



**ADEPT**

*Ensuring Educator Excellence for South Carolina Schools*

# **Professional Growth and Development Plans**

## **Guidance Document**

December 2010

## INTRODUCTION

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Professional growth and development (PGD) plans are intended to serve as blueprints that guide educators' ongoing learning and skill-building. Not only are professional growth and development plans considered *best practice*, but they also are required by state statute (S.C. Code Ann. §59-26-40) as part of the ADEPT system.

PGD plans are a vital part of the “Fulfilling Professional Responsibilities” ADEPT Performance Standard (APS 10) for classroom-based teachers as well as for each of the special areas—library media specialists (APS 7), school guidance counselors (APS 7), and speech-language therapists (APS 10). As such, PGD plans are required components of each of the ADEPT processes:

- *induction and mentoring* for beginning educators,
- *diagnostic assistance* for designated annual-contract educators,
- *formal evaluation* for annual-contract educators and designated continuing-contract educators, and
- *goals-based evaluation* (GBE) for continuing-contract educators and eligible annual-contract educators.

Each educator's PGD plan should be individualized for that educator based on his or her strengths, challenges, and level of expertise. Development of the PGD plan should be a collaborative effort between the educator and one or more assigned supervisors. The amount of direction provided by the supervisor(s) should be inversely proportional to the level of expertise of the educator. That is, in most instances, the more exemplary the educator, the less oversight the supervisor should need to provide terms of establishing and directing the implementation of the specific goal(s) for that educator.

“Blanket” goals that are automatically applied across-the-board to everyone in a particular district, school, or group of educators do not meet the intent of individualized professional growth and development plans. While administrators certainly may establish system-wide goals and expectations for their staff members, such goals cannot serve in lieu of individualized PGD goals.

All educators should be actively pursuing one or more PGD goals at all times. In other words, there is no “time off” from professional growth and development. It is important to emphasize, however, that PGD goal activities should be relevant, meaningful, and designed to enhance professional practice in ways that promote student learning, achievement, and well-being. While PGD plans should be challenging, they should not be burdensome.

Activities related to the PGD goal(s) of an educator who holds a professional teaching certificate may count toward the educator's certificate renewal, at the discretion of the school district and upon approval by the educator's supervisor.

There are two basic types of professional growth and development plans: (1) *competence-building* PGD plans and (2) *research and development* PGD plans, as described below. Optional templates for both types of PGD plans are available online on the ADEPT web page:

<http://www.scteachers.org/Adept/index.cfm>

## **COMPETENCE-BUILDING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

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Competence-Building professional growth and development (PGD) plans are designed to promote learning and skill-building relative to one or more of the ADEPT Performance Standards (APSs). Competence-building PGD plans are intended to be used to assist and support educators as part of the following ADEPT processes:

- **Induction and mentoring** for beginning educators. In these instances, specific performance weaknesses may—or may not—have been identified. The purpose here is to ensure that the beginning educator receives appropriate formative assistance that is clearly tied to the ADEPT Performance Standards and that is provided or coordinated by the assigned mentor, supported by the administrator, and supplemented by the induction program activities.
- **Diagnostic assistance** for designated annual-contract educators. Identified performance weaknesses or orientation needs (i.e., familiarization with the district, the school, and/or the ADEPT processes) should be targeted in the PGD plans. During the diagnostic assistance process, appropriate formative assistance should be provided or coordinated by the assigned mentor and supported by the administrator.
- **Formal evaluation** for annual-contract educators and designated continuing-contract educators. If performance weaknesses have been identified during the preliminary evaluation period, a competence-building PGD plan should be developed to assist the educator. A mentor may or may not be assigned, at the discretion of the evaluation team, depending on the needs and experience level of the educator. At the close of the final evaluation period, the educator’s PGD plan should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised, based on his or her final evaluation results.
- **Goals-based evaluation (GBE)** for designated continuing-contract and eligible annual-contract educators. The purpose of competence-building professional growth and development plans during the GBE process is to target specific performance weaknesses that have been identified and documented over time and to support the educator in remediating these weaknesses. In many cases, appropriate and effective use of competence-building PGD plans can help avert the need for full-scale formal evaluations for educators at this career stage.

# COMPETENCE-BUILDING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS

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## COMPONENTS OF COMPETENCE-BUILDING PGD PLANS

Competence-building PGD plans include the following components:

- **Identifying information**
  - The educator's name, grade/subject area(s), district, and school.
  - The supervisor's name and title.
  - The mentor's name, if a mentor is assigned.
- **Timeline**
  - Initial conference date (i.e., the date that the supervisor and the educator met to develop the PGD plan).
  - Beginning date for implementing the plan – i.e., the date that the educator is expected to begin work on the goal(s) outlined in the plan.
  - Preliminary review/conference date – i.e., the date that the supervisor and educator met mid-year to discuss the educator's progress toward meeting the specified goal(s). At least one preliminary conference must be held during the course of a full academic year. Additional conferences may be held at the request of the educator and/or the supervisor.
  - Ending date for implementing the plan – i.e., the date that the educator is expected to have completed work on the goal(s) outlined in the plan.
  - Final review/conference date – i.e., the date that the supervisor and educator met at the end-of-the-year to discuss the educator's progress toward meeting the specified goal(s). The final conference should be held within a reasonable time period following the ending date for implementing the plan.
- **Areas to be addressed** – i.e., the performance areas for which goals are to be developed.
- **Goal(s)**. An educator can be required to address no more than three goals at any given time. If performance weaknesses have been identified in more than three areas, priorities should be established, beginning with the three most critical areas of need. Once goals have been met, they can be replaced by lower-priority goals.
- **Reason(s) for targeting the goal**. For each goal that is developed or selected, the supervisor must indicate the reason for targeting that goal. If weaknesses have been identified, a description of the weaknesses must be provided to help the educator understand the specific concerns and the expectations for improvement.
- **Suggested strategies**. To support competence-building, the supervisor must offer strategies that, if appropriately implemented, are likely to help the educator achieve the related goal. However, it is important to note that accomplishing the strategies is not synonymous with

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achieving the goal. An educator may accomplish all of the suggested strategies but not achieve the goal. Conversely, an educator may achieve the goal without accomplishing all—or even any—of the strategies. In other words, the strategies are intended to provide professional advice to the educator; they are not intended to be additional requirements. It is the educator’s progress toward meeting the goal, and not the accomplishment of the strategies, that should be measured.

- **Evidence that the supervisor will consider in determining progress and goal accomplishment.** For each goal that is developed or selected, the supervisor must indicate how the goal will be measured. Again, accomplishment of the strategies is not an appropriate means for determining the goal outcomes.
- **Preliminary performance review.** During the preliminary conference, the supervisor must inform the educator of his or her progress and status relative to each identified goal. Written comments are required if the educator has not met or made satisfactory progress toward meeting the goal, and additional strategies must be provided if appropriate.
- **Final performance review.** During the final conference, the supervisor must inform the educator of his or her progress and status relative to each identified goal. Written explanations are required if the educator has not met or made satisfactory progress toward meeting the goal. Once the final performance review/conference has been concluded, a planning conference may be held to develop the educator’s new professional growth and development plan.

### SUPERVISORS

For educators at the **induction and mentoring, diagnostic assistance, and competence-building goals-based evaluation (GBE)** levels, the supervisor must be a school- and/or district-level administrator. The role of the supervisor is to guide the development of the educator’s PGD goals and strategies, to determine the educator’s progress toward meeting the PGD goals, and to provide performance-based feedback to the educator at least twice during the school year.

For educators for whom a competence-building PGD plan must be developed due to performance weaknesses identified during the **formal evaluation** process, the members of the educator’s evaluation team serve as the “supervisors.” The role of the supervisors (i.e., the members of the evaluation team) is to ensure that the educator receives a PGD plan that includes strategies that, if appropriately implemented, are likely to promote improvement in the identified area(s) of weakness.

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## MENTORS

For educators receiving **induction and mentoring** support and **diagnostic assistance**, an appropriately qualified mentor must be assigned. The role of the mentor is to provide the support and assistance necessary to help the educator achieve the goal(s) of his or her PGD plan and successfully transition into the profession. Regular opportunities must be provided for the mentor to observe, consult with, coach, give feedback to, and coordinate other types of assistance for the educator. The mentor is to provide formative feedback directly to the educator. The mentor is not to gather or provide summative information, nor is the mentor to fill the role of “supervisor.”

For educators who are undergoing **formal evaluation** or **competence-building goals-based evaluation (GBE)**, an assigned mentor is optional, at the discretion of the supervisor(s), based on the needs and experience level of the educator.

## PGD PLAN DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

PGD plans for educators receiving **induction and mentoring** support and **diagnostic assistance** must be in place no later than the 20<sup>th</sup> day of school.

PGD plans for educators undergoing **formal evaluation** are developed at the end of each evaluation cycle, based on the results of the evaluation.

Competence-building PGD plans for educators who are participating in **goals-based evaluation (GBE)** should be developed and implemented as soon as performance weaknesses are identified and documented over time.

Competence-building PGD plans may be modified at any point there is a documented need to do so. All proposed changes must be discussed in a conference between the supervisor(s) and the educator, reflected in the written plan, and signed, as appropriate.

## EVIDENCE

Evidence refers to the information that is collected regarding the educator’s progress toward meeting his or her goals. Evidence must be valid (i.e., directly related to the goal and not, as has been mentioned, to the strategies), reliable (i.e., exhibited over time), and documented (i.e., substantiated by proof). Evidence may be gathered by the supervisor(s), by the educator, or by both, depending on the goal.

When competence-building PGD plans are part of **formal evaluation**, the formal evaluation process itself is the means for gathering the evidence and for making judgments based on the evidence. Evidence is reviewed by the supervisors (i.e., the members of the evaluation team) and discussed with the educator at the end of the evaluation cycle.

Competence-building PGD plans that are tied to **induction and mentoring**, **diagnostic assistance**, and **goals-based evaluation** require that the types of evidence, and the respective roles of the supervisor(s) and educator in terms of collecting and presenting the evidence, be clearly specified and understood. Evidence must be reviewed by the supervisor(s) and discussed with the educator at least twice during the course of a full academic year.

# **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

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**Research and development professional growth and development (PGD) plans** are designed to serve as catalysts for instructional innovation, problem-solving, and collaboration. All educators who are participating in research and development goals-based evaluation (GBE) must develop and implement a research and development PGD plan. However, educators at all levels may establish and pursue research and development goals, in addition to or in lieu of competence-building PGD goals, if appropriate and as time permits.

## **COMPONENTS OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PGD PLANS**

Research and development PGD plans include the following components:

- **Identifying information** (i.e., the educator's name, grade/subject area(s), district, and school)
- **Goal Planning.**
  - At least annually, the educator must meet with his or her supervisor to develop the research and development PGD plan.
  - Each research and development goal should address a particular question or issue related to student learning, achievement, and/or well-being that the educator wishes to explore via action research.
  - Educators are encouraged to collaborate to develop and pursue the same (or a related) research and development goal (i.e., question or issue). In these cases, each educator must implement the research goal and collect and analyze the data in his or her own setting (e.g., classroom, school, district). Each educator must share the process and findings with the collaborative group and, if appropriate, with other professionals. The educator must also present his or her implementation plan/process, data, and results to his or her supervisor(s) as part of the PGD plan annual review process.
  - The beginning date, annual review date, and duration of the goal must be specified. As part of the research and development process, educators may establish a one-year goal or a multi-year goal. The duration of multi-year goals typically ranges from three to five years to give the educator sufficient time to gather and analyze longitudinal data. The educator must document his or her implementation, data collection, and results during each year of the multi-year goal process.
  - The types of evidence required to verify annual progress/overall goal accomplishment must be specified. That is, the educator and supervisor must agree on the documentation that the educator will present at the PGD plan annual review to describe the implementation of the plan, the data that were collected, the analysis of the data, and the results and recommendations.

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- The educator and supervisor must agree on whether or not activities related to this goal can be applied toward the educator's certificate renewal. If activities can be applied, the educator and supervisor must adhere to the procedures specified in the district's approved certificate renewal plan.
- Research and development goals may be modified on an as-needed basis. All proposed changes must be discussed in a conference between the educator and the supervisor, reflected in the written plan, and signed, as appropriate.
- **Annual Review.**
  - At least annually, the educator must meet with his or her supervisor to present the agreed-upon evidence regarding the implementation of the plan, the data that were collected, the analysis of the data, and the results and recommendations.
  - Based on the evidence presented, the supervisor will determine the evaluator's status relative to the goal (i.e., met, satisfactory progress, unsatisfactory progress). Also, the supervisor, in collaboration with the educator, will determine whether to continue the present goal or develop a new goal.
- Once the final performance review/conference has been concluded, a planning conference may be held to develop the educator's new professional growth and development plan.

### **SUPERVISORS**

The supervisor for an educator's research and development plan may be a school- or district-level administrator or designee. Appropriate supervisor designees may include, but not necessarily be limited to, department chairs, lead teachers, curriculum specialists, and the like, at the discretion of the administrator and the district. Districts should provide all PGD supervisors with training that includes a copy of this guidance document. As a follow-up to this training, districts should ensure that supervisors have a comprehensive understanding of both the intent of and the procedures relating to professional growth and development plans.