

## **Guidelines for appraising Community of School (CoS) Leadership and Teacher Roles**

### **Overview**

Communities of Schools (CoS) are forming to support improvement in student achievement and learning outcomes by building shared commitment and focus of effort across groups of schools.

Three new roles<sup>1</sup> are being created to help colleagues focus effort on the student achievement challenge for their Community of Schools:

- CoS leadership role
- CoS teacher (across community) role
- CoS teacher (within school) role

**These guidelines are provided by NZPPTA and NZSTA to assist Boards of Trustees in developing appraisal processes for those in the new role**

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the Community of Schools Guides for more information on each role.

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## What is appraised?

Good practice appraisal should be referenced to:

- the relevant professional standards
- the registered teacher criteria
- the job description
- performance objectives contained in the performance agreement/ appraisal document.
- learning and development objectives contained in the performance agreement/ appraisal document.
- career structure steps (for principals)

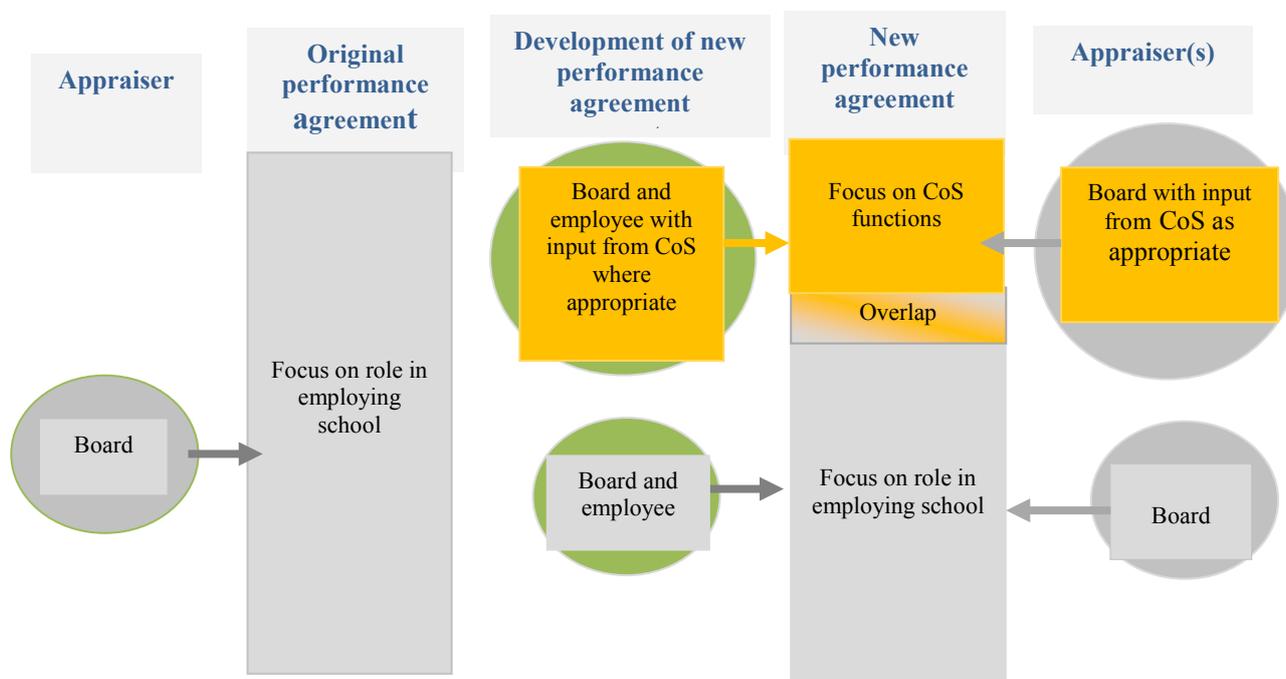
## How will the new roles change what is appraised?

The new CoS roles will have a number of functions that are different from existing roles in schools. The roles will have specific selection criteria, job descriptions and performance standards. These new functions, job descriptions and performance criteria will have to be taken into account in developing the appraisal document/performance agreement and subsequently for appraisals<sup>2</sup>.

Those in the new roles will have **both**:

- objectives and functions that focus on their role in the employing school and align with their employing board's charter, annual plan and strategic plan, as now, **and**
- objectives and functions aligned to the CoS achievement plan or role functions

## Community of Schools Role



<sup>2</sup> An expert writing group is developing professional standards for the roles. These will be ready in 2015. In the meantime, the Selection Criteria developed by that writing group, plus any local criteria developed by the CoS, will serve as a guide for establishing appraisal goals for those appointed to roles prior to the finalisation of the professional standards.

## How do we reflect these changes in the appraisal process?

1. The employer/appraiser will have to review the changed job description with the role appointee.
2. The appraisal document/performance agreement will need to be reviewed. For the Leadership and Teacher (across community) roles the document/agreement must reflect both the role appointees on-going role in the school and their new CoS Role across the community. For the Teacher (within school) Role, the document/agreement will need to reflect the addition of the new role functions.
3. The employer/appraiser will have to consult with the role appointee about changing their performance agreement in order to be able to successfully carry out the new roles: previous duties may need to be reallocated, priorities re-evaluated and changes made to previously agreed performance and learning objectives. The extent of changes will depend on the CoS role and the CoS achievement plan.
4. The revised appraisal document/performance agreement should be signed by both parties.

## Who is responsible for the appraisal of these new roles?

The employing board of trustees is accountable for the appraisal of the new roles, including for those working across other schools.

## What appraisal framework should we follow?

Performance appraisal has a dual focus:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Development    | Helping teachers to develop their practice and do their personal best  |
| Accountability | Showing that standards are being met, and that progress is being made towards organisational and individual goals, especially in the area of student achievement |

Boards should currently be following a good practice process which meets the following criteria, identified by Eileen Piggot-Irvine (2003):

- Educative
- High trust
- Well resourced
- Based on objective, multiple perspective, data
- Based on mutual respect
- Clear guidelines
- In-depth and on-going
- Independent of disciplinary processes (Appraisal may highlight areas of concern that could lead on to the competence process, but these **must** be separate and different) Piggot-Irvine (2003).

If your board and school are following a good process, according to the above, there should not be a need to make substantive changes to your processes for the new roles. Performance appraisal is just one part of a 'performance management' system, which includes professional learning and career pathways, and the appraisal document or performance agreement that is used to support it is just one part of performance appraisal. Throughout this guide there are links to resources which provide advice on other parts of these processes.

## **How will this change the evidence required?**

If a board and school are already using a good practice appraisal/performance system, the type and amount of evidence should not be much different. Any new evidence would focus directly on the new role functions.

A Writing Group established by the IES Working Party is developing the professional standards for Community of Schools roles. These will be finalised in 2015. The Writing Group will also develop advice on the evidence which can appropriately be used for appraisal against these professional standards.

The primary difference is that the evidence will need to be gathered from different, wider, sources. The evidence will need to be gathered, not only from the role appointee's employing school, but from the wider CoS, as appropriate for the particular role.

The evidence, as with all appraisal, can and should be naturally occurring.

Providers of evidence could include: CoS boards, principals and teachers. It is advisable the type of evidence and providers of evidence be discussed with the role appointee when reviewing their appraisal document/ performance agreement.

The evidence of progress towards achievement goals of the CoS or school as a whole should not be confused with the evidence relating to the appraisal of an individual.

## **Will we need more evidence?**

In total the appraisal requirements of the new roles (new functions and existing functions of the holder of the role) should not be greater than their existing appraisal requirements. The appraisal requirements will not be greater, but they will be different and will require different evidence and from a wider range of sources.

It is unnecessary to require these role appointees to gather masses of data in portfolios and complete extensive checklists of actions. However, if a board and school have had, in the past, a relatively rudimentary appraisal process which did not require teachers to focus on any evidence of the impact of their teaching on their learners, that board and school may conclude that they need to make their processes more comprehensive to ensure they have good appraisal processes in place for the new CoS roles.

## How can I check if our appraisal system follows good practice?

|    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| 1  | Do you have a performance appraisal process for teachers and principals?   |  |
| 2  | Are the Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards covered by your appraisal process?  |  |
| 3  | If no to number 2, do you have systems in place to make judgements about the Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards?   |  |
| 4  | Is the relationship between the Registered Teacher Criteria and the Professional Standards made clear? Do teachers and principals know which standards they are being evaluated against? |  |
| 5  | Do teachers have opportunities to think about and unpack the appraisal criteria? Is there a shared understanding between teachers and school leaders of what they mean?                  |  |
| 6  | Is most evidence required for performance appraisal naturally occurring?   |  |
| 7  | Do you use multiple sources of evidence for performance appraisal?   |  |
| 8  | Is any extra work required for performance appraisal built into the school meeting cycle and properly accounted for to allow it to happen effectively?                                   |  |
| 9  | Are individual goals aligned with the board and school goals? Will they be aligned with CoS goals for those in the new roles?  |  |
| 10 | Are teachers and principals offered appropriate and relevant support to reach their goals?   |  |
| 11 | Is there a clear relationship between the school's appraisal system and allocation of resources for professional learning and development?   |  |

## What does a good appraisal system look like?

### A good appraisal system should:

- Have professional conversations at its heart. These conversations should be based on evidence and focused on student learning. [Open to learning conversations](#) are a useful model for this.
- Use reasonable and focussed documentation. **A ten page appraisal document or performance agreement for each teacher each year should be the maximum required for an effective appraisal system.**
- Be on-going and built into the regular work and meeting cycle. It should not be simply a once or twice a year meeting. If journals or logs are part of the appraisal documentation, teachers must have time to complete them at the end of professional learning and development sessions.
- Use appraisers who have a good understanding of the work of the person they are appraising. For example, this could be a middle leader who knows the teachers work best, who then advises the principal.
- Have training and support for the people doing appraisal. It's not reasonable to expect someone to simply be able to do appraisal well because they are a good teacher. Training is needed in conducting observations, what types of evidence to look for, to build familiarity with the criteria or standards and in having difficult conversations.
- Be referenced to standards or criteria. Where the Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards fit in relation to a schools performance appraisal must be made clear. It is important that teachers know which criteria they are being evaluated against and they should be able to develop their own understanding of what these criteria mean, and what the evidence will look like.
- Include classroom observations. Planned and intentional classroom observations are crucial. A good process involves a pre-meeting, to decide on what to focus on and a follow up meeting after the observation to discuss it.
- Use data that comes from multiple sources. These *should* include student learning outcomes and *could* include: student achievement information, student feedback, observations, personal reflections, peer feedback... or the multitude of different types of 'evidence' that teachers create every day in their work.
- Be used to plan professional learning and development (PLD) based on teachers' needs. Teachers should have the opportunity to pursue PLD that allows them to achieve their goals and meet their learning needs.
- Be based on board and school policies which establish how teachers will be supported to meet the requirements and criteria of appraisal.

- Teachers' goals or inquiries should be informed by and have reference to school goals, as established in the charter, or CoS goals, as set in the achievement challenge plan. The best goals are set by agreement between the appraiser and the appraisee.

### Three models of appraisal documents

There are different ways that board and schools may design their performance appraisal systems that may display these elements and achieve both its purposes. The paper work matters, but it is not the paper-work that is 'appraisal'. Evidence used in appraisal conversations and to make judgements will come from many places, not simply these documents.

Some schools are using portfolios of PLD and teacher reflections instead of or along-side this type of document. These can be great for encouraging good, broad discussions and letting teachers focus on what is meaningful to them. However, teachers should be given time, training and support when using them like when using other appraisal documents.

Remember that each teacher's appraisal documents, portfolios and evidence belong primarily to them. They are part of a teacher's professional responsibilities.

### Registered Teacher Criteria based appraisal

The employer may make the Registered Teacher Criteria (RTC) central to performance appraisal and evaluation. They may use a document to complete over one year, or over the three years between renewal of teachers' practising certificates. Schools will need to consider:

- Which criteria to focus on. The Teachers Council is happy for teachers not to 'cover' all the criteria every year, as renewal of practising certificates happens three yearly. Some criteria may require less evidence and discussion than others, while some might be much more important and challenging. For example, a school or teacher might choose to focus one year primarily on criteria that involve student well-being and community connectedness.
- If few criteria are covered in depth each year (aiming for 3 yearly renewal of practising certificates), how are judgements made for annual attestation?
- How to foster teachers' engagement with the RTC as meaningful descriptions of good practice and not just boxes to be ticked.
- That the gathering of evidence for the RTC needs to 'fall out of good practice'. There should be no need to be doubling on creation of evidence.
- The reflective questions of the criteria shouldn't lead to insistence on keeping artificial reflective journals. Reflecting takes place in many different times and places.
- How to give teachers the opportunity to set their own goals or do their own inquiry as well as gather evidence towards the criteria.

### Inquiry process based appraisal

The employer may make a teacher inquiry central to appraisal. This will also need to have reference to the RTC and/or the professional standards at some point, but this might not be central to the process. Schools will need to consider:

- That the questions/goals of the inquiry cycle should be worthwhile and meaningful to the individual setting them, but may have reference to overall school goals.
- How many inquiries? One or at the most two inquiries per year is enough. To do an inquiry process well the goals should be narrow and deep rather than broad and shallow.
- How teachers can use their departments or cross-curricular inquiry groups to work on an inquiry topic together.
- Whether an inquiry cycle may run from term two and end in term one the following year – to enable time to reflect on learning and not have to rush to complete at the end of the school year.

### Goal setting based appraisal

The employer may choose to take an approach in which performance and professional learning and development goals are central to appraisal. Schools will need to consider:

- That the personal goals should either connect in some way with board/school/department goals, or the teacher may set a personal goal and another goal that links with the board/school's.
- How teachers are trained to set relevant, high level goals. There are many ways in which goals might not be useful – too broad, unobtainable, too simplistic. [SMART goals](#) may be a useful approach.
- How groups of teachers with similar goals can support each other and provide useful input. How can the school facilitate this?
- The emphasis of the goals may be around groups of teachers working on specific learning problems.
- Whether a goal setting cycle may run from term two and end in term one the following year – to enable time to reflect on learning and not have to rush to complete at the end of the school year.

## What support is available for appraisal of these new roles?

| Role                                 | Support   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Community of Schools Leadership Role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Independent advisers</b> from national panel can advise boards on evaluating against CoS role criteria, setting CoS aligned performance and learning objectives and CoS evidence collection and analysis</li> <li>• <b>NZSTA HR advisors</b> can advise boards on the appraisal/performance process.</li> <li>• <b>PPTA field officers and advisory staff</b> can offer advice to teachers and principals</li> </ul>  |
| Teacher (across community) Role      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CoS Leadership Role</b> can assist with assessing against CoS criteria, setting CoS aligned performance objectives and CoS evidence collection and analysis</li> <li>• <b>Independent advisers</b> are available to advise boards on assessing against CoS criteria</li> <li>• <b>NZSTA HR advisors:</b> can advise boards on the appraisal/performance process</li> <li>• <b>PPTA field officers and advisory staff</b> can offer advice to teachers and principals</li> </ul> |
| Teacher (within school) Role         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NZSTA HR advisors:</b> can advise boards on the appraisal/performance process</li> <li>• <b>PPTA field officers and advisory staff</b> can offer advice to teachers and principals</li> </ul>   |

Boards may also choose to engage their own external appraisal consultants separate from the above to advise them on appraisal.

Resources are available on the PPTA and NZSTA websites

[www.ppta.org.nz](http://www.ppta.org.nz)

[www.nzsta.org.nz](http://www.nzsta.org.nz)

## Links to other sources of advice on appraisal can be found here

<http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/content/appraisal-teachers-project>

<http://www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Supporting-school-improvement-through-effective-teacher-appraisal-May-2014>

<http://www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Supporting-school-improvement-through-effective-principal-appraisal-May-2014>

<http://ppta.org.nz/resources/publication-list/2432-teacher-appraisal-resources>

<http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/resources/publication-list/1651-pld-toolkit>

<http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Leadership-development/Professional-information/Professional-learning-and-development-planning>

<http://www.nzsta.org.nz/board-as-employers/principals-performance-management/>

<http://appraisal.ruia.educationalleaders.govt.nz/>

<http://www.nzspc.org.nz/index.php/nzspc-resources/8-principals-career-and-appraisal-toolkit>