



# APRIL 2017

***"I BELIEVE IN YOU. These four words can mean the difference between a fear of failure and the courage to try." – Coach K***

**Observations:** Remember that you have to conduct minimum of two observations for every teacher you are evaluating this year – one of which must be done by the administrator who is doing his/her final evaluation and one that must be unannounced. For each of these observations, you need to review the lesson plan, the state curriculum standard being taught in the lesson and the student engagement during the lesson.

**Final Evaluations:** Beginning this year, your final evaluation must comply with the revised Educator Evaluation law passed in December. Make sure that you have a plan in place for the big pieces:

- 25% of the evaluation must be based on multiple measures of student growth. You don't have to use state assessment data, but you may.
- The remaining 75% of the evaluation is based on a teacher's practice as measured by the district's selected framework.
- The portion of the evaluation not measured using growth or evaluation framework must include the factors from section 380.1248. How you incorporate these elements is to be determined at a local level. For example, some districts choose to use these as tie-breaker factors when teachers are on the cusp between two rating levels. There is no requirement to assign these factors a specific weight, you simply need to show that they have been considered when developing a final evaluation. Consult with your Central Office on how to enact this within your local policy.
- Make sure that your written evaluation includes "specific performance goals that will assist in improving effectiveness for the next school year" and "any recommended training." The goals and training must be developed "in consultation with the teacher." Teachers rated ineffective or minimally effective must be provided an IDP.

**Staffing Needs:** Identify probable staffing needs based on student course needs (registration).

- Build a grid with the number of students in need of a course and the number of FTE it will take to fill that position.
- From this matrix you should build your staffing needs list.
- Teachers should then be tentatively assigned based on the identified need.
- Communicate your staffing needs to your Superintendent.

**Interviewing/Hiring Staff:** One of the most important things you will do as a principal is hire new staff members. Unfortunately over the past few years, for most schools, there have been more lay-offs than hiring. Establishing a sound protocol for the hiring process is critical. General steps to follow are:

1. **Posting:** Make sure you list the FTE (will they be full or part-time), list the content you are looking for and the HQ letters required (i.e., there is a difference between what someone with a history certification can teach vs. a social studies certification).

Some Districts have very specific guidelines for internal posting such as the number of days it has to be posted, who has to be interviewed/considered, seniority, transfer rights, etc. If posting externally, make sure you set a deadline for applications and the required materials and stick to it. Consider posting the job to MASSP's site: [mistaff.com](http://mistaff.com)



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## 2. **Process:** Think about the interview process from start to finish:

- Do you want to screen the applicants yourself or would you like to delegate this part of the process?
- The actual Interviews: Do you plan to have multiple? Who will you involve in each part of the process and what will you require candidates to do during each phase? Does central office require final approval?
- Notification: How will you notify applicants who will receive an interview and those applicants that will not? It's professional courtesy to notify all applicants once a candidate has been selected.
- Job offer/hiring: What forms will the District need completed? What induction training will be provided for the new hire? Who will you assign as their mentor?

3. **Screening:** Once the posting closes, develop a form to use to assist you with screening the applicants. Outside of the required HQ cert, what other qualities, experiences and characteristics are you looking for? Is there a college GPA target or a particular college preparation that you prefer? Do you need the applicant to fill other extracurricular openings as well? Having your list of "look fors" established before you review applications helps to narrow down the applicants. Determine the number of applicants you will select for a first round interview and stick to the number (you can always go back to the stack if you do not find a suitable candidate). If you delegate the screening process make sure the person you appoint has a clear idea of what you are looking for in the candidate.

4. **Interviews:** Hiring and evaluating are two of the most important job responsibilities of a Principal. Put great care into your hiring and good things will happen – it is well worth the investment of time to find the very best teachers available for your openings. A multi-step interview process is strongly recommended as well as including staff in the selection of the new hire. The following is a suggested interview process.

5. **Round I:** "Cattle call"... If you are hiring for an English position and there are hundreds of applicants call in your top 20 for quick 10 minute interviews. You will get a better feel for their affect and professional demeanor when you see the candidates in person. Have five key questions prepared for these 10 minute visits:

1. What do you know about \_\_\_\_\_ school and \_\_\_\_\_ District? (If they want the job they should have researched the school and the District)
2. What made you decide to be a teacher? (Look for passion for teaching/learning, love of working with kids, etc.)
3. How do you prepare your lessons? (Listen for a lesson plan that includes a learning target and an assessment)
4. How do you know that students have really learned what you are teaching? (Look for a concrete formative assessment – NOT head nodding or looking at the kids)
5. What do you do when students have not learned? (listen for reteaching, differentiating, etc.)

**Round II:** After completing the short round one interviews, narrow the field to six to eight candidates. Round two should be a panel interview. An Assistant Principal can chair/facilitate this round. The panel should include: two to three department members, a counselor and a special ed teacher. Allow the panel to develop a list of questions that are content and instructionally focused. Include questions on developing appropriate relationships, classroom management, collaboration and communicating with parents. Advise the panel that their role is to send you the top three candidates for the final round interview. . . knowing that you can pick any one of the three. ([PHD for Sample Interview Questions](#))



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**Round III:** Require the candidate to teach a 15-20 minute lesson and invite three to five students to participate. After the lesson, seek feedback from the students on the instructional delivery. Ask the candidate a series of questions based on any concerns from answers in the first two interviews. Follow with:

1. How do you stay current and keep up-to-date with changes and innovations in teaching and learning?
  2. What role does technology play in your classroom?
  3. How do you balance high expectations and the concept that failure is not an option?
  4. What do you know about RTI and how do you support struggling students?
  5. How would you go about setting growth goals for your students?
- 6. Final Decision:** Establish an order for your final three candidates. Call the references of your top choice and ask very direct questions about his/her ability to deliver instruction, to collaborate with peers, to learn and take direction and to show leadership qualities. Listen carefully and do not lead the respondent with answers. If the references pass the test, notify the HR Director that you would like to extend the offer. Once approved, call the candidate to offer the position and provide direction regarding required paperwork, induction training and board approval. Contact the other finalists to inform them of your other choice and offer constructive feedback to assist the candidate to succeed in their next interview.

**A Primer on "Prom-blems":** Prom season is upon us along with all the accompanying legal issues. Our friends at Thurn Law Firm, PC have provided some attorney-approved tips for navigating common "prom-blems" as well as some "prom-posals" to address them. [Check out the article here.](#)

**Awards Programs:** Prepare for end-of-year student recognition programs: awards, qualifying recipients, speaker, presenters, program and schedule. Collaborate with everyone involved in the planning and facilitation of the event (Secretaries, Counselors, Custodial Staff, Teachers and Students) to review how it has typically run and to implement any tweaks or changes to improve the program.

**Communicate with Senior Parents:** As the year is coming to an end quickly, most principals do not realize how quickly the senior's last day of school comes (typically earlier than the other students). It is always a great idea to send a list of all senior events to the parents and students such as: Honor Nights, NHS Ceremonies, Award Banquets, Cap and Gown Distribution, Baccalaureate, Graduation Location and Times, Yearbook Distribution and Senior Exams. Getting this information out to parents clearly and early will be very helpful to them and is great service and PR on your part.

**Commencement:** Challenge yourself to "one up" last year's ceremony. What could be done to make it just a little better? Could you order new table coverings in the school colors with your logo? Could you improve the flow of the ceremony to help it move more quickly? Could you contact a local florist to borrow potted ferns to decorate the stage? Why not allow the seniors to send a special invitation to the District employee of their choice to attend commencement and sit with the faculty? Attention to detail kicks a good ceremony up to great.

Don't forget to make sure you've thought about all of the legal aspects surrounding graduation. School decisions affecting a student's participation in graduation can often result in litigation. Cover yourself by reading this article "[Navigating Graduation's Legal Minefield](#)" written by Thurn Law Firm, P.C.

**Summer School:** Build your program and make sure summer school dates and applications are available to students/parents in print and on the website. Counselors should contact students directly who are behind in credits to ensure that they are registering for summer school courses required for graduation. Ideally, summer school should provide enrichment and advance-credit courses as well as intervention programs.



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**Budget:** Involve staff in identifying needs for next year. Require purchases to align with student learning outcomes. It's a good idea to set aside Department time during a staff meeting or PD to allow them to complete a list of their needs.

**Textbooks:** Work with Counselors, Department Chairs and your Media Specialist (a.k.a. Librarian) to place textbook orders and to identify books in need of rebinding to ensure arrival in time for summer registration.

**Supplies:** Prepare paper orders; lesson plan and grade software or books; and general classroom and office supplies. Use consortium purchasing to reserve funds for quality instructional resources.

**April Recognition Dates:** April is Autism Awareness Month and April 2 is Autism Awareness Day, use [this link](#) for a great website with a number of helpful resources.

April 23-29 is National Volunteer Week, many schools use this opportunity to provide a breakfast or other acknowledgment of the volunteers who regularly help at the schools such as PTA members, Booster members and others that give of their time. It's always good to post "THANK YOU PTA, Boosters and Parent Volunteers - We Appreciate You" on the school sign.

April 26 is Administrative Professionals Day, in addition to personally giving a gift of thanks, it is very nice for the Student Council to do something for the secretaries as well. Also post a thank you in your weekly Principal Staff Communication.

**Monthly Meetings:** Here are two items you should consider adding to your staff meeting agenda this month.

- **Staff Meeting Icebreaker of the Month:** Desert Island: Tell teams of five or six they will be marooned on a desert island. Give them 30 seconds to list all the things they think they should take and each person has to contribute at least three items. At the end of 30 seconds, tell the teams they can only take three things. Have the person who suggested each item on the list tell why they suggested it and defend why their item should be one of the chosen three. This helps the team learn about how each of them thinks, get to know each other's values, and how they solve problems.
- **New Teacher Meeting Topics of the Month and Mentor Teacher Checklist: (PHD)** Email the mentor checklist to your mentor teachers each month to encourage conversation with untenured teacher mentees.

**Upcoming MASSP Events:** For more information or to register, please visit [mymassp.com/eventlist](http://mymassp.com/eventlist).

- **April:** Data Analysis Workshop (Berrien Springs) - 4/19 | 5D+ Rater Reliability - 4/26-4/28
- **May:** Zero Tolerance/Seclusion & Restraint Workshop - 5/9 | Data Analysis Workshop (Hillsdale) - 5/23
- **June:** EdCon (Grand Traverse Resort) - 6/26-6/28