

NETWORK for EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS

GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE TEACHER PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

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INTRODUCTION

Effective teachers are the most important factor contributing to student achievement. So, when teaching performance issues come up, school leaders need to address them head-on.

Sometimes, establishing a stronger coaching connection is enough to help teachers improve their teaching practice. Other times, more structure and documentation are required. When a teacher is consistently evaluated as below effective on a certain indicator or multiple indicators of effective teaching practice, a school leader might consider writing a teacher performance improvement plan, or PIP. In fact, most U.S. states require teacher performance improvement plans or performance assistance plans for teachers rated below effective.

Before we move forward, three important beliefs and norms must be established regarding the use of PIPs:

1. The purpose of the PIP is NOT to terminate the teacher. The purpose is to improve the behavior in question.
2. There is no exact science, score, rule, or light sensor that goes off to tell you it is time to write a PIP.
3. Developing and implementing a PIP shouldn't be something done TO teachers but something done WITH teachers.

In this paper, we will walk through the entire process of implementing an effective teacher performance improvement plan that promotes growth and leads to positive environments for leaders and teachers.

WHEN IS IT TIME TO WRITE A PIP?

When considering whether to write a teacher performance improvement plan, know that every situation is unique and will require thoughtful consideration on your part as a school leader. The context of a teacher performance improvement plan can include an array of concerns such as instructional practices, classroom management, or violation of board policies. This wide range of circumstances requires a principal to be able to use situational leadership as they make decisions regarding the urgency, worth, and content of the PIP.



Although termination may be the end result of a teacher failing to meet the expectations set forth in the PIP, improving the identified behavior is the ultimate goal. The decision to develop a PIP is complex and can't be determined solely on the merits of some evaluative score, single incident, or gut reaction. Every situation, every teacher, and every action must be critically analyzed from the lens of improvement. Will a PIP strengthen this teacher, paralyze their abilities, or cause them to retreat to isolation?

Because there is no exact science, a principal must look at each situation, analyze the data, and decide whether they believe a teacher performance improvement plan will cause improved behavior. Principals have all the data they need to make this decision if they will ask themselves the following questions.

1 What really concerns me with this teacher? Can I link it to a teaching standard or board policy?

If you can't put your finger on what is concerning you about this teacher, you are not ready to implement the PIP. When you have identified the behavior of concern, resist the temptation to hide behind some deficiency you believe will be easy to document in lieu of tackling a more difficult or sensitive situation. Developing a PIP to improve an instructional strategy might be more pleasant to deal with than a PIP that addresses a teacher's negative attitude, but it will not help to get rid of the elephant in the room.

2 Do the scores and comments given during formative evaluations support the need for a teacher performance improvement plan?

Even though there is no magic number of low scores that automatically jump-starts the PIP process, one would assume that formative evaluations have not generated consistently average or above-average scores. Evaluative comments should equally articulate concerns about the specific behavior in question. While teachers may be surprised a PIP is being implemented, they should not be blindsided that they have not been meeting expectations. Telling a teacher you believe a PIP is in order during a summative conference is unfair if you have not shared your apprehensions during the formative phase of evaluation.

3 Did I have honest face-to-face post-observation conversations with this teacher during the formative evaluation phase?

The formative phase of evaluation should include specific feedback to the teacher that helps them to identify strengths and specific points upon which to improve. Conversations should always be conducted with a growth mindset.

4 Have I given this teacher enough time to improve?

Asking teachers to change their instructional practices or interpersonal skills is asking a lot. Most human behaviors don't change overnight and certainly don't become routine with a few weeks of random practice. Although there are circumstances requiring immediate teacher reaction (see disregard of BOE policy below), most behaviors and situations will require time and coaching to improve. The experience level of the teacher may be a factor to be considered, as well as the complexity of the desired action.

5 How will the teacher react to a performance improvement plan?

Students, teachers, and principals survive and thrive on relationships. The principal-teacher relationship is particularly complex given that principals must act as coach and evaluator for teachers. These relationships are important to manage and nourish. Before implementing a PIP, a principal should reflect on the persona of the teacher and their relationship with the teacher. This does not mean some teachers get a pass on PIPs. It does mean you need to consider how a teacher is going to react and decide if it's worth it. Can you simply help this teacher to improve with more observation and conversation? Will this teacher wilt under the pressure of the PIP? Is this a teacher who will thrive with the organization and timelines of a PIP? Is this teacher not moving until some formal piece of paper is signed? And when you do initiate the PIP process, how does it change your relationship? Almost all teachers will require some added positive attention from you to preserve the rapport you have established.

6 Has the teacher's growth stagnated or regressed?

Did the teacher initially demonstrate growth but over time slip back into old, unproductive habits? Does the teacher seem to be motivated to continue working toward growth? It's not unusual for a teacher to initially demonstrate improvement toward feedback, only to slip back into prior behaviors. If the teacher isn't demonstrating appropriate growth, a PIP, which is more specific and formal, might be needed to establish clear expectations for growth and a timeline for actions to occur.

7 Do I have the resources to fulfill my obligations to the teacher performance improvement plan?

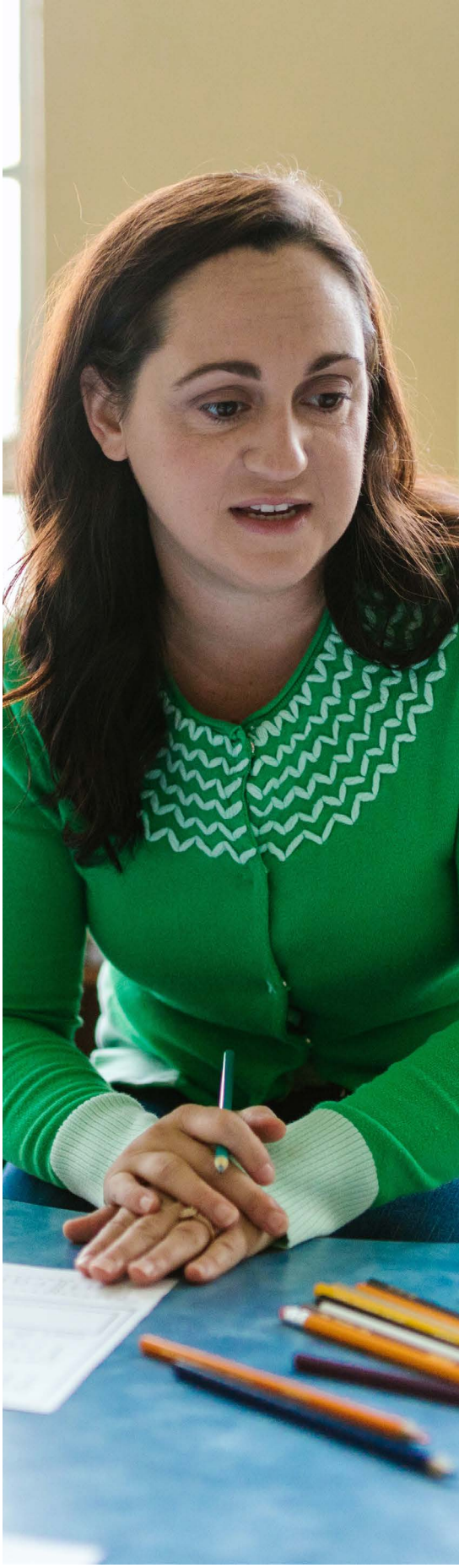
Principals have many obligations when it comes to supporting the PIP, including providing resources, follow-up conferences, instructional coaching, and documentation. Overextending your time with too many PIPs will serve no one well. Attention should also be given to the resources that will be necessary to support the plan. Obtaining these resources generally falls to the principal, so it is critical you are confident you can do so.

8 Is the teacher's behavior a blatant disregard of Board of Education (BOE) policy?

If the teacher has violated a serious BOE policy, swift action and a PIP may be in order. Violations concerning student safety, drug use, and theft to name a few may warrant immediate action without the normal time to improve. However, it's important to take a step back and take some time to carefully consider the facts surrounding the event to determine the best actions in this situation. Is this a one-time event? Is this event out of character for the teacher? Did the event cause lasting harm to students and/or others in the school community? Does the teacher recognize their mistake?

9 Should I involve district administration in the decision to write a teacher performance improvement plan?

Read your BOE policy before you talk with district administration. Do your homework, especially if this is the first PIP you are contemplating. Before initiating the PIP process, inform Human Resources (HR) or the person(s) above you in the appeal process that you have a concern, and present the written facts. Keep your comments focused on the behaviors and actions causing the concern, not your feelings about the teacher. Teachers have rights that should be followed, but don't let that discourage you from doing what is justified – improving teaching performance to ensure student success. That's your job. Always follow the advice of HR.



HOW TO INTRODUCE A TEACHER PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

At this point, you have identified a specific teacher behavior that needs to change and your concern has elevated to the point you believe a teacher performance improvement plan will be beneficial and necessary for the behavior to improve. What are the next steps to get the process moving? Surprisingly, it would be to slow down and double-check your own actions and reasoning.

Before you move forward, make sure you have:

- Observed and documented the behavior on more than one occasion (unless it's an egregious violation of BOE policy)
- Articulated a specific behavior that needs to change
- Collected objective data
- Given honest feedback
- Provided supportive resources
- Allowed time for improvement
- Informed appropriate district administration of your intent

INITIAL ACTIONS

If you are indeed ready to move forward with the PIP process, there are several initial actions to take. First, it is imperative that you tie the overall objective of the PIP process to the mission, vision, values, or improvement plan of the building or district. The second you do this, the PIP moves from a personal attack by you to a compliance issue grounded in documents that govern expectations for everyone in the district. It is hard to argue against a PIP that clearly demonstrates the behavior in question is moving the district farther from its mission. As you begin to craft the actual goal for the PIP, make sure the link to the district's mission, vision, value, or improvement plan is clearly detailed. A PIP anchored in this way can temper future emotions and focus the dialogue.

Another initial step is to determine the intensity of the need for a PIP. Not all PIPs are put into place with the same level of urgency. Each situation will produce the need for more or less time, more or less action, and more or less monitoring. Understanding this upfront will allow you to respond appropriately when writing the details of the PIP and will influence the way you interact with the teacher. This narrative should be based on the data you have collected and the conversations you have had with the teacher, not influenced by the chatter of others.

CHECK YOURSELF

It is usually at this point in time that you realize the PIP process is more than filling out a form. You are going to have to face the teacher and confront your own reservations about doing so. You have some sort of relationship with the person, and you are about to question their performance. It would be unnatural if you did not have some hesitation and even the thought of just forgetting the whole thing. Unjustified excuses begin to enter your thoughts: You don't want to damage your relationship, the situation might fix itself, you have more important priorities, this is a power-player teacher, you're not confident with your instructional leadership, etc. When these dark deliberations start to creep into your thinking, just remember that silence is consent. Allowing the behavior to continue unchecked sends a powerful message to the rest of your staff. You are condoning the behavior and signaling to all that it is acceptable in this workplace.

Are you in the right emotional place to begin the PIP process? Do you remember the guiding objective you have established? A PIP is not about your frustration, disappointment, annoyance, sadness, defeat, weariness, or aggravation. Until you can realize this is not about you, don't begin the PIP process. This is about assisting a teacher's professional growth. It is crucial that you enter the process with the mindset that things can change and become better.



INTRODUCING A TEACHER PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

With your mind and attitude in the right place, it is time to invite the teacher for a conversation. Be forthright about why you want to meet. Don't be vague or hide behind verbose language. Keep it simple and noncombative. For instance: "We have been talking about your use of formative assessments, and I would like the chance to continue that conversation and create an action plan together. When is a good time for you to meet?" The teacher should have the opportunity to come to the conference prepared and thoughtful, not ambushed.

Choose a private place for this conversation and think about where each of you will sit. Sitting in comfortable chairs turned for conversation sends a different message than you sitting behind your desk with the teacher directly in front of you. The physical environment at this conference can be used to magnify the intensity or decrease the intensity of the situation, so be sure to give this careful consideration. Time is another factor that warrants attention. A quick 10-minute conference isn't going to produce the results you want; schedule a reasonable amount of uninterrupted time.

Do not enter this dialogue with the PIP completed. Doing so communicates to the teacher that this conversation has a predetermined outcome and they have no voice. It also closes your mind and discourages your own ability to listen, learn, and discover details that will help you to inform the action plan. Certainly, you will not go into this conversation cold; you will have reviewed the data and contemplated possible actions while remaining open to what the teacher has to offer. Above all, you want to remove perceived threats and promote an environment of cooperation.

The initial PIP meeting sets the tone for your work together over the course of the plan.

In every feedback conversation, follow the steps outlined in the **NEE Guide to Effective Feedback**:

PREPARE

Work through the initial actions of linking your concerns to the mission of the school and determining the intensity level of the PIP. Determine where and how you will conduct the conversation to appropriately convey the intensity of the PIP. Assess your readiness to support the action steps that will be outlined in the PIP.

PRESENT DATA

Be direct and clear and share your facts. Do not impose your opinions or express yourself through adjectives, which convey emotion. A common mistake made by principals is the desire to protect the feelings of the teacher by sugar-coating or glossing over the message. This leads to confusion on the part of the teacher, who could interpret this conversation as motivational cheerleading or kind advice and not the charge for change you intend. Being able to state the facts in a direct manner doesn't mean you have all the answers, so your next step is to work with the teacher to build understanding and discuss the focus of the PIP.

DISCUSS FOCUS

Bring the teacher into the discussion. Create an atmosphere of genuine inquiry and solution to open the teacher's mind and help them to be engaged in the process. Always ask the teacher for their input, and listen for the underlying causes of the concerning behavior. Taking notes, nodding in affirmation, and asking questions not only tells the teacher their voice has value, but it allows you to collect more data about the situation. Admit that you don't have all the answers, and be unpretentious as you explore circumstances.

During this step, you will better understand the underlying reason that the focus behavior exists, and you can use **NEE's Four Paths to Effective Feedback** to develop a specific goal and action steps appropriate for the situation.

The PIP should focus on one behavior only. If there are multiple teaching behaviors that need to improve, the PIP should focus only on the most important. Later (or subsequent) PIPS can address other behaviors, if necessary.

MAKE A PLAN

After stating your facts and allowing the teacher to share their story, it is time to think through the first three components of NEE's short-term professional growth plan template: set a goal, list activities and resources, and list the evidence to be collected. Explain to the teacher that you want to develop an action plan that will spell out their responsibilities and your responsibilities as you work together to improve performance. Acknowledge this is an opportunity to improve and you believe they can. Initiating the PIP is your decision, but approaching it in a direct manner with concern and empathy will influence the likelihood that it will be successful. Use a blank form to sketch ideas and plans as you and the teacher discuss and provide input.

FOLLOW UP

Inform the teacher that you will draft the actual PIP from these notes and send the final version to them for their signature.

STARTING THE TEACHER PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

NEE provides a template for administrators to utilize when writing a performance improvement plan. We call it a **short-term professional growth plan**.

To begin, you will complete the first three sections of the document:

SET A GOAL

The first step is to develop a SMART goal that will guide the teacher's work. (SMART is an acronym for specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.) Select just one goal. If there are multiple issues to be addressed, select the most important one to focus on first. You can complete subsequent plans, if necessary, after the completion of the first goal. Be clear on the timeline of the goal. Don't allow the process to extend too long.

LIST ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

List at least three activities or steps that will be completed toward meeting the goal. Keep each step of the plan small and quick so progress can be easily tracked. These steps might include utilizing professional development materials, observing another teacher's classroom, or joining a professional learning network.

LIST THE EVIDENCE

List three artifacts or pieces of data that will be collected to document completion of the three activities. Suggested evidence will be addressed in more detail later.

After completing the first three sections, you are ready to put the plan into action. The remaining sections of the template will be completed during the implementation and monitoring phases of the PIP action plan.

3 PHASES OF THE PIP ACTION PLAN

There are three phases that make up the action plan of the PIP. All three phases must align to the stated goal of the plan, and all three phases must have built-in accountability to ensure compliance and sincere effort on the part of the teacher and principal.

PHASE 1: TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Teachers have to acquire the knowledge that will allow them to identify and understand the action you are asking of them. They must be supported and allowed to learn and come to terms with the new expectations. The first step in a legitimate action plan is to give teachers the resources and time they need to acquire the knowledge and to understand the nuances behind these changes. Sending a teacher straight to implementation without the proper understanding and foundation is a recipe for disaster. Lay the groundwork for effective change by allowing a teacher to gather knowledge through books, webinars, peers, coaches, and observations.



PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION

Once the teacher is on solid footing and understands what is being asked of them, it is time to implement the identified action. One of the biggest mistakes principals make in developing a PIP is failing to break down the implementation phase into manageable steps. Progressing through a series of small actions that lead to the accomplishment of the goal is much more likely to result in success. Each activity and expectation designed in the implementation phase must directly align to the goal. Don't waste your time or the teacher's time assigning meaningless busy work simply to generate mindless data. Implementation requires time to practice, fail, adjust, and try again. Rushing this phase will produce compliance, not true lasting change.

PHASE 3: MONITORING THE PLAN

Principals have a full plate and, therefore, need to be careful not to make the PIP a burden that cannot be monitored in an efficient manner. One way to do this is to give a majority of the responsibility for creating, collecting, and presenting the evidence of completion to the teacher. It should be the teacher's responsibility to gather the evidence and present it to you in a timely fashion as directed by the PIP. It should not be your duty to watch the calendar and chase down the data requested in this PIP.

A good practice is to require the teacher to schedule two face-to-face meetings with you during the anticipated duration of the PIP. The obligation of scheduling, preparing, and leading this follow-up meeting will belong to

the teacher, allowing you to play the more useful role of facilitator and coach. During this monitoring phase, you are going to discover that adjustments are needed to the plan. Show that you are sincerely trying to help this teacher succeed by giving them more or less time, revising or adding action steps, and simplifying and clarifying expectations all according to the needs of the teacher. It demonstrates to all involved your intentions are earnest as you support the teacher and that you are guiding the process with integrity.

BUILD IN ACCOUNTABILITY

An action plan without accountability is no more than a hope and a prayer. All three phases must specify hard evidence to be collected that will allow the teacher to demonstrate they have completed each step of the action plan with fidelity and quality.

Next, we will look at examples of evidence for four types of PIPs.

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE TO COLLECT FOR FOUR TYPES OF PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

The next step in the PIP process is to collect evidence. Evidence is used to ensure the teacher adheres to the action plan and to measure progress toward meeting the goal of the PIP. Without the review of documented evidence, teachers receive no formative feedback or coaching in their growth journey. Sometimes recognizing the type of evidence to be collected is obvious, and sometimes it requires a little head-scratching and creativity. The type of documentation that should be collected varies based on the type of PIP that is being developed.



Four Types of Teacher Performance Improvement Plans

A teacher's PIP will typically fall into four general categories:

1. **PIP to improve a teacher's instructional skills and strategies.** This type of PIP could address a wide scope of instructional concerns, including concerns about a specific skill and concerns about implementation of an instructional program.
2. **PIP to improve a teacher's communication skills.** These issues could include the inability to provide appropriate written communication, offensive or abusive verbal communication, a lack of communication, or issues with a teacher's grading policy and instructional feedback.
3. **PIP to improve student management.** This type of PIP deals with teachers struggling to manage students and will focus on management plans and strategies.
4. **PIP to improve adherence to organizational expectations and BOE policies.** These are often concerns that must be addressed and corrected in immediate fashion, and the PIP is often more direct in style. This type of PIP would address concerns such as a teacher consistently arriving late to work, a teacher who does not fill out reports or turn in paperwork, or a teacher who demonstrates severe disregard of board policy.

Each category of PIP lends itself to the collection of some common evidence. The following examples of general evidence might be considered. The evidence is organized for all three phases of the PIP action plan (training and support, implementation, and monitoring). By no means is this an exhaustive list. Knowing the teacher and the exact activities in the plan will allow you to be much more detailed and specific in the evidence you request.

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE FOR 4 TYPES OF PIPS

PHASE 1: TRAINING AND SUPPORT

PIP to improve instructional skills and strategies

Reflection paper of book read, webinar or conference attended

Reflection from peer observation and subsequent action plan developed by teacher

PIP to improve communication skills

Teacher analyzes the data that caused the concern about verbal communication (notes or comments from parents, peers, or students) to increase self-awareness. Teacher presents findings.

Teacher gains knowledge from an identified communications expert in the area of concern and identifies those strategies they will utilize.

Teacher reviews their own written communication with the focus concern in mind (tone, clarity, grammar, bias) to increase their self-awareness of the issue.

Teacher compares their own written communication with that of their peers or other professionals and submits practice samples.

Teacher compares their own grading practices to those of selected peers. A list of impactful differences is established.

PIP to improve student management

Teacher has peer or principal complete a student time-on-task chart for three class periods for written self-analysis.

Teacher has peer or principal complete a positive feedback chart for three class periods for written self-analysis.

Teacher has peer or principal observe transition times and give feedback.

Teacher observes another classroom teacher and provides written reflection to include effective management strategies noted.

Teacher reviews researched student management plans through books, articles, or webinars and presents the key principles of their chosen plan to implement.

Teacher reviews the school-prescribed student management plan and selects areas of focus in which to implement or improve.

PIP to address aderencce to expectations & policies

Teacher will be given a copy of the appropriate employee handbook or board policy in question. A written statement of understanding of the policy will be collected from the teacher.

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE FOR 4 TYPES OF PIPS

PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION

PIP to improve instructional skills and strategies

Lesson plan samples highlighting the targeted skill/strategy

Video of teacher implementing the skill/strategy

Student work samples as outcomes of the teacher's skill/strategy use

Teacher's own written or verbal reflection of progress being made

Feedback from principal or peer observation of skill/strategy being implemented

PIP to improve communication skills

Teacher implements the positive verbal communication strategies identified after the self-analysis. A calendar of dates and a self-reflection of the success of the strategies used will be collected.

Teacher responds to the self-analysis of written communication by having a peer or principal review and revise written documents.

Teacher provides specific examples of the new verbal communication strategies being used through the use of video.

Teacher develops a new or modified grading and feedback system for approval by principal.

Teacher surveys students and parents for satisfaction of new grading/feedback system. Survey requires prior approval and results presented to the principal.

PIP to improve student management

Teacher submits a written plan for implementation of new student management plan or the improved implementation of the school's prescribed plan to students and parents.

Teacher video-records three class periods for peer feedback or self-analysis of the new or improved plan. Findings will be emailed to the principal.

Time-on-task and/or positive feedback charting will be conducted again at the PIP's midway point.

Teacher completes the Reflection section of the EdHub Learning Organizer and submits to the principal.

PIP to address aderencce to expectations & policies

Principal will develop a plan to correct and monitor the behavior in question to ensure immediate compliance.

Teacher will submit any relevant information and/or evidence related to compliance with the developed plan.

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE FOR 4 TYPES OF PIPS

PHASE 3: MONITORING

PIP to improve instructional skills and strategies

Feedback of classroom lesson plans utilizing the skill/strategy

Direct observation by the principal of the skill/strategy being used through informal walkthroughs

Adjust action plan as needed in terms of actions and timelines

Provide specific written praise and acknowledgement of progress on the plan

Conduct two or three face-to-face meetings with teacher to monitor progress and document the outcomes on the plan

PIP to improve communication skills

Principal monitors any feedback from students, peers, or parents throughout the PIP process concerning communication issues.

Principal conducts direct observations to monitor verbal communication and gives feedback.

Principal spot-checks written communication throughout the PIP process and gives feedback.

Principal conducts formal or informal survey of students and parents concerning the communication issues.

Principal evaluates the implementation of the new or modified grading/feedback schedule by reviewing a sampling of students' grades and supporting documentation.

Principal reviews survey findings of new or modified grading/ feedback system and gives feedback.

Conduct two or three face-to-face meetings with teacher to monitor progress and document the outcomes on the plan.

PIP to improve student management

Direct observation and informal walkthroughs of the classroom by the principal will be conducted to document fidelity of implementation of the management plan.

Review any principal/ parent communication regarding classroom management.

Office referrals will be tracked and analyzed for quantity, frequency, behavior type, gender, and race. Feedback analysis will be given.

Principal reviews completed EdHub Learning Organizer.

Conduct two or three face-to-face meetings with teacher to monitor progress and document the outcomes on the plan.

PIP to address aderencce to expectations & policies

Principal will immediately monitor the plan and behavior in question for compliance.

Teacher will be notified that noncompliance could result in termination of employment.

Conduct two or three face-to-face meetings with teacher to monitor compliance and progress and document the outcomes on the plan.

COMPLETING THE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

As you go through the three phases of the PIP action plan, you will complete the remaining sections of NEE's short-term growth plan template, documenting your follow-up steps, teacher self-reflection, evidence of progress, and final review.



RECORD YOUR FOLLOW-UP STEPS

It is important that you follow up with the teacher and offer feedback throughout the duration of the PIP. A feedback loop helps to establish a coaching relationship that supports the teacher in accomplishing their goals. If the PIP is instructional in nature, you will record your follow-up classroom observations, the scores from those observations, and the dates of the follow-up conversations. You might choose to write notes about each observation and feedback conference in a separate document that you can attach to the PIP.

Establishing a frequent feedback cycle keeps the teacher informed on their progress over time. Offer praise for improvement, and offer additional resources if needed along the way.

TEACHER SELF-REFLECTION

After the completion of the activities and follow-up steps, the teacher will complete a self-reflection to record what was learned, the improvement achieved, and how the changes have been integrated into the teacher's instructional practice.

RECORD EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS

The progress section provides space for the administrator to reflect on the progress that was made toward meeting the goal. Note the data and evidence you have gathered over the course of the plan.

FINAL REVIEW

The final section allows both the teacher and administrator to record any further comments about professional growth and to sign and date the form. The completed PIP should go in the teacher's personnel file, and a copy should be made for the teacher.

If all of the activities that were included in the PIP are completed, the PIP is considered to be completed after the final review meeting between the teacher and the administrator.

If, however, the teacher is unable to complete the activities or does not meet the goal for improvement, the final meeting is used to discuss the reasons the goal was not met and to identify the next steps. Next steps might be another intervention cycle, where the teacher will again attempt to achieve the goal or, if there have been numerous intervention cycles, it might be time for a conversation with HR.

ADJUSTING YOUR MINDSET ABOUT PIPs

A teacher performance improvement plan is often thought of as a negative tool because they are sometimes used to begin the path toward nonrenewal of a contract.

However, PIPs do not have to be a negative experience. PIPs are meant to give struggling teachers the targeted support they need to improve. That means principals share in the responsibility of providing support and resources to help teachers accomplish their goals for improvement.

Almost every teacher wants to do well. They want to improve. Give struggling teachers your support and make this a collaborative process. Recognize the teacher's strengths. When teachers have your support and give input on the creation of the plan, they are more likely to be invested in the process and more likely to accomplish the goals you set together.

Also keep in mind that the environment of the school can greatly affect how feedback will be received. If the school climate is positive and focused on improvement, critical feedback will be viewed more objectively. Teachers must feel they can take risks and try new things. When this level of trust is missing, they may feel it is safer to continue to do the wrong thing than to take a chance on change. Although it can take time, building trust in the teacher evaluation process is critical for sustained instructional improvement.

It is worth repeating our three important beliefs and norms regarding the use of PIPs:

1. The purpose of the PIP is NOT to terminate the teacher. The purpose is to improve the behavior in question.
2. There is no exact science, score, rule, or light sensor that goes off to tell you it is time to write a PIP.
3. Developing and implementing a PIP shouldn't be something done TO teachers but something done WITH teachers.

Approaching the PIP process with a growth mindset – communicating to the teacher that you believe they are capable of growth and that you are committed to supporting their improvement – will establish a PIP process that promotes growth and leads to positive environments for leaders and teachers.

CONTACT US

Contact NEE for additional guidance and support, or to learn more about NEE's comprehensive evaluation services.

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NETWORK for EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS

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