

THRUN'S EVALUATION TRACKER: TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE/ANSWERS TO THRUN EVALUATION TRACKER: TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

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To wrap up the school year, this month's Thrun Evaluation Tracker tests your knowledge of teacher evaluations under Revised School Code Section 1249. Answers are provided below.

Question 1: A first-year probationary teacher begins in August 2017. What "first steps" should you take under the school's performance evaluation system?

- A. Give the teacher a copy of the evaluation tool and tell him/her to look it over and see the building principal with questions.
- B. Determine if the teacher obtained tenure in another Michigan school district and plan a meeting to draft the teacher's IDP.
- C. Assign the teacher a mentor and explain the mentor process.
- D. None of the above.

Question 2: In her first year, a probationary teacher was "on the low end of effective." In her second year, the teacher was not improving, despite supports and training. It is February of her second year, and the school is considering nonrenewal. The board has until June 15 to nonrenew the probationary teacher contract and provide written notice to the teacher.

- A. True
- B. False
- C. It depends

Question 3: An administrator schedules a first classroom observation on October 15. He notices that the teacher is not using differentiated instruction or surveying the class for understanding, both of which are part of the evaluation tool. What step(s) should the administrator take?

- A. Complete the observation write-up noting the deficiencies and schedule another observation for November 15.
- B. Complete the observation write-up noting the deficiencies, give feedback within 30 days, provide written notice of the deficiencies, schedule another observation, and give the teacher ample opportunity to improve.
- C. Schedule a meeting with the teacher and provide “relevant” coaching, instruction support, or professional development.
- D. Nothing and hope for the best.

Question 4: A teacher on an IDP is directed to submit weekly lesson plans to the evaluator. The teacher has submitted lesson plans for three out of five weeks. How should this situation be addressed?

- A. This conduct is part of the IDP and should be addressed through the IDP process.
- B. This conduct is insubordination and the teacher should be disciplined.
- C. All of the above.
- D. None of the above.

Question 5: Only teachers and evaluators need training about the evaluation tool.

- A. True
- B. False

This “test” involves only a few areas that the Thrun Evaluation Tracker articles addressed during the 2016-17 school year. We will continue this series of articles throughout the 2017-18 school year.

Answers:

Question 1:

Best answer: B

A. While the school needs to train all teachers on the evaluation tool and how it is used, the first priority should be to determine the applicable length of the newly-hired teacher's probationary period and begin the IDP process.

B. This answer is correct. The first step in the evaluation process is to determine whether the probationary period is two years (for a teacher who has successfully completed the probationary period in another Michigan school district) or five years, plus an "effective" or "highly effective" rating on the three most recent year-end performance evaluations (for a teacher who has not previously successfully completed the probationary period in another Michigan school district). Each probationary teacher must be on an IDP during his or her probationary period.

C. Section 1249 "encourages" schools to assign a mentor or coach to a first-year probationary teacher or to a teacher who received a "minimally effective" or "ineffective" rating on his/her most recent annual year-end evaluation. Section 1526 requires that teachers in their first three years of teaching be assigned a mentor. While assigning a mentor is prudent, it is not the "first step" the district should take when evaluating a first-year probationary teacher.

D. Not the correct answer.

Question 2:

Best answer: It depends.

If the teacher acquired tenure in another Michigan school district, the deadline for nonrenewal is 60 days before the end of the school year. By that deadline, the board must act to nonrenew the teacher and the teacher must "receive" written notice of nonrenewal not later than April 30. If the probationary teacher did not acquire tenure in another Michigan school district,

the deadline for board action and the teacher's receipt of a nonrenewal notice is 15 days before the end of the school year, or by June 15. For teachers whose employment did not begin on the first day of school, notice of nonrenewal must be provided not later than the requisite number of days (60 or 15) before the teacher's anniversary date.

Question 3:

Best answers: B & C

A. The administrator should complete the observation write-up and provide feedback within 30 days. The observation process must comply with the performance evaluation guidelines published on the school's website.

B & C. Where a deficiency is observed, it is also important to provide the teacher with: (1) written notice of the deficiency, (2) relevant coaching, support, or professional development to correct the deficiency and meet IDP goals, and (3) ample opportunities to improve.

D. Not the correct answer.

Question 4:

Best answer: C

Best practice is to address this issue as both: (1) insubordination; and (2) an evaluation issue in determining whether the teacher is making progress toward the IDP goals. In the year-end performance evaluation, always indicate whether the teacher has met IDP goals.

Question 5:

Answer: False

"Observers" also must be trained "in the use of the evaluation tool or tools." If school officials want a "second opinion" about the teacher's performance, make sure the observer: (1) is trained regarding the evaluation tool by an individual who has expertise in the evaluation tool, and (2) follows all of the requirements for a classroom observation under Section 1249. Generally, teachers must be trained: (1) about the evaluation tool(s) used by the school and (2) how each tool is used.

