



The Head of School Evaluation Process

In an independent school, one of the primary responsibilities of the board of trustees is the hiring, nurturing, and evaluating of the head of school. The evaluation, when done correctly, enhances communication between the head and board around the school's strategic goals. It establishes common goals for the year and utilizes appropriate assessments for measuring progress on those goals.

Guiding Principles for Effective Head of School Evaluations

The head of school evaluation process should be structured to focus on areas relevant to the board's expectations of the head.

The evaluation of the head is solely the responsibility of the board and should never be relegated to stakeholders outside of the board. It is appropriate to assess key constructs for which the head might be held responsible; however, these assessments should be undertaken with an understanding that no one outside of the board has a vote in the evaluation.

Boards should be specific in identifying the goals and objectives to be used in the evaluation process. Upon defining these items, a plan to assess them in a reliable and valid manner is important.

Clearly stated goals and areas of evaluation should be defined prior to the year for which the head will be evaluated. As much as possible the goals should be developed jointly by the board and the head; however, the head evaluation should be conducted on areas that have been defined in advance.

Beyond the established goals, it is expected that the head will act in a legal and ethical manner. It also is expected that the head will adhere to board policies regarding the administration of all school business.

At times, the board may wish to evaluate the head on various factors about which the board may not have direct knowledge but which are felt to be important to mission fulfillment and fall within the head's general responsibility. These factors might include the following:

- Academic progress
- Faculty morale
- Parent satisfaction
- Student satisfaction
- Community relationships
- Advancement of the school (admissions and fundraising)

However, the assessment of these areas is a process that should remain separate from the head's evaluation even though their results contribute to the head's evaluation. For example, if the board agrees that faculty morale is important to fulfilling the school's mission, this area could be included as one of the criteria on which the head is evaluated. However, an assessment of faculty morale should be undertaken separately from the head's evaluation process in order to underscore the clear message that no one outside of the board has a vote in the evaluation.

There are various ways that data can be gathered in assessing those factors which are outside the board's direct knowledge.

- *Surveys.* Whether commercially developed or self-developed, care should be taken to ensure reliability and validity.
- *Focus groups.* Using a trained facilitator is important.
- *Personal interviews* of individuals from the target demographic. Whether using one or several interviewers, it is important to have a clearly defined protocol.
- *School data.* Data on academic achievement such as AP, SAT, ACT, or ERB scores currently exists. Development data includes dollar amounts generated by the Annual Fund or Capital Campaign.

Developing the Evaluation Process

In general, an effective evaluation process should include the following components:

- Review, as a board, the school's mission to determine what expectations are appropriate to ensure that the mission is being implemented. This discussion could include things such as the admission of mission appropriate students, adherence to school policies, management of the board-approved budget.
- Review, as a board, the importance of other factors key to the sustainability of the school. This discussion should recognize how various factors may interact to impact on the head's performance (for example, how faculty morale might be impacted by a board mandated reduction in faculty or reduction in budgets).
- In collaboration with the head of school, establish goals and objectives for the upcoming school year. These goals and objectives should be central to fulfilling the school's mission and should be measurable, either by quantitative or qualitative methods.
- In collaboration with the head of school, decide what data should be collected, how it will be reported, and the process of assessing the goals and objectives. Data collection could include the use of a board survey (*see below*).

The Board Evaluation Survey

Surveys are often administered to trustees seeking individual ratings of the head's performance on several items. The areas represented on the trustee survey should either be ones that the trustee has direct knowledge or an informed knowledge based on data gathered from pre-established methods. The board survey should likely include the following areas for the trustees to evaluate:

- Board relationship

- Representative of the school
- Overall leadership
- Objectives and goals as agreed upon prior to the beginning of the year
- Additional comments

A sample survey is provided in the appendix.

Sample Evaluation Timeline

- Prior to the start of the year: Establish jointly with the board and the head of school goals, objectives, and expectations for the year.
- Prior to the start of year: Identify additional areas to be evaluated.
- Throughout year: Commission an assessment of additional areas identified to influence the board's evaluation.
- Bi-monthly: Board chair and head discuss progress toward goals, objectives, and expectations at regular intervals throughout the school year.
- Late spring: Request of the head of school a self-evaluation related to goals for the year.
- Late spring: Request of the head proposed goals for the following year.
- Late spring: Administer the head evaluation survey to all trustees
- End of school year: Convene board or evaluation committee to discuss the head's self-evaluations and trustee evaluations.
- Prior to start of next year: Draft evaluation report for approval by the board. Prior to start of next year: Present evaluation report to head of school and establish goals for the following year.
- Following presentation of the evaluation to the head: Identify any areas in which the head would benefit from a specific professional development opportunity.

Sample Head of School Evaluation Survey for Independent School Board Members

Please respond to the following items regarding the effectiveness of the head of school on the following items:

	Not at all Effective	Effective	Less Effective	Highly Effective	Extremely Effective
Working with the Board:					
Participates meaningfully in board discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicates well with the board	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informs the board of independent school best practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generates meaningful ideas for board consideration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides appropriate support to the board in Strategic Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Representing the School:					
Appearance is appropriately professional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is appropriately visible at school functions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is appropriately visible in the non-school community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintains an appropriately positive attitude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicates well with the school community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Leading:					
Is mission focused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administers board policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Executes the duties of Head of School ethically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Displays stewardship with school resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides leadership for academic programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides leadership for co-curricular programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides leadership for fund raising activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides leadership for campus operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Accomplishing established goals and objectives:					
<Goal 1>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<Goal 2>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<Etc>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide additional comments related to the head's effectiveness during the past year:

Comments:

