



Using a 360-Survey to Evaluate Your Superintendent

A 360 evaluation should never be considered THE evaluation and should not be represented as such. When using a 360-survey remember, the results may not be as truly reliable for rating the superintendent's actual behavior or hoped-for outcomes as they are in reliably rating the respondents' own personal feelings and emotions. With this in mind, whether and how a 360-survey is used as part of the evaluation process, consider the following before making such decisions.

Things to Consider

A 360 evaluation is not recommended during difficult times (such as reductions in programs and staff due to budget cuts) because the responses may reflect a reaction to changes made outside the superintendent's control. When times are tough responses are likely to represent venting, not an objective analysis of what has been accomplished.

A board should be cautious about using a 360 evaluation because they are not happy with the superintendent's performance and want to be able to point to another source for that dissatisfaction. While the responses can provide further justification of a negative evaluation, the 360 should not be used as a weapon in such cases.

Boards and superintendents ARE encouraged to regularly survey staff, students, parents and others in the community to get a sense of how effectively district systems and processes are actually or at least perceived to be working. It may seem like a fine line, but surveys can be designed to reflect district climate, communication effectiveness, personnel issues, etc. that are indicators of superintendent performance without asking constituents to "tell us what you think" of the superintendent. Since district employees don't supervise the superintendent, they may not have a good understanding of the superintendent's responsibilities. This is also true of students, parents, and community members.

Other things to consider are:

- Staff, students, nor community members may not know what the board and superintendent have identified as the areas to be measured in the evaluation. It is not their job to know what the superintendent's responsibilities or standards are and may result in feedback that is not supported by research as relevant to the impact on student performance.
- Your superintendent may make decisions that are unpopular with district staff that would inappropriately influence their feedback, e.g., making a change to the new teacher evaluation tools and process or recommending policy requiring building administrators to live in the district.
- If the evaluation results in any real or perceived gain to the superintendent (e.g. contract extension, salary raise or other perks), it could garner negative feedback (especially if there is not a comparable raise for district staff).

Suggestions for Using the ASBA 360-Survey Sample

Questions asked on this survey focus on the six standards included as part of the superintendent evaluation process. It also includes space at the end to include the PGP goals and/or any other significant initiatives or goals of the district, student achievement, or services provided. Take care not to focus questions on personal characteristics of the superintendent.

The 360 degree evaluation process including questions to be asked, timeline, who will be surveyed, and who is responsible for publishing the survey and collecting and analyzing results should all be adopted as part of the full evaluation process a year before it is used (suggested time: during the PGP development and adoption process in January and February). Nothing in the evaluation should ever be a last minute surprise, and this is particularly true when the 360 degree instrument is used as part of the process to inform the board in making the final board evaluation decisions. The ASBA pilot model (in Step #5) shows the superintendent as having access to and using the 360-survey results as part of his/her self-evaluation and report to the board (if it's chosen as an included option in the evaluation process).

If your district chooses to include a 360-survey in the superintendent evaluation process, paper may be used for administering it. Using an online survey system such as Survey Monkey is recommended (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>).

A WORD OF CAUTION: When you use surveys of any kind, ALL results, regardless of their subject or content, must be shared in their entirety if requests are made under FOI. No part of the results may be redacted before they are turned over to the entity requesting results of the survey.