion** laden items that are subject to bias or misinterpretation.

For all the above reasons, **full performance rubrics tend to be lengthy, detailed, and comprehensive representing developmental levels** for all (or most of) the known aspects of teacher and administrator performance that have been substantially linked with student and organizational outcomes. These **detailed rubrics can be useful in guiding self-assessment and the formative improvement efforts of educators**, since they provide clear guidance for how a given performance factor or characteristic breaks down to actionable practice and how an educator can systematically develop their practice toward greater levels of effectiveness. They **can also be daunting and frustratingly counterproductive if used in such a way as to suggest that all factors and characteristics are equally important** for the performance of any given teacher or administrator in any given context with any given set of circumstances.

Summary rubrics (see School ADvance Summary Rubrics for Principal and District Leader evaluations) **collapse the multiple actionable/observable descriptors for each factor or characteristic into an overarching practice descriptor for each performance level**. They are useful for **creating summative ratings when coupled with identified priority performance targets aligned with established classroom, school, or district level improvement targets for student outcomes.** When using the summary rubrics evaluators and evaluatees **can both refer back to the full rubrics whenever there is a need to clarify** what a full application of a factor or characteristic involves, what the various levels of effectiveness look like, and how they build developmentally upon one another. Summary rubrics also provide a condensed lens for moving from formative to summative evaluation decisions (see sections on Creating the Summative Evaluation and What Goes in the Personnel File).

Rationale for a Priority Performance Rating

As discussed above, a comprehensive performance rubric is designed to represent a full array of research supported factors and characteristics that can be associated with student and school success. That said, this comprehensiveness comes, in part, from the inclusion of findings from many bodies of research conducted in many different school contexts and focusing on many different school and student outcomes. This is good, because this helps insure that the **full rubrics represent a practice and performance menu that captures most of what might be important in any district or school setting**. Think of it this way: comprehensive rubrics are like a

restaurant menu that offers something for every culinary taste, every level of hunger, and every time of day. Within this menu, there will be certain offerings that are essential because of the particular needs of the diner. Over time, the diner will find it necessary to prioritize different menu offerings based on changing health status and nutritional needs. The healthier the diner, the more widely they can sample from the menu based on culinary preferences, appetite, and how much they are ready to branch out.

So it is with comprehensive rubrics. They offer a menu that has a good chance of providing guidance to the areas of practice and performance that are most in line with a teacher's or administrator's areas of responsibility, status in the job, classroom/school/or district conditions, and specific priorities for making an impact. If, however, the summative evaluation process treats every item, every factor, and every characteristic in the evaluation rubric as equally important regardless of the educator's status, the job responsibilities and the specific targets for improved impact, the comprehensiveness of the rubric can actually work against the intended use, i.e., guiding performance emphasis in ways that align with performance expectations. For this reason, **School ADvance advises against summative rating systems that arbitrarily assign points to every factor, characteristic, and descriptor**, add up those points across the entire rubric, and set arbitrary cut scores for final ratings.

School ADvance **recommends that the district establish a priority rating framework for teachers and administrators** by: (a) job responsibility; (b) job status (non-tenured vs. tenured, new assignment vs. continuing, etc.); and (c) priority improvement targets (see User's Guide Section: Developing the Priority Rating Profile). A **priority rating framework allows the evaluator and evaluatee to focus on the performance areas most appropriate to the educator's circumstances and most likely to align with the priority work identified for that educator or category of educator.**

For instance, a Priority Rating Framework for a principal who also serves as the Title I coordinator for the district would look different than that of an assistant principal who has dean of student responsibilities but no responsibility for evaluating teachers. A principal in a school that has been identified as a Focus School would have different improvement targets than a principal of a Reward School and this should influence which areas of the performance rubric are included in that principal's Priority Performance Profile (PPP). In a similar fashion, the Priority Performance Framework for a superintendent of a district with a very poor relationship with the school's external community could emphasize different evaluation factors and characteristics than that of a superintendent in a district with solid community relations but very weak principal performance ratings. The Priority Performance Framework allows the district to support performance growth in critical areas by giving those areas more weight in the final summative evaluation rating (see Figure 3 above and User's Guide Section on Developing the Priority Performance Rating).

Adapting the Evaluation Process for the Superintendent

Although the evaluation of the superintendent falls under the general statutory requirements for evaluating Administrators, there are certain aspects of the evaluation process for superintendents that must be taken into account:

1. While detailed performance rubrics based on research supported standards of superintendent practice are available and should be used as the grounding of a superintendent's evaluation, it is not feasible to train lay board members to reliably recognize and interpret indicators of research supported practice across the wide span of superintendent functions at the level of detail represented in comprehensive rubrics.
2. Board members (including the board president) have limited opportunity to directly observe the work of the superintendent and must rely on the superintendent to provide them with information that will help them understand how the superintendent is carrying out his or her duties in ways that align with established goals and priorities for the district.
3. While board members are an important constituent for the superintendent's work, they are not the only one. Thus, it is important for the board to understand how the superintendent works with other key constituent groups (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents, community leaders, other area superintendents, legislators, etc.).

In consideration of the above factors, School ADvance provides both detailed full rubrics and summary rubrics for the evaluation of the superintendent and other administrators. The *School ADvance Users Guide* provides further detail on how to use both the full and the summary rubrics for administrators (including the superintendent) in the sections on using the rubrics. For superintendents, the full rubrics provide a guide to assist the superintendent in assessing their own practice and for communicating that practice to their board trustees. The **summary rubrics provide the board trustees with a condensed, but still comprehensive view of the superintendent's roles and responsibilities and a way to distinguish between levels of performance.** That said, even with the summary rubrics, the board needs assistance from the superintendent in three important ways:

1. **Determining how the summary performance rubrics align with the nuance of the superintendent's specific job responsibilities**. This can vary so much from district to district, that the board and superintendent will find that some areas of comprehensive evaluation rubrics for district leaders are not aligned with the job expectations for the superintendent in that district, while other areas are.

2. **Establishing district leadership priorities that are aligned with the board's district improvement goals** (see *School ADvance Users Guide*–Section 1.b on Establishing Priority Performance Areas). To the degree that the board and superintendent establish improvement goals that are grounded in student outcomes, measurable, and feasible within the means of the district, there will be clarity of priority focus for the

superintendent. Clarity of agreement on priority focus is critical to maintaining a high performing district governance and leadership team and should be a key influence for both the superintendent's summative evaluation and the board's self-evaluation. In other words, "How well did we (the board and superintendent) conduct our work to achieve the district's priority improvement goals?" Equally important, "How well did we do at communicating regularly with each other (board and superintendent) and with both internal and external stakeholders on our priority improvement goals?"

3. **Tracking and reporting on the work of the district,** the work of the superintendent, and the indicators of achieving the district's priority improvement goals along with other key indicators of district success.

By using the Priority Performance Rating (PPR) process for the superintendent's summative performance evaluation, the board **ensures that both the board focus and the basis for determining their superintendent's effectiveness are solidly grounded in established district priorities.** The Priority Performance Framework also provides the focus for ongoing communication, dialogue, and engagement between the board and the superintendent, between the superintendent and his or her leadership team, and between the district and both its internal and external stakeholders. When the Priority Performance Framework for the superintendent is the mirror image of the Priority Performance Framework (also known as the district improvement or district strategic plan) for the district, it serves as a key alignment tool for the allocation of attention, time, and resources as well.

When the superintendent and the board support district and building administrators by aligning their Priority Performance Profiles to established district and school goals and priorities, and principals, in turn, support their teachers by doing the same, the district leadership can work in concert to achieve high reliability status as defined by McREL (see Appendix A). Because of the potential for the Priority Performance Profile to be a high impact strategy in achieving the status of a high reliability district, School ADvance recommends that the Priority Performance Profile be established as a district begins using a new performance rubric/system (see Figure 1) for summative purposes and conducts evaluation for a new administrator.

For all administrators except the superintendent, the district can use the detailed rubrics for developing the Formative Performance Profile (FPP) and the summary rubrics for recording the Summative Performance Profile (SPP). For the superintendent, however, School ADvance recommends that the detailed rubrics be used only by the superintendent for developing a comprehensive self-assessment or for helping the board interpret a certain area of the summary rubrics where there is not clarity or agreement on the superintendent's performance status. Since the Summary Rubrics are also supported with lay friendly descriptors of what "evidence" might be offered by the administrator to help determine performance levels, they are the better tool for board members to use when looking at the

superintendent's Formative Performance Profile (FPP) or determining a final Summative Performance Profile (SPP).

As both the superintendent and board become more comfortable with the combination of self-assessment and performance documentation by the superintendent, they may want to add the Overall Performance Rating (OPR) and Performance Growth Rating (PGR) to the superintendent's summative rating, but in so doing, the board should still work from the summary rubrics for assessing the superintendent's performance with the full rubrics referenced by the superintendent only where needed to achieve clarity of understanding or to adjudicate an area where consensus is lacking on the superintendent's performance status. For the final rating document that goes into the superintendent personnel file, School ADvance recommends a single page final rating summary with a rating for each of the five superintendent domains plus an overall final rating (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4–Sample Summary Rating Sheet for the Superintendent's Personnel File based on an Overall Performance Profile:
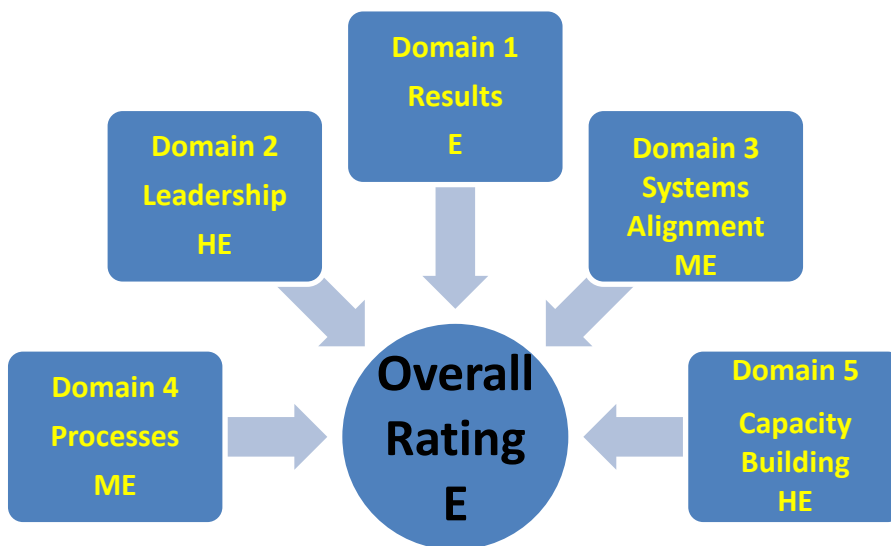

The above example of an Overall Performance Profile Rating (OPR) could represent a scenario where the superintendent is in his or her second year with the district and has not had the time to establish full systems alignment and high reliability school processes. In the scenario illustrated in Figure 4, the superintendent–and thus the district–has met the established student outcome targets (Results); the superintendent has established a strong performance in strengthening district leadership practices and has implemented key strategies for capacity building with the result that the district has seen real growth in the performance of both administrators and teachers.

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The version of this superintendent's profile in Figure 4 may be masking the fact that the superintendent has been highly effective in addressing priority areas because of his or her demonstration of key practices in Capacity Building and overall Leadership and the attainment of district improvement targets in the Results area; i.e., the above profile may not give sufficient credit to the superintendent for understanding the importance of matching his or her performance emphasis to the conditions of the district. Looking at the final Summative Rating example below based on a Priority Performance Profile approach, we may be seeing a truer picture of the same superintendent's overall performance effectiveness.

Because the profile in Figure 5 gives extra weight to the critical areas of Leadership and Capacity Building and less weight to the areas of Processes and Systems, it provides a truer picture of how effective this superintendent is within the areas of greatest priority importance at this time. This results in the ability for the superintendent's evaluation to recognize and reward a superintendent who can work with the board to be intentional about where he or she places the greatest emphasis in practice and performance based on the needs of the district.

Figure 5–Sample Summary Rating Sheet for the Superintendent's Personnel File based on a Priority Performance Profile (based on a 50% weight to Results and 50% weight to the other two yellow areels):
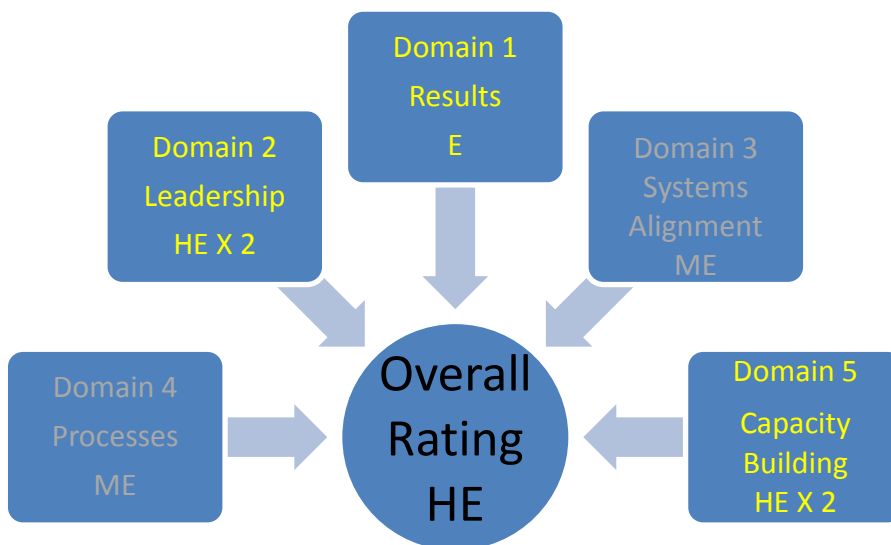
Note: Priority Performance Areas would rarely be designated at the domain level. This would normally occur within domains at the factor or characteristic level (see actual School ADvance Rubrics and Overview), but for the sake of illustration, Figure 5 shows the Priority decision making at the Domain.