

**Update your APPR:
February 2008 - Professional Portfolios Required
for Evaluation of Newly Certified Teachers**

Regulations of the Commissioner of Education 100.2 subdivision (o) B (3) adopted in 1999, entitled Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), describe methods for evaluating teachers. The regulations state:

“Assessment approaches. The plan shall describe the methods that the school districts or BOCES shall employ to assess teachers’ performance which may include but is not limited to the following: classroom observation, videotape assessment, self review, peer review, and portfolio review. **For teachers possessing a transitional or initial certificate, the plan shall require the teacher to be evaluated based on a portfolio review, which may include but is not limited to: a video of teaching performance, a sample lesson plan, a sample of student work, student assessment instruments and the teacher’s reflection on his or her classroom performance.**”
(Bold font included for emphasis.)

1. Which teachers must be evaluated using the portfolio?

A. Teachers holding a transitional or initial NYS certificate State must be evaluated using a portfolio. Those teachers are first entering the teaching ranks in New York in September 2004. They are the same newly certified teachers who will receive the mandated mentoring as required in the amended Professional Development Plan (PDP) regulation.

2. Is portfolio assessment only available to those new teachers?

A. No. Your APPR may contain an evaluation system that includes an assessment plan and criteria that span multiple approaches or multiple years. Your district’s APPR may indicate that all teachers are eligible to use portfolio assessment as an evaluation tool. Review your current APPR to see who else is eligible.

3. Q. What is portfolio assessment?

A. Professional Portfolio Assessment is an approach to assessment of skills that uses a collection of “artifacts” as a demonstration of steps to achieve stated goals and showcase the professional’s experience, qualifications and competence. Literally a professional portfolio may be a collection box, an artist’s folio, a videotape, a CD, a scrapbook, a web site, or a filled three ring binder. The key to portfolio assessment is that the teacher is involved in the establishment of goals, the identification of evidence to demonstrate progress toward those goals, and reflection on the learning that occurs. Assembling a professional portfolio is an on-going reflective process that builds competence and confidence.

4. Q. Who conducts the portfolio review with the new teacher?

A. The APPR regulation does not specify who is responsible for conducting teacher evaluation. In common practice and as defined in many contracts and APPR plans, the formal evaluation is conducted by an administrator (principal, assistant principal or designee.)

5. Q. Is there a role for the mentor in the portfolio and other evaluation processes?

A. Unless a local has negotiated a collective bargaining agreement, the mentor can not be involved in either summative or formative evaluation activities. The language from the district-based mentoring amendment to Regulations of the Commissioner of Education 100.2 (dd) (iv) (d) states,

“The information obtained by a mentor through interaction with the new teacher while engaged in the mentoring activities of the program shall not be used for evaluating or disciplining the new teacher; ...or unless the school district or BOCES has entered into an agreement, negotiated pursuant to Article 14 of the Civil Service Law whose terms are in effect, that provides that the information obtained by the mentor through interaction with the new teacher while engaged in the mentoring activities of the program may be used for evaluating or disciplining the new teacher.”

6. Q. What unique issues should be addressed in the section of the APPR plan related to the portfolio component?

A. The teachers subject to the portfolio review are also the teachers receiving the mandated one year of mentoring. Questions that are likely to arise and should be addressed in the district APPR plan include:

- What is the purpose of the portfolio review? Establishing competence for continued employment or documenting individual professional growth? What are the criteria for a “successful” portfolio?
- How is the portfolio review used as a formal evaluation?
- How are administrators trained to participate in evaluations using a portfolio method?

7. Q. How does the change in tenure law impact this portfolio requirement?

A. Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2007 requires a teacher to demonstrate the ability to use student data to inform instruction as one element of the tenure decision. A teacher may use this topic as evidence presented in a portfolio, if it is negotiated with the district or supervisor as an acceptable way to demonstrate this ability.

Advice to Local Leaders

- ❖ The APPR plan is the responsibility of the district and is approved by the board of education.
- ❖ The procedures for teacher evaluation for tenured and non-tenured teachers are a mandatory subject of collective bargaining.
- ❖ Find out the current status of your APPR. If it has not been revised, discuss revision with your LRS.
- ❖ Ensure that comprehensive training is provided for all involved in the portfolio assessment process including principals, supervisors, department heads and mentors as required in section (b) 5 of the APPR regulation.
- ❖ Monitor with your new teachers the development, use and results of the portfolio assessment tool.
- ❖ Explore if you want to incorporate this as an assessment tool for all teachers in your next negotiations.

Resources

- ❖ Consult your NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist (LRS) for more information specific to your region.
- ❖ NYSUT’s Education and Learning Trust (ELT) offers a 3 credit (45 hour) course entitled Professional Portfolios. This course provides specific direction in creating and evaluating professional portfolios. Contact www.nysut.org, Effective Teaching Program to find out when it is offered in your region or to make arrangements for a customized workshop.
- ❖ Contact your Teacher Center for support in portfolio assessment. www.teachercenters.org