

# **Instructional Specialist Evaluation Instrument**

**Performance Standards, Criteria,  
and Descriptive Examples**

## Introduction

This evaluation document is purposely general to fit the variety of positions under the “instructional specialist” classification. The job description is the essential link to this document. Department discussions regarding how the job description defines the application of the evaluation are essential. Since the job responsibilities of instructional specialists vary from office to office, not all of the descriptive examples will be applicable.

### **Standard I : Instructional specialists show their commitment to students and student learning through their work with teachers, administrators, support staff, and the broader educational community.**

#### *Performance Criteria*

- A. The instructional specialist acts on the belief that all professional/instructional staff can master and use exemplary practices.
- B. The instructional specialist supports professional/instructional staff in the goal of producing measurable growth in student achievement.
- C. The instructional specialist recognizes individual differences in professional/instructional staff and differentiates practices accordingly.
- D. The instructional specialist works as an advocate for students, parents, and staff.

<b><i>Examples of evidence of commitment to student learning</i></b>
--

#### *The instructional specialist...*

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ communicates the core belief that all students can learn at high standards</li> <li>▪ sets high expectations within the implementation of best practices delivered during professional development sessions</li> <li>▪ offers and uses a repertoire of strategies that address the goal that all students can achieve at high levels, regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, or other factors of diversity</li> <li>▪ delivers the message that each member of the educational community is capable of implementing strategies to enable students to achieve at a high level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ accepts and/or reinforces low expectations for some students and staff</li> <li>▪ demonstrates inconsistent expectations of staff and students</li> <li>▪ does not offer or use a repertoire of strategies that address the goal that all students can achieve at high levels, regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, or other factors of diversity</li> <li>▪ shows little or no evidence of the repertoire of strategies to build the commitment to improving student achievement</li> </ul>

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ assists professional/instructional staff in building a repertoire of strategies that send messages of high expectations for all students</li> <li>▪ supports school improvement plans to maximize student achievement</li> <li>▪ encourages and supports professional/instructional staff in setting goals and evaluating their progress</li> <li>▪ provides customized training and skill-building opportunities</li> <li>▪ differentiates learning and assessment activities and experiences to promote instruction that meets the wide range of learning styles, needs, and strengths of students</li> <li>▪ provides prompt and specific feedback</li> <li>▪ advocates for students with special needs (i.e., GT, ELL, ESOL, special education) to ensure that the instructional program meets their needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ promotes the use of educational strategies without monitoring the impact on student achievement or adjusting support as needed</li> <li>▪ fails to maintain contact for the purpose of ongoing support</li> <li>▪ gives little or no opportunity for stakeholder input/feedback</li> <li>▪ does not consider stakeholder needs or feedback</li> <li>▪ gives untimely and vague feedback</li> <li>▪ does not promote interpersonal skills</li> <li>▪ fails to advocate for students with special needs (i.e., GT, ELL, ESOL, special education) to ensure that the instructional program meets their needs</li> </ul>

**Standard II: Instructional specialists are knowledgeable in their field, and use their expertise to promote systemwide goals by communicating their knowledge to teachers, administrators, support staff, and the broader educational community.**

**Performance Criteria**

- A. The instructional specialist demonstrates rich knowledge of job-specific content.
- B. Instructional specialist understands how his/her field of expertise connects to system initiatives.
- C. The instructional specialist demonstrates understanding of curriculum, assessment, and instruction and clearly conveys this knowledge to the educational community.
- D. The instructional specialist shares responsibility for developing and/or supporting the implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- E. The instructional specialist understands and applies learning theories to offer multiple paths to knowledge.
- F. The instructional specialist accesses current research and incorporates the findings into his/her work.

*Examples of evidence of professional knowledge*

**The instructional specialist ...**

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ is knowledgeable about system initiatives and priorities</li> <li>▪ continually critiques and upgrades professional development opportunities to ensure most current thinking/research</li> <li>▪ provides clear information and explanations about curriculum, assessment, and instruction to a wide range of stakeholders</li> <li>▪ differentiates practices based on the knowledge of the culture of the educational community</li> <li>▪ participates in the design and implementation of professional development and/or training to meet stakeholders needs and MCPS goals</li> <li>▪ uses knowledge and skills to develop exemplary curricular documents, assessment tools, and/or instructional approaches that promote student mastery of local, state, and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ demonstrates lack of knowledge of systemwide goals, initiatives, and priorities</li> <li>▪ presents content without linking it to student achievement or to the priorities of MCPS</li> <li>▪ develops curricular documents and materials that are not aligned with established learning outcomes for all students</li> <li>▪ does not show others the relevance of the information disseminated</li> <li>▪ gives incorrect or insufficient information.</li> <li>▪ fails to share the benefit of scientifically based research with stakeholders</li> <li>▪ strays from or omits critical topics in curriculum, assessments, and instruction</li> <li>▪ provides explanations that are limited, vague, or lack coherence</li> </ul>

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
<p data-bbox="284 233 630 264">national learning standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="237 275 862 373">▪ develops curriculum that meets or exceeds MSDE standards providing guidelines for enrichment and differentiation of instruction.</li> <li data-bbox="237 422 862 596">▪ stays abreast of the latest research, best practices and systemwide data in order to provide support for the development of high-quality curriculum, assessments, and instructional innovations and practices</li> <li data-bbox="237 642 756 705">▪ coaches and mentors members of the educational community</li> <li data-bbox="237 751 862 814">▪ provides practical application of theory to the instructional setting</li> <li data-bbox="237 861 834 959">▪ uses latest research on student and/or adult learner in designing professional development sessions</li> <li data-bbox="237 1005 789 1104">▪ recognizes and communicates the connections between adult learning and student achievement</li> <li data-bbox="237 1150 837 1213">▪ informs stakeholders of available resources and supports</li> <li data-bbox="237 1260 802 1323">▪ discusses with colleagues how to clearly convey content</li> <li data-bbox="237 1369 781 1432">▪ demonstrates effective written and oral communication skills</li> <li data-bbox="237 1478 802 1541">▪ applies knowledge of current research to practice</li> <li data-bbox="237 1587 789 1650">▪ models a variety of research-based best practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="898 275 1500 373">▪ develops learning and assessment activities and experiences that do not address the diverse strengths and needs of students</li> <li data-bbox="898 422 1484 525">▪ relies on single or limited models of staff development and support to assist schools and staff to improve student achievement</li> <li data-bbox="898 571 1442 634">▪ demonstrates little or no knowledge of current research</li> </ul>

**Standard III: Instructional specialists are responsible for establishing and managing positive learning environments.**

*Performance Criteria*

- A. The instructional specialist fosters a professional climate by modeling openness, support, mutual respect, reflection, and inquiry.
- B. The instructional specialist establishes and maintains respectful, productive relationships with members of the educational community.
- C. The instructional specialist communicates the impact of teacher and student beliefs on student achievement.

***Examples of evidence of responsibility***

*The instructional specialist...*

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ shares ideas, materials, and experiences with colleagues</li> <li>▪ purposely uses strategies to create a climate of mutual respect.</li> <li>▪ uses a repertoire of strategies to maintain attention and momentum when delivering information or instruction</li> <li>▪ acknowledges and engages members of the diverse socioeconomic educational community</li> <li>▪ recognizes and celebrates successes of all members of the educational community</li> <li>▪ facilitates the formation of study groups and action research</li> <li>▪ facilitates team-building activities for school staff</li> <li>▪ exhibits a respect for the knowledge and wisdom that resides in schools among teachers, administrators, and support staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ shows insensitivity to the importance of collegiality</li> <li>▪ does not use purposeful strategies to foster a climate of mutual respect</li> <li>▪ demonstrates a limited repertoire of motivational strategies</li> <li>▪ produces written documents that are neither engaging, relevant, nor useful</li> <li>▪ offers staff few or inappropriate strategies to help establish a positive school climate</li> </ul>

**Standard IV: Instructional specialists use data to support the educational community’s efforts to improve student achievement.**

**Performance Criteria**

- A. The instructional specialist analyzes relevant data for continuous improvement of services.
- B. The instructional specialist assists the educational community in identifying, collecting, and analyzing appropriate data and planning accordingly.

***Examples of evidence of the use of data***

**The instructional specialist ...**

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ differentiates support to school staff based on student data and knowledge of research and best practices</li> <li>▪ uses systemwide and school data to plan and implement focused programs and projects that promote achievement of MCPS goals</li> <li>▪ works with leadership teams to develop and monitor school improvement plans</li> <li>▪ utilizes feedback to support continuous improvement</li> <li>▪ obtains data from appropriate sources</li> <li>▪ uses multiple sources of data and information, considering all levels of the school system</li> <li>▪ facilitates the process of looking at student work</li> <li>▪ evaluates the effectiveness of new and existing programs or curriculum</li> <li>▪ communicates results to all members of the educational community</li> <li>▪ provides a variety of assessment tools (e.g., rubrics, focus groups, surveys) that encourage participants to evaluate their own work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ does not monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of new programs and curricula</li> <li>▪ does not appropriately use systemwide data to inform their work</li> <li>▪ fails to use available monitoring tools and/or evaluation plan for determining the effectiveness of instructional practices</li> <li>▪ does not communicate or poorly communicates the rationale used in making and justifying data-based decisions</li> <li>▪ relies on one data source or limited data to make decisions</li> </ul>

**Standard V: Instructional specialists are committed to continuous improvement and professional development.**

**Performance Criteria**

- A. The instructional specialist continually reflects upon the alignment of his/her practices with systemwide goals.
- B. The instructional specialist draws upon educational and professional development research and seeks the advice of others as they reflect on their practice.
- C. The instructional specialist is a member and facilitator of learning communities.

***Examples of evidence of commitment to professional development***

*The instructional specialist...*

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintains professional portfolios or other means of assembling evidence of meeting evaluation standards.</li> <li>▪ Reflects, self-evaluates, and adjusts work to improve efficiency and productivity.</li> <li>▪ Models continuous improvement and experimentation.</li> <li>▪ Debriefs with colleagues to improve.</li> <li>▪ Seeks and reflects upon feedback from colleagues, supervisors, stakeholders, and/or outside consultants.</li> <li>▪ Stays current by reading professional journals and participating in professional development experiences.</li> <li>▪ Participates in and/or facilitates study groups.</li> <li>▪ Seeks out opportunities to enhance professional development through workshops, professional organizations, and conferences.</li> <li>▪ Actively participates in systemwide and departmental committees and functions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assembles little or no evidence of meeting evaluation standards.</li> <li>▪ Fails to acknowledge stakeholder feedback.</li> <li>▪ Does not act on any feedback, whether solicited or unsolicited.</li> <li>▪ Does not reflect on own strengths and weaknesses and/or does not modify practice after reflection.</li> <li>▪ Interacts rarely with colleagues to reflect on practices.</li> <li>▪ Participates rarely in professional groups and activities.</li> <li>▪ Shows little or no interest in local, state, or national professional organizations.</li> </ul>

**Standard VI: Instructional specialists exhibit a high degree of professionalism.**

*Performance Criteria*

- A. The instructional specialist understands and supports the vision of the school system.
- B. The instructional specialist participates as a leader in the educational community.
- C. The instructional specialist works collaboratively with the educational community to support MCPS goals and priorities.
- D. The instructional specialist shares responsibility for program goals and objectives in his/her respective office, department, or division.

<i>Examples of evidence of professionalism</i>
--

**The instructional specialist...**

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Serves on committees.</li> <li>▪ Helps to plan and/or facilitate meetings or workshops.</li> <li>▪ Helps members of the educational community make the connection between their role and systemwide priorities.</li> <li>▪ Meets professional obligations in a timely fashion.</li> <li>▪ Assists in setting and implementing office, department, or division goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrates little or no evidence of interest in or support of systemwide goals.</li> <li>▪ Fails to align professional tasks and responsibilities with systemwide goals.</li> <li>▪ Works exclusively in isolation, instead of collaboratively with members of the educational community.</li> <li>▪ Misses deadlines.</li> </ul>

# **Evaluation Process for Instructional Specialist**

## **Formal Evaluation Schedule**

### **Tenured, Experienced, or Veteran Instructional Specialists**

Instructional specialists who are tenured professionals follow the same professional growth cycle as their teacher colleagues. They will be evaluated formally at the end of a three-, four-, or five-year growth cycle, depending on years of service in MCPS. Also, they may be evaluated formally whenever the evaluator has observed and documented that a formal evaluation is warranted in lieu of a professional development year, following the same special evaluation criteria developed for teachers.

### **New Instructional Specialist /New to MCPS (Probationary)**

Instructional specialists in their first and second year of service in MCPS will be scheduled for formal evaluations. They will not be required to complete Professional Development Plans during their first two years of service. Their focus must be to develop a repertoire of instructional strategies and skills appropriate to their job description as well as to familiarize themselves with the programs, policies, and curriculum of MCPS. Once probationary instructional specialists have achieved tenure, they will follow the same professional growth cycle as their teacher colleagues.

### **New Instructional Specialists/Tenured MCPS Teachers**

MCPS teachers who accept the position of instructional specialist are in a unique category. Although they are veteran MCPS educators, they are new to the position and must build their repertoire of strategies. In their first year of service as an instructional specialist, they will be formally evaluated, regardless of their standing in the professional growth cycle. They will not be required to complete a Professional Development Plan. Once they have demonstrated through a formal evaluation that they have met the professional standards for instructional specialists, they will continue in the professional growth cycle already set in motion while they were teachers.

**Example:** if a teacher with six years of service becomes an instructional specialist at the start of his/her seventh year with MCPS, he/she will be formally evaluated during the first year as an instructional specialist. Assuming that the evaluation demonstrated that the professional standards had been met, the instructional specialist would continue in his/her professional growth cycle the next year (year 8) and would be formally evaluated next in year 9.

### **Position Reassignment**

The position of instructional specialist is unique in many ways. The job responsibilities vary significantly from office, assignment, or work location. In many cases, the assignment of instructional specialists is dictated by MCPS initiatives, priorities, and needs. Therefore, an instructional specialist may be reassigned from the position at the end of an evaluation or a nonevaluation year.

## Observations of Instructional Specialists

Three formal observations are required for most instructional specialists. However, in some cases such as those positions designated for curriculum development, evaluations may be based on product review.

Instructional specialists can be observed conducting a variety of professional activities as they provide services. Observed activities may include, but not limited to—

- individualized support/consulting,
- small-/large-group training/workshop sessions,
- meeting facilitation (parent/school/cluster),
- group presentations,
- demonstration lessons/teaching,
- staff development activities,
- participation in school/cluster/department meetings,
- informal interactions with administrators/leadership teams/cluster/teachers/parents/students, and
- telephone conversations with school staff/parents/students.

### Definition of Formal Observation

- At least two of the three required observations must occur for a minimum of 30 minutes. Due to the varied nature of the instructional specialist's role and responsibilities, it is recommended that these observations be of different activities in different settings.
- The compilation of a series of brief observations (not less than 10 minutes each) that cumulatively add up to 30 minutes may be used for one formal observation.
- All observations shall include a post-observation conference.
- In the case of 30-minute observations, post-observation conferences should be held within three school days after the observation. Conferences not held within that time frame for extenuating circumstances may be delayed by mutual agreement. When brief observations are used in lieu of a 30-minute observation, then the observation conference should be held within three school days after the last brief observation.
- Instructional specialists may respond to observation report write-ups by submitting a written response to their file.
- The observation report is considered a stand-alone document. Any notes taken by an observer or evaluator may be shared with the instructional specialist but are not considered part of the formal documentation.
- The observation report is reviewed by the evaluator and the instructional specialist. It is kept on file by the evaluator.

*Observations for the purpose of evaluation of instructional specialists may be conducted by—*

- associate superintendent,
- community superintendent,

- performance director,
- director,
- supervisor, and/or
- coordinator.

## **Additional Data Sources**

Other data sources also must be included during a formal evaluation of instructional specialists. Instructional specialists are encouraged to assemble a portfolio of documentation.

Additional data sources may include, but are not limited to—

- correspondence regarding performance;
- curricular documents;
- documents created by work groups/committees/task forces (national, state, local, office, cluster, school, etc.);
- documentation of meetings, presentations, workshops, projects, or staff development activities led by the instructional specialist;
- evidence of workshop/conference participation and application to the workplace
- evidence of work on professional development plan;
- letters sent to instructional specialist by supervisors, administrators, parents, students, and/or staff;
- meeting notes with clients or other professionals;
- memos related to programs;
- needs assessment results;
- notes from teachers, administrators, or other staff documenting assistance;
- planning materials;
- photos and videos of events;
- professional articles published;
- presentation designs and materials used for presentation;
- project, products, and deliverables (lesson plans, templates, manuals) ;
- publications such as newsletters or brochures;
- records of data analysis;
- records of peer mentoring and/or coaching;
- records of peer visits with reflection;
- reflective journal;
- session feedback forms;
- strategic plan for office/division;
- surveys or other evidence of requesting feedback from supervisors, administrators, teachers, parents, and/or students;
- Web site promoting the program with highlights, e.g., student projects, resources, homework help;
- work logs; and
- written communication with administrators, parents, students, and/or staff.