

School Based Support of the Teacher in PAR

- ◆ A CT collaborates with the teacher and administration, team leader, IRT, RT, SDT, mentor, and other school resource personnel.
- ◆ School personnel will assume the responsibility of supporting teachers in their professional growth after their participation in the PAR program.
- ◆ Teachers in PAR are not required to create, or implement previously-written, Professional Development Plans (PDPs)

Teacher Performance Standards

- I. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- II. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- III. Teachers are responsible for establishing and managing student learning in a positive learning environment.
- IV. Teachers continually assess student progress, analyze the results and adapt instruction to improve student achievement.
- V. Teachers are committed to continuous improvement and professional development.
- VI. Teachers exhibit a high degree of professionalism.

More detailed
information is in
**The Professional Growth
System Handbook and**
[http://www.mcps.k12.
md.us/departments/
personnel/te/](http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/personnel/te/)

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**A Guide for
Teachers in PAR**

The MCPS
Peer Assistance
and Review
(PAR) Program

Enduring Understanding:
A quality teacher in every classroom is the single most important factor in student achievement.

The **Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program** is a cornerstone of the new evaluation process within the "Professional Growth System." The teachers' union (MCEA) and the administrators' association (MCAASP) jointly run it, representing a qualitative shift in how the school system supports and evaluates teachers, to reach the goal of high quality teaching and learning in every classroom. The PAR program consists of two components, the **Consulting Teachers (CTs)** and the **PAR Panel**. The **CTs** work to provide intensive, individualized instructional support and resources to every teacher in PAR, including the "novices" (first year teachers with no teaching experience) and the under-performing experienced teachers. The CT shares formal documentation with the building administrator. With the knowledge of the client teacher, the CT may coordinate with other staff to maximize support. The CT does not share information about the teacher's performance with other school staff. The **PAR Panel** is composed of eight administrators and eight teachers who are paired. Each administrator/teacher pair works with a team of CTs. The PAR Pair reviews all CT information monthly, including observation reports and summaries, and also provides suggestions for support and interventions. The PAR Panel uses information from CTs to make recommendations to the superintendent regarding the employment status of teachers.

This brochure highlights information for teachers in PAR, including timelines and procedures.

Role of the Consulting Teacher

The role of the CT is complementary and does not duplicate the role of administrators, staff development teachers (SDTs), resource teachers (RTs), interdisciplinary resource teachers (IRTs), or mentors. The following are highlights of the individualized work that CTs do with teachers.

- ◆ coach teachers to reflect on, analyze, and improve classroom instruction, *Standards I-IV*
- ◆ address issues related to professional growth and professionalism, *Standards V-VI*, when behaviors are directly observed
- ◆ assist teachers with content/curriculum, and make referrals as appropriate to other resources such as team leader, reading specialist, RT, IRT, SDT, or subject area specialist (always with the knowledge and permission of the teacher)
- ◆ arrange for using the staff development substitute teacher (SDST) time to allow the teacher to observe other teachers
- ◆ support teachers with lesson planning, writing objectives, and classroom management, based on the principles from “Studying Skillful Teaching”
- ◆ visit teachers frequently to provide instructional assistance and feedback (need dictates number of visits)
- ◆ report monthly to the PAR Pair on teacher progress
- ◆ make recommendations to the PAR Panel regarding employment status of teachers based on documented progress
- ◆ conduct the review process for teachers who receive a “below standard” evaluation completed by the administrator. Reviews are conducted in April and May, but in some cases may occur in early fall. The CT makes two formal observations (one announced) and a recommendation to the PAR Panel as to whether there are serious instructional deficiencies that warrant CT support the following year

Teachers’ Rights in PAR

A teacher’s inclusion in the PAR program was designed to provide the support the teacher needs to be successful in meeting the MCPS Teacher Performance Standards, as determined by objective and independent information gathered about the teacher’s progress and performance. Administrators maintain a critical role in the observation and evaluation process. There are times when either the teacher or the administrator may disagree with decisions of the PAR Panel. In the following circumstances, both the teacher and the principal are given time to present information to the whole Panel:

- the Panel is considering a recommendation of non-renewal (probationary teacher)
- the Panel is considering a recommendation of dismissal (tenured teacher)
- the CT and the principal have different recommendations regarding inclusion in the PAR program (experienced teachers)
- the CT and the principal have different recommendations regarding employment status after participation in the PAR program

If a teacher chooses to present to the Panel, they may ask to be supported by an MCEA UniServ director.

Administrators’ Observations, Documentation, and Evaluations

- ◆ For probationary teachers in PAR, the administrator completes a formal evaluation. A minimum of two formal observations, at least one announced and at least one each semester, is required.
- ◆ For tenured teachers in PAR, administrators may formally observe the teacher receiving PAR support, but are not required to do so
- ◆ Administrators and CTs collect and maintain independent observation data.

Consulting Teachers’ Reports

- ◆ CTs complete a minimum of three required formal observations. Usually the first observation is announced, and others are unannounced. After two formal observations are completed, CTs submit a mid-year summary at the December PAR Panel meeting.
- ◆ By April, CTs complete a summative report with a recommendation regarding “meets standard” or “below standard” performance.
- ◆ Both the teacher and the observer sign all reports. Copies go to the teacher, observer, principal, and PAR Panel.

PAR Procedures and Timelines

- ◆ CTs meet on a monthly basis with members of the PAR Panel. Each CT reports to a PAR Pair who advises CTs regarding work with teachers.
- ◆ Due dates for reports are based on state requirements.
- ◆ If there is disagreement regarding inclusion in the PAR program after the review process, principals and teachers may present before the PAR Panel.
- ◆ If after participation in the PAR program there is disagreement regarding the final employment status, principals and teachers may present before the PAR Panel.
- ◆ The normal period of support in the PAR program is from September to March 1 for probationary teachers, or September to April 1 for tenured teachers. In rare cases there may be mitigating circumstances that result in a panel decision in less time, or that may require additional time. These decisions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- ◆ The period of support for novice teachers hired in January or February continues until the following December. If they are not meeting standards at that time, their support is extended until March.