Professional Improvement Plans (*ref. 1091*)

and

Professional Growth Plans (*ref. 1*07)

Evaluation for all employees consists of several components. There is the Developmental phase which includes observations, professional development plans for certified staff, and the Summative phase. Professional Improvement Plans are also part of the performance based evaluation system in the District for certified staff and ESP. They are called Professional Growth Plans for ESP.

 Sometimes, staff members find themselves struggling in one or more areas of their job performance. A supervisor may decide that your performance on one or more indicators (certified staff) or criteria (ESP) is below expectations and will decide to put you on a PIP/PGP. Do not panic if this happens. These plans are NOT punishment. Let me say that again: they are ***not*** designed to punish anyone. Actually, they are an intervention step to help folks who are struggling in their job performance. This is true for ESP as well as certified staff.

 Typically, your supervisor should have had a conversation with you about whatever the issue is. You have been put on notice that there is a concern. If you ignored it or crossed your fingers and hoped things would get better, then you have probably received a Developmental Data Form (DDF) that documents the problem and you have been notified that your supervisor wants to put you on a PIP/PGP.

 Here’s how the process works. You should have received a DDF prior to being informed that your supervisor wants to put you on a plan or you will receive a DDF indicating that you are going to be placed on a plan. Your supervisor must inform you in writing of the need for you to be on a PIP or PGP. Your supervisor will ask you to sign it. Your signature merely means that you have seen the DDF and it has been discussed with you. It does **NOT** mean that you agree with what is there. In the space for your comments, you should indicate that you will be writing a response.

 What do you do next? You call your Employee Rights Chairperson *immediately.* (**314-766-1253**) She will return your call as soon as possible.

 If the plan is going in place there are certain steps that must be followed by your supervisor. These are fairly simple but sometimes supervisors don’t always know all the fine points. You need to be proactive (with the help of your ER representative). The plan is supposed to be written cooperatively (that means you and the supervisor sit down and figure out the best way to accomplish the improvements needed).

 There is only ***ONE*** (**1**) indicator, standard, policy, or criteria allowed per PIP/PGP for your focus. Sometimes supervisors write a plan they way they would write a Formal Assistance Plan. Nope. Policies 1091and 107 say that just one indicator or criteria per PIP/PGP is allowed. Also, if multiple plans are written, your supervisor must get their supervisor involved in the process.

 A rationale should be included. This is the reason or reasons for the focus of the plan for certified staff.

 Targets/objectives must be stated on your plan to indicate the desired outcomes. Well-written plans probably should have just a few targets/objectives and all of them MUST be measureable. For example, if tardiness is an issue, the objective should state that Employee X will arrive at work by Y time daily – not, that Employee X will be on time. See the difference? I know, this example is a little simplistic but if “on time” is not specified, then a supervisor could say you didn’t meet the objective. (This kind of foolishness doesn’t happen often, but it does happen.)

 Procedures/strategies for achieving the objectives need to be stated. These will include not only your responsibilities but those of the supervisor as well. For teachers, the strategies may include student responsibilities. You will do X, Y, and Z and the supervisor will do A, B, and C to help you. The plan is supposed to be a joint endeavor.

 For ESP, the appraisal method will also be stated. In other words, how will you and the supervisor determine that you have been successful in achieving the stated goals/objectives of the plan? Target dates must be given as well. You have to have enough time to demonstrate that you can achieve these objectives but this should not be the “never-ending plan” either. The time frame needs to be reasonable.

 For certified staff, benchmarks and target dates will be set. These will indicate when you will meet with the supervisor to review progress on the plan as well as when the plan will be completed. And finally, the last part of the plan is to determine if you have met your target and where one goes from here.

 Once a plan has been initiated for certified staff, subject area coordinators, directors, professional associations and others may be asked to help.

 Professional Improvement Plans and Professional Growth Plans for Improvement are designed to help you correct any deficiencies before they become job threatening. They are interventions. You might be placed on more than one plan but smart supervisors typically focus on the most significant area that you need to improve and then they revisit other areas as needed. And finally, a supervisor may NOT mark Improvement Needed to Meet Expectations on a Summative report for ESP or mark Not Recommend for Re-employment for certified staff if not preceded by a PIP or PGP.

**So, to summarize:**

After you have been told you will be placed on a PIP or PGP, you need to

 • Call the ER chairperson (**314-766-1253**)

 • Respond to the documentation on the DDF

 • Work with your supervisor to develop the plan

 • Rationale for the plan must be included (certified staff)

 • Plan may have only ***one*** “target” or “criteria”

 • Target/objective needs to be state to indicate desired outcomes and they must be measurable – not subjective

 • Strategies/procedures for achieving targets/objectives must be stated

 • Appraisal method/benchmarks and target dates must be included. Time frame for accomplishing target or objective needs to be reasonable (not too short and not so long that an end is not in sight.