BEST PRACTICES REFLECTIVE/SUPERVISORY INSTRUMENT
DESCRIPTIONS AND DEFINITIONS OF OUTSTANDING TEACHING

Teach to and Plan From Essential Learning Goals | **Build a Success oriented Environment** | **Facilitate Successful Learning Through Instructional Practice** | **Use Assessments to Promote High Performance Levels** | **Support Professional Growth and Self-Reflection**

1. Teach To And Plan From Essential Learning Goals

A. Derives essential learning goals from many sources, including standards. Learning goals are broad statements of things valued--big ideas, essential questions, key processes, habits of mind -- which direct and guide curriculum and instructional practice. There are a few, focused, clear essential learning goals. The learning goals are aligned with assessments, performance standards, and expectations of quality student work.

Is able to communicate and explain the essential learning goals and how they were derived.

B. Focuses on fundamental understandings.
Organizes learning around a few important concepts, generalizations, theories, principles. Facts are not taught separately, but as part of larger categories of information--big ideas-- that help students develop explanations, see connections and relationships. Students learn to organize, evaluate, and interpret information and ideas, to see relationships, to draw conclusions. Fewer concepts and ideas help students to learn about essential knowledge in greater depth.

C. Focuses on fundamental processes. Communication, thinking, research, problem solving, application of knowledge, interpersonal development are the basis for instructional planning and implementation. Lessons are designed to incorporate reading, writing, listening and speaking, thinking, research and problem solving, planning. Knowledge is frequently applied as students draw conclusions and make decisions. Students work both individually and cooperatively and learn skills in both situations.

D. **Focuses on "habits of mind".** Is concerned about making sure that students develop appropriate "habits of mind" that support effective learning, such as perseverance, curiosity, listening, flexible thinking, and so on.

E. Uses essential learnings to plan key assessments and instructional practices.
Essential learning goals are the starting points for planning and developing assessments and instructional practices. There is a clear and logical connection and alignment between learning goals, assessments and instruction. Because the learning goals focus on fundamental concepts, ideas, processes and skills, and habits of mind, the assessments and instructional strategies tend to focus on in-depth learning, open-ended strategies and assessments, and interactive strategies.

2. Build A Success-Oriented Learning Environment

A. Communicates clear expectations and learning goals.
Students are able to explain the goals of learning. Learning goals and expectations are often posted in the room and referred to on a regular basis. Expectations for learning are made clear to students, with examples of model student work and other concrete models used to clarify expectations.

B. Appropriately challenges all students.
Creates challenges to students that stimulate interest and encourage high levels of learning for all students. Due in part to a challenging environment, students are highly motivated and interested in learning.

C. Provides students with help and assistance when necessary.
Provides multiple opportunities for students to improve their work, learn new concepts in different ways. Structures the learning environment to support differentiated instruction.

D. Celebrates the successes of students and provides incentives and encouragement to students as they work towards meeting high standards.
Emphasizes the positive aspects of work and continually encourages and supports students. Creates a positive learning environment.

E. Creates a community of motivated learners.
Students are encouraged to succeed. The learning environment is stimulating, with examples of learning goals, problems and questions, sayings and slogans that encourage success and positive attitudes. Examples of high quality student work, criteria for success, skills that will help improve learning are shared and discussed regularly.

When appropriate and possible, technology helps to create the positive and stimulating classroom climate.

F. Encourages students to take responsibility for their learning.
Expects students to take responsibility for learning, and provides students with the appropriate knowledge and skills that enables students to do so.

3. Support Professional Growth and Self-Reflection

A. Uses student data to improve instruction.
Data from assessments, observations, student work, and other sources are regularly used to examine, revise and refine classroom curriculum and instructional practice.

B. Develops alternative ways to solve classroom and student problems.
Always looking for new ways to instruct and assess in order to help students improve achievement results. Willing to try new ideas as a means of improving student learning,

C. Examines new ideas and designs innovative classroom experiences.
Attends workshops, reads articles and research, watches videotapes, and so on, in order to develop improved methods of classroom instruction. When appropriate, new ideas are implemented in order to work towards a more success-oriented classroom.

D. Works collaboratively with other professionals.
Works collaboratively with others in order to integrate the curriculum around essential goals and outcomes, improve instruction, develop clear expectations and guidelines for students, solve problems, and share ideas and successes. Collaborative efforts should lead to a more coordinated curriculum, improved instructional practice, integration of the curriculum, and higher levels of achievement for all students. Where possible, staff observe each other's teaching, brainstorm teaching strategies, and work together to solve instructional problems.

4. Facilitate Successful Learning Through Instructional Practices

A. Focuses instruction on mastering essential learning goals and assessments, including performance tasks.
Can show the connections between the instructional methods and key learning goals. Instructional methods promote the development of essential goals through such varied activities as thoughtful discussion, writing process and classification activities, graphic organizers, problem solving activities, cooperative learning, and research projects.

B. Provides students with reasons as to why the work they will do is important for them and for their future.
Students are provided with reasons for the learning they are expected to do. A rationale for what students

are learning is discussed and described often during the year.

C. Sets clear criteria for success and shared them with students and parents.
Rubrics and other means are used to clarify the criteria for successful achievement. Models of excellent and poor student work are shared to help concretize the criteria. Clear expectations are shared with both students and parents-guardians.

D. Diagnoses knowledge and skill levels prior to instruction.
Uses formal and/or informal methods to ascertain the abilities and knowledge levels of students prior to instruction. Uses this knowledge to plan learning activities that are appropriate but challenging to students.

E. Uses advanced organizers and summarizer activities on a regular basis.
Advanced organizers help teachers to assess prior knowledge and help students understand what they will learn. Summarizers help students synthesize learning at the end of a period of time. Both of these "best praactice" types of activities facilitate successful learning.

F. Promotes interactive student learning by using a variety of "best practice" instructional methods.
Uses a variety of activities that engage students in learning and helps them construct meaning, not only through traditional recitation methods and lectures, but also through such things as interactive reading, elaborative writing, small group and individual activities, discussions, response journals, interactive notebooks, research projects, experiments, and presentations, inquiry and problem solving activities, etc.
There is a minimum usage of worksheets and other short answer type activities.

G. Integrates appropriate and effective technology practices into instruction.
Effectively and appropriately integrates technology into instruction, through such activities as word processing for papers, use of search engines for research, creating presentations, conducting simulations, conducting interviews worldwide, and the like.

H. Encourages student questions, ideas and opinions in classroom activities.
Classroom activities encourage students to ask questions. Open ended questions and activities allow for student expression of ideas and opinions. Students are encouraged to develop questions and problems for study. Where appropriate and possible, students also help to design tasks, strategies, assessments and criteria for success.

J. Uses multiple materials (not only a textbook) where possible and when appropriate.
Textbooks are used as only one among many sources of information. Original stories and poems, primary sources, non-fiction books and magazines, computer databases, articles from scientific and technical journals, even multiple textbook sources are used to help students learn to read a variety of materials.

K. Assists students who are having difficulties by explaining concepts in different ways, and so on.
Since time is often a variable of success, students who need additional help are provided with many opportunities, such as tutoring by other students, feedback with opportunities for reworking materials and tests, after school mentoring.

L. Provides advanced students with enrichment activities.
Students who complete work with high levels of achievement are provided with enrichment tasks that extend their thinking, provide for creativity and originality, or enable them to go into greater depth.

M. Communicates with parentswhen students are doing well, as well as when students are having difficulties.
Parents and guardians are in regular communication, not only when a student is having problems but also when a student is doing well, had an exceptional piece of work, or is doing well in school.

N. Provides parents-guardians with ways to ehp their children attain success.
Through e-mails, conferences, newsletters, and othe rmeans, parents are informed about instructional approaches that will be used in class and about ways to help their children improve their levels of achievement. Homework is also provided and checked, with communication to parents about assignments and completion of assignments.

O. Helps students learn complex ideas logically, over time.
Students are provided with multiple explanations and concrete examples that capture key ideas and link them to students' prior knowledge. Ideas are developed and revisited over time to help extend and enrich learning.

5. Use Assessments Which Promote High Performance Levels

A. Uses a variety of types of assessments tied to essential learning goals and expectations of success.
Many types of assessments are integrated into the curriculum, based on the need to assess essential goals. Assessments may include traditional short answer tests, but also include essays, position papers, research projects, analysis and observation of collaborative skills, simulations, and so on. The assessments may vary, depending upon the teacher and the subject.

B. Design open-ended performance assessments and other alternative assessments that allow for complex answers and promote the development of quality work.
Designs and implements performance and alternative assessments . Shares the criteria for success, along with models that exemplify successful work.

C. Shares information about assessments with parents. Parents are informed about the assessment practices in the classroom, and the standards and expectations for success. There are opportunities for parents to examine assessments and to ask questions about the assessment process.

D. Frequently shares examples of excellent, proficient and unsatisfactory work.
In order to help students understand what is required of them, students are provided with multiple examples and models of work at different levels of quality. The work is analyzed to determine the factors that make one piece of work outstanding and another piece of work unsatisfactory. Students are encouraged to strive to develop excellent work in the classroom.

D. Uses portfolios - collections of student work - as part of the learning and assessment process.
Students keep portfolios of their work to show progress over time and growth towards proficiency. Portfolios are also used to help students think critically about their work and to help them learn to self-assess their work.

E. Monitors students' progress and success. and provides feedback and suggestions for improvements before a final product is completed.
Students are provided with specific helpful feedback on the quality of their work, tied to criteria for progress and success. Tasks are provided in class which are non-evaluative, but which enable students to improve their skills and learn content which will help them on classroom assessments. Portfolios are used to demonstrate progress and provide feedback.

F. Uses assessments to help monitor and plan instruction.
Both formative and summative assessments are usedf regularly. Formative assessments enable students to receive feedback on the quality of their work and to improve their work. Where possible, exams and other assessments are reviewed with students, and students have additional oportunities to demonstrate success. Students have opportunities to review, revise and improve their work based on teacher (and other) feedback. The emphasis is on providing students with clear criteria and standards for success, and providing time and support that will help all students to succeed.

G. Provides students with multiple opportunities to improve their work.
Rather than a "review it and move on" evaluation model, students are provided with many opportunities to have their work reviewed and evaluated as they work toward completion of a product or performance task. This "revision process" enables students to rewrite papers, redo presentations, and revise other work so that they can successfully complete their work and achieve success.

H. Promotes student participation in designing the assessment process.
Students are provided with opportunities to help design assessment tasks and questions, as well as standards and criteria for success.

H. Incorporates student self-assessment and peer assessments into the learning process.
Opportunities are provided for students to assess the quality of their own work, and, when appropriate, for students to assess the quality of each other's work.