



New Board President Webinar - Conducting Meaningful Superintendent Evaluation

Resources

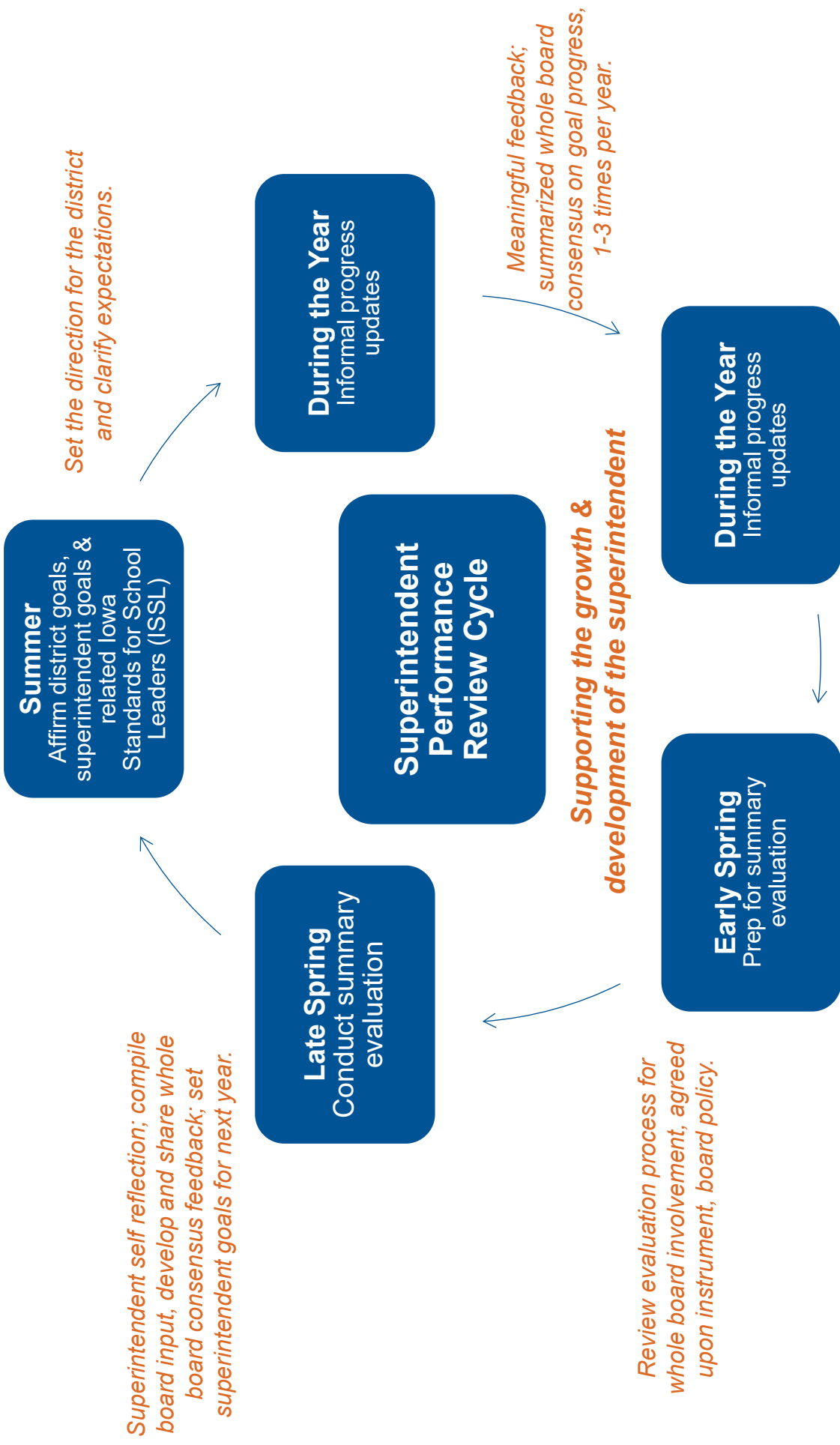
February 25 & 26, 2025

Facilitators:

Lou Gvist
Board Development Director
lgvist@ia-sb.org
(515) 720-8561

Tammi Drawbaugh
Board Development Director
tdrawbaugh@ia-sb.org
(563) 299-7028

Alignment between district goals, superintendent goals and superintendent evaluation





Iowa Code and ISSL

284A.7 Evaluation requirements for administrators.

A school district shall conduct an annual evaluation of an administrator who holds a professional administrator license issued under chapter 272 for purposes of assisting the administrator in making continuous improvement, documenting continued competence in the Iowa standards for school administrators adopted pursuant to section 256.7, subsection 27, or to determine whether the administrator's practice meets school district expectations. The evaluation shall include, at a minimum, an assessment of the administrator's competence in meeting the Iowa standards for school administrators and the goals of the administrator's individual professional development plan, including supporting documentation or artifacts aligned to the Iowa standards for school administrators and the individual administrator's professional development plan.

2007 Acts, ch 108, §58; 2010 Acts, ch 1183, §38; 2012 Acts, ch 1119, §7

Note: The law does not require a specific instrument, it simply requires the ISSL and superintendent progress on goals.

Policy 302.05: Superintendent Evaluation

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 03/08/2022 | Last Reviewed Date: 03/08/2022

The board will conduct an ongoing evaluation of the superintendent's skills, abilities, and competence. At a minimum, the board will formally evaluate the superintendent on an annual basis. The goal of the superintendent's formal evaluation is to ensure the education program for the students is carried out, promote growth in effective administrative leadership, clarify the superintendent's role, clarify the immediate priorities of the board, and develop a working relationship between the board and the superintendent. This policy supports and does not preclude the ongoing, informal evaluation of the superintendent's skills, abilities and competence.

The superintendent will be an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by:

- Mission, Vision and Core Values: Develop, advocate and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.
- Ethics and Professional Norms: Act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
- Equity and Cultural Responsiveness: Strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
- Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment: Develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
- Community Care and Support for Students: Cultivate an inclusive, caring and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.
- Professional Capacity of School Personnel: Develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
- Professional Community for Teachers and Staff: Foster a professional community of teachers and professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
- Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community: Engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
- Operations and Management: Manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
- School Improvement: Act as an agent of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

The formal evaluation will be based upon the following principles:

- The evaluation criteria will be in writing, clearly stated and mutually agreed upon by the board and the superintendent. The criteria will be related to the job description, the Iowa Standards for School Leaders, the school district's goals, and the goals of the administrator's individual professional development plan.
- At a minimum, the evaluation process will be conducted annually at a time agreed upon;
- Each board member will have an opportunity to individually evaluate the superintendent, and these individual evaluations will be compiled into an overall evaluation from the entire board;
- The superintendent will conduct a self-evaluation prior to discussing the board's evaluation, and the board as a whole will discuss its evaluation with the superintendent;
- The board may discuss its evaluation of the superintendent in closed session upon a request from the superintendent and if the board determines its discussion in open session will needlessly and irreparably injure the superintendent's reputation; and,
- The individual evaluation by each board member, if individual board members so desire, will not be reviewed by the superintendent. Board members are encouraged, however, to communicate their criticisms and concerns to the superintendent in the closed session. The board president will develop a written summary of the individual evaluations, including both the strengths and the weaknesses of the superintendent, and place it in the superintendent's personnel file to be incorporated into the next cycle of evaluations.

NOTE: The Iowa Board of Education previously adopted the new Iowa Standards for School Leaders which will take effect on July 1, 2021. Districts are required to use these new standards in conducting evaluations of school administrators.

Legal Reference: *Wedergren v. Board of Directors*, 307 N.W.2d 12 (Iowa 1981).
Iowa Code §§ 279.8, .20, .23, .23A.
281 I.A.C. Ch. 83; 12.3(4).

‘During the Year’ Superintendent Performance & Progress Review

This form is designed to support a brief dialogue between the board and superintendent relative to progress toward the superintendent’s goals and related Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL). The board provides feedback and together, steps are identified to move toward goal attainment. Board leadership should capture summarized notes from whole board conversation about the superintendent’s accomplishments and any areas of needed attention. The summarized notes are placed in the personnel file and the board can refer to them when completing the annual evaluation, making the process more meaningful and efficient.

Date: _____ Recorder: _____

Strengths and key areas of progress

Areas for growth or areas that need more time and attention.

Be as specific as possible—emphasize the desired behavior or action.

Adjustments and support needed

To help superintendent focus on areas needing time and attention and to work around roadblocks.

Iowa Standards for School Leaders

- 1. Mission, Vision and Core Values**
Develops, advocates, and enacts a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.
- 2. Ethics and Professional Norms**
Acts ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.
- 3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness**
Strives for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.
- 4. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**
Develops and supports intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.
- 5. Community Care and Support for Students**
Cultivates an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.
- 6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel**
Develops the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.
- 7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff**
Fosters a professional community of teachers and professional staff to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.
- 8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community**
Engages families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.
- 9. Operations and Management**
Manages school operations and resources to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.
- 10. School Improvement**
Acts as an agent of continuous improvement to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.



Superintendent Evaluation Form

Based on IASB and SAI's Superintendent Leadership Performance Review document

Superintendent Evaluation Form

Introduction

The Iowa code requires an annual evaluation of the superintendent based on competence in meeting the Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL) and performance and progress on the superintendent's goals established by the board-superintendent team.

This form serves as a resource for board-superintendent teams to conduct a meaningful and effective superintendent evaluation process using the 10 Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL) that go into effect on July 1, 2021. It is a simplified, adapted version of the comprehensive [Superintendent Leadership Performance Review](#) document.

An effective process to address the growth and development of a superintendent is:

- A critical component in the entire improvement effort of a school district. It defines expectations, enhances communication, prioritizes district and building goals and encourages the school board to focus their attention on the leader's role in improving achievement and well-being for every student.
- Based on a presumption of positive intent focused on providing feedback for growth, as opposed to finding evidence of shortcomings. If a school board is considering evaluation for the purposes of termination, other processes should be employed.
- A year-long process that includes time for the superintendent to update the board on progress toward reaching established goals and time for the board to provide feedback on a regular basis—in addition to the year-end summative evaluation.

IASB encourages the whole board team to participate in the end of the year superintendent evaluation conference. This provides all board members the opportunity for firsthand awareness of the information communicated between the board and superintendent regarding the superintendent's performance. There are a variety of ways the conference can be structured. One of the most important parts of the process is ensuring every board member's voice is heard. Every board is unique, and you will need to guide what works best for your board. For more information on effective practices, see the IASB resource [FAQ: Superintendent Evaluation](#).

The following sections describe three phases of the year-end summative evaluation process for experienced superintendents.

Phase 1: Assessment of Competence

Evaluating the superintendent each year on all 10 ISSL does not have to be daunting. The Assessment of Competence is a brief, high-level conversation of all 10 standards, where the board assesses if the superintendent either meets or does not meet each standard.

If the board has questions regarding the superintendent’s performance at a minimum level of competence, the superintendent and board move into a deeper discussion about what evidence would affirm competence; then, identify and agree upon improvement goals and a timeline for achievement.

#	Standards	Meets	Does Not Meet
1	Mission, Vision and Core Values Superintendent develops, advocates, and enacts a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.		
2	Ethics and Professional Norms Superintendent acts ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.		
3	Equity and Cultural Responsiveness Superintendent strives for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.		
4	Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Superintendent develops and supports intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.		
5	Community Care and Support for Students Superintendent cultivates an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.		
6	Professional Capacity of School Personnel Superintendent develops the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.		

7	Professional Community for Teachers and Staff Superintendent fosters a professional community of teachers and professional staff to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.		
8	Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community Superintendent engages families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.		
9	Operations and Management Superintendent manages school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.		
10	School Improvement Superintendent acts as an agent of continuous improvement to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.		

Comments/Supporting Evidence:

Phase 2: Review Current Superintendent Goals in Relation to Specific Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL)

Overview

In phase one, the board established the superintendent's competence in meeting all 10 standards. In phase two, the board takes a deeper dive on the superintendent's growth and development over the year relative to the:

- Superintendent's established goals.
- Specific standards aligned to the goals.

This portion of the year-end conference is designed to give feedback on a continuum of growth, using a strengths-based approach for developing the capacity of the superintendent. There are four levels of performance—from ineffective to highly effective.

Definitions of Effectiveness

These definitions can support the board in understanding performance of each standard. Note: The ineffective category stands alone and performance in this area indicates a significant need for intervention and assistance. **The three columns to the right** represent the continuum of growth of a school leader and performance in any of these columns **meets the standard**.

Does not meet the standard

Ineffective: The superintendent may be aware of effective practices but does not consistently demonstrate evidence of implementation. Leadership is inconsistent, ineffective and in need of significant intervention and assistance.

Meets the standard

Developing: The superintendent knows and models effective practices. They strive to implement consistently and are in the process of building their own capacity to do so. Their leadership shows growth and promise.

Effective: The superintendent consistently implements effective practices. They build capacity, distribute and share leadership, collaborate and create collective efficacy such that school improvement goals are achieved. Their leadership encompasses the depth and fullness of the Iowa standards.

Highly Effective: The superintendent promotes and advances effective practices both within and beyond their own school. They serve as a resource to colleagues and local and state organizations because of their impactful leadership and sustained results.

Assessing Performance on a Continuum of Growth

Thoughtful and meaningful feedback reflects an effective evaluation process and allows for professional and personal growth.

When determining the level of effectiveness on the continuum, the question to be answered is, 'Where has the superintendent performed most of the time?' To help guide the discussion, you can use and review the sample indicators for each standard provided on pp. 10-30 on the [Superintendent Leadership Performance Review](#) document.

Consider the following when writing comments:

- Provide specific examples of a strength, including when/how it was performed.
- Identify potential challenges and opportunities for growth.
- Suggest supports that could elevate the superintendent along the continuum.

Current Superintendent Goal #1			
Aligned to Standard(s) #			
Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard		
Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
Comments:			

Current Superintendent Goal #2			
Aligned to Standard(s) #			
Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard		
Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
Comments:			

Current Superintendent Goal #3			
Aligned to Standard(s) #			
Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard		
Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
Comments:			

Phase 3: Affirm Superintendent Goals for the Next Year

The year-end conference is an opportune time to affirm superintendent goals for the coming year. This provides time for the board and superintendent to clarify the mission and long-range plans for the district.

The following considerations can guide the process:

- The board and superintendent should discuss and agree upon areas of growth for the superintendent.
- Goals reflect district priority areas of work that may take multiple years to achieve. Specific goals may be continued from the previous year.
- Ask, ‘What does successful completion of each goal look like?’ Include specific measures to provide agreement and clarity for the board and the superintendent.
- Map out an evaluation timeline for the following year. The process should include quarterly or mid-year progress update relative to the superintendent goals and standards aligned to each goal.

Goal #1
Aligned to Standard(s) #
Comments:

Goal #2
Aligned to Standard(s) #
Comments:

Goal #3
Aligned to Standard(s) #
Comments:

Remediation Target (If applicable)

Standard to be Remediated	Remediation Target	Action Steps	Evidence of Progress	Summary Rating (Meets/Does Not Meet)



Superintendent Evaluation Calendar Template

[Insert District Name]

[Insert School Year]

Date	Time of Year	Meeting Purpose	Resource Needs
	Late Spring/Early Summer	<p>Superintendent and board clarify vision, mission and long-range plans for the district. Board and superintendent review the most recent superintendent evaluation and the evaluation process.</p> <p>The superintendent considers 2-3 goals as the focus for learning and leading work to propose to the board and aligns those goals to the respective standard/s</p>	
	Late Summer	<p>Explore options and select your superintendent evaluation instruments. This includes both the brief progress reviews that happen during the year and the year-end performance review.</p>	
	Weekly/Monthly	<p>Superintendent provides regular updates to the school board regarding progress and next steps related goals.</p>	
	Nov/Dec (Ongoing as needed)	<p>As new board members are elected or appointed, they and the superintendent review the evaluation process, forms, goals and aligned standards</p>	

Date	Time of Year	Meeting Purpose	Resource Needs
	Quarterly or Midyear	Conduct a brief, quarterly or midyear progress review. Board and superintendent dialogue about progress relative to the goals and standards. The board provides feedback, and together they clarify next steps in moving toward goal attainment.	
	Quarterly or Midyear	Conduct a brief, quarterly or midyear progress review. Board and superintendent dialogue about progress relative to the goals and standards. The board provides feedback, and together they clarify next steps in moving toward goal attainment.	
	Quarterly or Midyear	Conduct a brief, quarterly or midyear progress review. Board and superintendent dialogue about progress relative to the goals and standards. The board provides feedback, and together they clarify next steps in moving toward goal attainment.	
	Early Spring	Board president prepares for the year-end summary performance meeting. Board-superintendent team reviews agreed upon forms and discusses the year-end superintendent evaluation process.	
	Late Spring or Early Summer	Conduct year-end superintendent evaluation before the contract is renewed or extended. Superintendent completes a self-assessment of the goals and standards progressions. Individual board members complete feedback primarily focused on the standards and goals. Board members meet to discuss feedback and develop the board's official written document(s) that will be shared, clarified and discussed with the superintendent. Iowa law requires that notification of a school board's intent to terminate the contract of a superintendent must be done by May 15.	
	June	A copy of the final written evaluation form is placed in the superintendent's personnel folder.	



Superintendent Evaluation: A Guide for Board–Superintendent Teams

Addressing the growth and development of a superintendent is a critical component in the entire improvement effort of a school district. Use the following timeline, guidance and sample board questions to prepare for and conduct a year-long evaluation process that is fair and productive.

PART 1: SUMMER

1. **Set superintendent goals for the coming year.** The board and superintendent collaborate and establish the superintendent’s goals for the upcoming school year—or revisit and affirm the goals if previously set during the most recent summary evaluation.
 - Superintendent and board clarify vision, mission and long-range plans for district,
 - Then establish and align the superintendent’s goals to district [goals and priorities](#).
 - Once the goals are established, discuss plans to stay focused, provide board support and monitor progress.

Sample discussion questions at the board table

- a. Why do we need our superintendent to ‘lean into’ these goals this school year?
- b. What will it take for us to commit to and stay focused on these goals?
- c. What essential support does our superintendent need from our board to achieve these goals?
- d. What will success look like? What will we watch as indicators of progress or success?
- e. How closely do these superintendent goals align with our district priorities or goals? What, if anything, do we need to do to improve alignment?

2. **Identify Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL) that align with superintendent goals.** Iowa code requires the board to annually evaluate the superintendent's performance on progress toward meeting the superintendent's goals and the [ISSL](#). The board-superintendent team should identify specific standards that align with each of the superintendent's goals.
- Ideally, the whole board-superintendent team participates in this discussion to ensure collective understanding.
 - Review the ISSL in comparison to each of the superintendent's goals. Select the one or two standards that most closely align to each goal.
 - As an alternative, board leadership and the superintendent could identify alignment between standards and goals, then bring their recommendations to the whole board for discussion and confirmation.

Sample discussion questions at the board table

- a. Which one or two standards most closely align to each of the superintendent's goals for this coming school year?
- b. Are these a realistic number of standards for our superintendent and board to focus on this year? What refining or 'trimming back' might be needed?

PART 2: LATE SUMMER/EARLY FALL

3. Explore options and finalize your selection for your superintendent evaluation instruments. There are a range of choices.

Year-end summary performance review instruments:

- [IASB superintendent evaluation form](#), which can be modified as needed.
- The standards and progressions tool prepared by the state committee—[Superintendent Leadership Performance Review](#).
- Modify the instrument your board-superintendent team has previously used. For example, insert the 10 standards into your existing instrument.
- Create your own new instrument.

Midyear or quarterly review forms:

- ['During the Year' Superintendent Performance & Progress Review](#)

Sample discussion questions at the board table

- a. What are our first impressions of the evaluation instrument options?
 - b. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the evaluation instruments we are considering?
 - c. What has worked well with our evaluation instrument in the past?
 - d. Which instrument is likely to be the most beneficial and practical for us to use this year? Why?
 - e. What would strengthen our evaluation instrument and process?
4. **Create and confirm a year-long calendar for superintendent evaluation.** The whole board and superintendent will benefit from a clearly defined process that includes dates throughout the year for progress updates, discussion, preparation and the summary evaluation.
- Use this prefilled [template](#) to create your own calendar for a year-long superintendent evaluation process.
 - Getting board meeting dates on your calendar for two or three progress updates and the year-end evaluation can get your team organized and poised for a successful year.
 - Your timeline is essential orientation information for newly elected or appointed board members.
5. **Conduct midyear or quarterly reviews.** As an effective practice, IASB strongly encourages boards and superintendents to conduct at least one [midyear or quarterly performance reviews](#) during the year. These ‘mini-evaluations’ provide an ongoing cycle of review and clarity about progress over time. They also ensure the summary evaluation reflects the superintendent’s performance over the entire year.

Sample discussion questions at the board table

- a. What are the key benefits of doing midyear or quarterly performance reviews? What are the disadvantages of waiting until the end of the year to discuss performance?
- b. If we have not been conducting midyear or quarterly performance reviews in the past, what has held us back?
- c. What would it take for us to implement a midyear or quarterly review in the coming school year?

PART 3: LATE WINTER/EARLY SPRING

Prepare for a fair and productive year-end summary performance review. Dedicate one or two board meetings to review key materials and processes related to your summary superintendent evaluation meeting. Take time to discuss board policy, your evaluation instrument and your process for conducting the year-end superintendent performance review. Here are two helpful IASB resources: [Superintendent Evaluation Process At a Glance](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions About Best Practices for Superintendent Evaluation](#).

Sample discussion questions at the board table

- a. What does our board policy on superintendent evaluation say?
- b. After reviewing the superintendent evaluation form that we agreed on earlier in the year, what questions do we have?
- c. What were the steps of our year-end superintendent performance review process last year?
- d. What worked well and what would enhance our process this year?
- e. What questions do we still have? What support does the board or superintendent need to prepare for the summary evaluation meeting?



Conducting Evaluations in Closed Session Guidance

On December 4, 2024, the Iowa Court of Appeals issued a decision for *Teig v. Loeffler*, which impacts how government boards conduct evaluations and interviews of an individual. This decision is very likely to be appealed and will hopefully be overturned. However, for the interim, boards should consider making some meaningful changes when conducting an evaluation or interview of an individual.

In *Teig v. Loeffler* the Cedar Rapids City Council conducted a closed session under *Iowa Code* 21.5(1)(i) to interview a candidate for the position of city clerk. The candidate had requested the closed session in accordance with 21.5(1)(i): *To evaluate the professional competency of an individual whose appointment, hiring, performance, or discharge is being considered when necessary to prevent needless and irreparable injury to that individual's reputation and that individual requests a closed session.* The closed session was conducted, and the Iowa Court of Appeals held that while the council initially entered into the closed session correctly, the council should have conducted an inquiry as to why the closed session was necessary to prevent irreparable harm.

Additionally, the court interpreted the language of 21.5(1)(i) to mean that when discussion did not relate to statements or information that could harm an individual's reputation, that portion of the evaluation or interview should be held in open session. But if a board member anticipates that they may make a statement that could be considered harmful to the individual's reputation, the board should go into closed session.

Below is some guidance for boards to consider in order to conduct a meaningful evaluation or interview of an individual in accordance with *Iowa Code*, and within the requirements of *Teig v. Loeffler*.

Be thoughtful in structuring the written request from the individual.

Requests from an individual to hold a closed session under 21.5(1)(i) should be in writing. The request should include some language that

- The individual anticipates a full and frank discussion with the board which will include performance strengths and weaknesses.
- The closed session is necessary to prevent harm to the individual's reputation and to allow the full and frank discussion to occur.

Conduct an initial assessment of evidence to show risk of harm to reputation.

If a board enters closed session under 21.5(1)(i), the board should begin the session by making an initial assessment as to whether evidence exists that there is a risk of reputational harm to the individual. This informal assessment should be recorded and stated in the minutes. However, it is important to remember that board members should not vote in closed session!

Factors to include in this assessment:

- Explain that the evaluation/interview will include a full and fair discussion, which may include both positive and negative comments. Negative comments may impact the individual's ability to continue to serve in their role. They may also negatively impact the individual's future employability if shared during open session.
- Ask the individual if they believe the discussion is necessary to prevent needless and irreparable harm, and they wish to continue with the discussion in closed session.

Consider in advance how to structure your discussion.

Consider how to effectively structure or frame your evaluation/interview. If there are concerns about reputational harm, could that discussion be grouped together? Can the individual's goals be established in open session in a way that is forward-focused?

Discuss this process and learn together.

It will be very important that boards take time in advance of any evaluation/interview session to learn together, and better understand both the new legal requirements imposed by *Teig v. Loffler* and how the board will plan to allow for honest discussion in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the individual and preserves the transparency obligations of the board.