

Soaring Heights Charter School Performance and Evaluation Committee Standards

In keeping with the New Jersey Charter School philosophy of innovative practice, Soaring Heights Charter School in Jersey City is proposing to pilot an alternative to the current teacher evaluation and supervision program. In this original system, teachers observe one another with immediate follow-up discussions conducted under the direction of the Supervisor. Through these discussions, difficult to hear information addressing classroom organization, management, and teaching practices is relayed in constructive ways that allows the observed teacher to relax and more readily accept suggestions and incorporate them into classroom practices.

In a society seeking to improve teacher performance, Soaring Heights Charter School is unique. Its teacher evaluation model derives its vitality from the fact that the school is teacher-managed-and-operated which leads to teachers being highly invested in each other's performance. At Soaring Heights, teachers are continuously observed by committees of all their colleagues. Each teacher was observed between 25 and 200 times during the 2011-2012 school year and observed others between 25 and 90 times. The teachers are adamant in their commitment to their work style because they've seen how it has transformed every aspect of their teaching world. As a result, this has been made a job requirement by the teachers themselves.

Organization of Performance and Evaluation Committee

The Performance Evaluation Committee is comprised of seven members of the Management Collaborative. Each member in collaboration with the supervisor is responsible for one standard of the evaluation system. Committee members as well as the supervisor will observe each teacher several times in pairs. Then the committee members will come together to discuss their observations of classroom organization, management, teaching practices, and leadership skills and responsibilities with the supervisor and teacher. From these discussions, Corrective Action Plans will be developed as needed.

* Italics (other than when used to state the seven standards) indicate practices unique to Soaring Heights Charter School.

Standard 1 – Planning for Instruction

The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

A. The teacher individually or collaboratively creates lessons that demonstrate knowledge of content and content standards.

- Lesson plan book lists objectives using Bloom's Taxonomy, CCSS, and specific accompanying activities that are not repetitive without explanation: (3 2 1 0)
- Lesson plan book is legible, neat and organized: (3 2 1 0)
- *Plan book is submitted weekly and on time to the designated member of the Plan Book Committee: (3 2 1 0)**
- Grade book is current and clearly labeled with an adequate amount of grades per subject: (3 2 1 0)
- Plans collaboratively with other educators (special education, related service providers, consultants and colleagues): (3 2 1 0)
- Effectively integrates techniques/materials provided by consultants: (3 2 1 0)
- Demonstrates ability to pace lessons according to students' needs: (3 2 1 0)
- *Actively seeks and implements suggestions from colleagues on the Plan Book Committee: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Identifies successful techniques employed by colleagues and adopts them: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Keeps binders of tests, quizzes, and other supplementary materials organized and clearly labeled: (3 2 1 0)*

Total points: /30

B. The teacher understands the need for differentiated instruction based on student levels of mastery.

- Scaffolds the question structure to the needs of individual students
 - Tailors questions suited to the entire class: (3 2 1 0)
 - Tailors questions suited to the lower learner: (3 2 1 0)
 - Tailors questions suited to the higher learner and encourages higher learner to guide other students to a greater understanding for the purposes of clarification and classroom discussion: (3 2 1 0)
- Creates cooperative learning groups according to students' needs
 - Experiments with grouping: (3 2 1 0)
 - Adapts groups accordingly: (3 2 1 0)
- Modifies assessments and independent work as needed: (3 2 1 0)
- Incorporates different learning styles (visual, kinesthetic, and auditory): (3 2 1 0)

Total points /21

C. The teacher plans for instruction based on prior knowledge of content delivered in previous lessons.

- Assesses prior knowledge: (3 2 1 0)
- Incorporates prior knowledge into current lesson: (3 2 1 0)
- Uses formative and summative assessments to plan instruction: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /9

D. The teacher is able to identify the need to revise plans based on learner responses and unforeseen circumstances.

- Adjusts and revises plans based on learner needs and changing circumstances during delivery of lesson: (3 2 1 0)
- *Utilizes ongoing reflection of lessons to adjust and revise plans with input from colleagues:* (3 2 1 0)

Total points /6

Accumulated Points for Standard 1: /66 = %

Performance Level 1 – Unsatisfactory (0-59%)

Performance Level 2 – Needs Improvement (60-69%)

Performance Level 3 – Satisfactory (70-89%)

Performance Level 4 – Exemplary (90-100%)

Comments:

Standard 2 – Instructional Strategies

The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

A. The teacher partners with students to explore a wide range of learning experiences based on an understanding of cognitive processes associated with various types of learning and the purpose of instruction.

- Effectively models lesson/skill in relation to the content being taught: (3 2 1 0)
- Varies his/her role in the instructional process as instructor, facilitator, coach or audience, and encourages students to do likewise: (3 2 1 0)
- Utilizes a variety of cognitive processes (critical and creative thinking, problem framing and problem solving, invention, memorization and recall) to stimulate higher level thinking: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /9

B. The teacher understands and employs many aspects of communication in order to convey concepts, promote self expression, build confidence, and cultivate relationships within the learning environment.

- Makes use of verbal and non-verbal questioning techniques: (3 2 1 0)
- Encourages learners to develop and use many aspects of communication: (3 2 1 0)
- Promotes an environment that encourages ever-increasing listening skills: (3 2 1 0)
- *Poses questions in formats geared to stimulate discussion: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Monitors voice tones, facial expressions, and body gestures to promote the most effective communication within the learning environment: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Recognizes and works to eliminate blaming as it is expressed through sarcasm, preaching, and pleading so as to maintain a relaxed learning environment. Left unaddressed, blame and self-blame are the greatest impediments to successful student/teacher performance. At Soaring Heights we have seen what reducing blame and self-blame has done to change the school climate. It has improved morale and allowed for the growth and development of confident, enthusiastic students and teachers who are interested in seeking solutions: (3 2 1 0)*
- Employs cooperative learning opportunities: (3 2 1 0)
- Implements suggestions from colleagues: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /24

C. The teacher integrates a wide range of technological resources to promote student learning.

- Uses a wide range of technological resources to support and enrich lesson content: (3 2 1 0)
- Explores new and emerging techniques in technology: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /6

D. The teacher applies differentiated instructional strategies based on student levels of achievement.

- Continuously monitors student progress and adapts instruction
 - Tailors questions/materials suited to the entire class: (3 2 1 0)
 - Tailors questions/materials suited to the lower learner: (3 2 1 0)
 - Tailors questions/materials suited to the higher learner and encourages higher learner to guide other students to a greater understanding for the purposes of clarification and classroom discussion: (3 2 1 0)
- Provides opportunities for learners to demonstrate their knowledge and build confidence through encouraging a wide range of responses, outcomes and performances: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /12

E. *The teacher provides samples of homework that have been assigned and graded over the past week. These samples meet the following guidelines: (3 2 1 0)*

- a. *Clear directions*
- b. *Related to the current lessons*
- c. *On grade level*

Total points /3

Accumulated Points for Standard 2: /54 = %

Performance Level 1 – Unsatisfactory (0-59%)

Performance Level 2 – Needs Improvement (60-69%)

Performance Level 3 – Satisfactory (70-89%)

Performance Level 4 – Exemplary (90-100%)

Comments:

Standard 3 – Content Knowledge and Application

The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches, and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

The teacher understands how to connect concepts and uses differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

- A. The teacher promotes learning experiences in the discipline(s) that provide learners with the opportunity to explore, understand, question and analyze different perspectives that lead to content mastery.
- Allows for multiple perspectives within the content area to encourage discussion and analysis of these perspectives: (3 2 1 0)
 - Creates opportunities for students to explore, understand, question and master content: (3 2 1 0)
 - Effectively incorporates supplementary resources and technologies to make connections for all learners: (3 2 1 0)
 - Encourages students to question and challenge assumptions and possibilities through the problem solving process: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /12

- B. The teacher displays a mastery of content standards with an understanding that content is ever evolving and culturally situated.
- Evaluates and adjusts the lesson using instructional resources to guide learners to accurate conceptual understanding: (3 2 1 0)
 - Integrates culturally relevant content to establish background knowledge: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /6

- C. The teacher engages learners in applying content knowledge through interdisciplinary approaches.
- Incorporates knowledge outside of his/her own content area to enhance student learning: (3 2 1 0)

- Guides learners to analyze the complexities of an issue or question using other disciplinary approaches: (3 2 1 0)
- Encourages learners to apply content knowledge to real world problems: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /9

*D. The teacher promotes and models **Direct Communication** skills that create meaningful opportunities for learning. **Direct Communication** is a process developed at Soaring Heights Charter School through which training is provided so that people of all ages can talk with and listen to each other more effectively.*

- *Fosters creative and critical thinking processes to produce original work so as to develop high level questioning skills that promote independent learning: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Creates an environment in which learners' communication skills are developed, practiced and refined: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Allows students to voice and explore their experience of real world concerns through discussion: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Facilitates a relaxed learning environment that encourages learner exploration, discovery and expression across content areas: (3 2 1 0)*

Total points /12

Accumulated Points for Standard 3: /39 = %

Performance Level 1 – Unsatisfactory (0-59%)

Performance Level 2 – Needs Improvement (60-69%)

Performance Level 3 – Satisfactory (70-89%)

Performance Level 4 – Exemplary (90-100%)

Comments:

Standard 4 – Assessment

The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.

A. The teacher aligns assessments with lesson objectives and the Common Core State Standards

- Lesson plan book lists assessment objectives using the Bloom's Taxonomy and CCSS: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /3

B. The teacher understands when and how to use multiple types of assessment tools to address specific learning goals and individual differences.

- Seeks ways to integrate technology as an assessment tool: (3 2 1 0)
- Modifies assessments and testing conditions in order to accommodate the needs of specific learners: (3 2 1 0)
- *Confers with colleagues to seek direction and suggestions regarding materials and methods needed to accommodate all students: (3 2 1 0)*

Total points /9

C. The teacher provides timely and effective feedback to guide students' progress in all assessment modalities.

- Reviews content to engage students in discussion: (3 2 1 0)
- *Understands when to provide students with wait time to think and formulate responses during minute to minute questioning and gives feedback so students can self monitor learning according to the needs of the individual student: (3 2 1 0)*
- Provides examples of exemplary work for students to emulate: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /9

D. The teacher examines performance data to assess each student's progress, guide planning and set goals for learning.

- Adjusts lesson plan for re-teaching material to close learning gaps: (3 2 1 0)

- Analyzes grade book to assess the level of mastery: (3 2 1 0)
- Fosters an environment in which students are inspired to set goals, encouraged to achieve them, and become responsible for attaining them: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /9

Accumulated Points for Standard 4: /30 = %

Performance Level 1 – Unsatisfactory (0-59%)

Performance Level 2 – Needs Improvement (60-69%)

Performance Level 3 – Satisfactory (70-89%)

Performance Level 4 – Exemplary (90-100%)

Comments:

Standard 5 – Learning Environment

The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical area, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.

- A. The teacher continuously assesses both the performance of each student as well as the performance of the entire class in order to plan and adjust instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

- Identifies students' prior knowledge through questioning techniques
 - Tailors questions suited to the entire class: (3 2 1 0)
 - Tailors questions suited to the lower learner: (3 2 1 0)
 - Tailors questions suited to the higher learner and encourages higher learner to guide other students to a greater understanding for the purposes of clarification and classroom discussion: (3 2 1 0)
- Creates lessons that are developmentally appropriate, suited to individual needs, and scaffolds to the next level of development: (3 2 1 0)
- Assesses students' strengths and weaknesses in order to modify instruction and promote learners' growth and development: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /15

- B. The teacher promotes learning at high levels and partners with each learner in order for each learner to reach his/her fullest potential.

- Adapts instruction to meet individual needs: (3 2 1 0)
- Creates circumstances for students to demonstrate their knowledge in different forms: (3 2 1 0)
- Builds on learners' prior knowledge and experiences which include language, culture, family, and community values to move toward and encourage global understanding: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /9

C. *The teacher collaborates with learners and colleagues to establish a productive school community that is both emotionally and physically safe.*

- *Fosters respectful interactions throughout the school community through the use of Direct Communication: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Provides an emotionally safe environment in which learners are encouraged to value themselves and others: (3 2 1 0)*

Total points /6

D. *The teacher collaborates with learners and colleagues to ensure that shared values and expectations result in respectful interactions, challenging academic discussions, and quality work.*

- *Collaborates with students, colleagues and families to promote an emotionally and physically safe school climate: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Recognizes that the school is a community of learners each one of whom is an integral part of the learning process and works to foster relationships aimed at creating a nurturing learning environment: (3 2 1 0)*

Total points /6

E. *The teacher maintains the conditions of the classroom/learning environment.*

- *The teacher's desk is neat and organized: (3 2 1 0)*
- *The students' desks are clean and organized inside, and presented in neat rows: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Bulletin boards and posters are current and in good condition: (3 2 1 0)*

Total points /9

Accumulated Points for Standard 5: /45 = %

Performance Level 1 – Unsatisfactory (0-59%)

Performance Level 2 – Needs Improvement (60-69%)

Performance Level 3 – Satisfactory (70-89%)

Performance Level 4 – Exemplary (90-100%)

Comments:

Standard 6 – Professional Learning

The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

A. The teacher participates in ongoing learning opportunities which deepen knowledge and skills based on national and state standards.

- Implements techniques and strategies as suggested by colleagues and consultants: (3 2 1 0)
- Seeks and participates in activities that support current teaching practices: (3 2 1 0)
- Ensures CCSS are documented in plan book: (3 2 1 0)
- Incorporates insights and experiences resulting from professional development to enhance content integration across the curriculum: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /12

B. *The teacher implements an ongoing plan for professional growth aligned with her/his needs based on feedback from follow-up discussions stemming from teacher evaluations and observations, data on learner performance and school-wide priorities.*

- *Uses self assessment based on input from colleagues and personal reflections to prioritize goals for professional growth: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Collaborates with other teachers and provides leadership opportunities to promote school achievement: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Engages in high-quality, on-going professional development and practices new techniques with colleagues: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Incorporates suggestions from teacher observation follow up discussions into lessons to promote professional growth: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Uses Direct Communication when speaking with students, colleagues and parents to encourage clear respectful interactions: (3 2 1 0)*

Total points /15

C. *The teacher views himself/herself as a learner who is continuously seeking opportunities to draw upon as sources of analysis and greater self awareness to improve performance and in so doing provide a more emotionally safe classroom climate.*

- *Uses on-going analysis and reflection from observations and follow-up discussions to improve planning and practice: (3 2 1 0)*

- *Reflects on his/her delivery of the lesson to plan for adaptations and adjustments to create more relevant learning experiences and gain input from observers: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Uses a wide range of self assessment techniques to monitor the success of the lesson which would include but not be limited to a review of one's frustration levels and levels of impatience so as to increase the teacher's ability to work more effectively with the students: (3 2 1 0)*

Total points /9

D. The teacher uses a wide range of data to evaluate the outcomes of teaching and learning independently and collaboratively with colleagues.

- Incorporates a wide range of resources to monitor student learning: (3 2 1 0)
- Analyzes learner data to improve teaching practices and differentiate instruction according to the needs of the students: (3 2 1 0)
- Reviews assessment data to understand patterns and gaps in learning, guide planning and instruction, and keep observers aware of goals to be focused upon: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /9

Accumulated Points for Standard 6: /45 = %

Performance Level 1 – Unsatisfactory (0-59%)

Performance Level 2 – Needs Improvement (60-69%)

Performance Level 3 – Satisfactory (70-89%)

Performance Level 4 – Exemplary (90-100%)

Comments:

Standard 7 – Leadership and Management

The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

- A. The teacher demonstrates leadership by sharing new and/or creative information that increases knowledge about management, teaching strategies, materials or content knowledge with colleagues.
- Shares ways of working with individual learners that have proven to be successful: (3 2 1 0)
 - *Provides on-going assistance to colleagues by exploring difficult interactions with others in order to identify blame and uses the tools of **Direct Communication** to move beyond preaching, pleading, sarcasm, and other commonly used management techniques:* (3 2 1 0)
 - Collaborates with other school professionals to plan for and facilitate learning opportunities to meet the needs of diverse learners: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /9

- B. The teacher seeks appropriate opportunities to model effective practices for colleagues, lead professional learning activities, and serve in other leadership roles.
- Works collaboratively with other adults and develops skills using **Direct Communication**: (3 2 1 0)
 - Enacts system changes to strengthen the school community: (3 2 1 0)
 - Embraces the challenge of continuous improvement and development: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /9

- C. The teacher takes responsibility for contributing to and advancing the profession.
- Exhibits a keen sense of ethical responsibility to advance the profession while simultaneously seeking knowledge, skills and opportunities for growth: (3 2 1 0)
 - Engages in professional learning, contributes to the knowledge and growth of other educators, and works collaboratively to advance professional practice : (3 2 1 0)
 - Takes on leadership roles at the school/district, and/or state level to advocate for learners, the school, the community, and the profession: (3 2 1 0)

- Seeks opportunities to build on-going collaborations within the field of education: (3 2 1 0)

Total points /12

D. *The teacher takes an active role on the management team by sharing responsibility for decision making and accountability to shape and support the mission of the school.*

- *Engages collaboratively in the school-wide effort to build a shared vision and supportive culture, identify common goals and monitor and evaluate progress toward those goals: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Contributes to a common culture that supports high expectations for student and teacher growth and development: (3 2 1 0)*
- *Grows in self-awareness and develops a greater capacity to both listen and speak effectively by initiating interactions with colleagues using **Direct Communication**: (3 2 1 0)*

Total points /9

Accumulated Points for Standard 7: /39 = %

Performance Level 1 – Unsatisfactory (0-59%)

Performance Level 2 – Needs Improvement (60-69%)

Performance Level 3 – Satisfactory (70-89%)

Performance Level 4 – Exemplary (90-100%)

Comments:

Standard 1- Planning for Instruction	_____
Standard 2- Instructional Strategies	_____
Standard 3- Content Knowledge and Application	_____
Standard 4- Assessment	_____
Standard 5- Learning Environment	_____
Standard 6- Professional Learning	_____
Standard 7- Leadership and Management	_____
Grand Total	_____

Evaluation Committee Members	Date
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____

All of the above standards were discussed and reviewed with Claudia Zuorick.

Director's Signature

Date

Teacher's Signature

Date