

OVERVIEW: PROFESSIONAL GROWTH SYSTEM (PGS)

The Professional Growth System is a collaborative effort between the School District of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers designed to improve instruction at all schools. PGS is an aligned system that sets clear expectations for teachers and administrators, defines standards of practice, creates transparency, provides data on teacher performance and focuses on teacher support and improvement. PGS aligns teaching standards, professional development, observation tools and evaluation tools.

PGS is made up of two components: The Peer Assistance and Review Program (PAR) and the Formal Observation Cycle (FO Cycle).

Peer Assistance and Review (PAR)

PAR is mandatory for all new teachers. New teachers are teachers in their first year of employment with the School District who are not tenured in Pennsylvania.

PAR is also mandatory for tenured teachers who have been rated unsatisfactory in the previous school year.

A tenured teacher who believes that his/her teaching competence will benefit from PAR also may request participation. Principals may also request that tenured teachers who are in their PDP years participate in PAR as part of Special Observation Status.

Formal Observation Cycle (FO Cycle)

During years 2 and 3, non-tenured teachers are classified by the PA Department of Education as Temporary Professional Employees and are rated on a biannual basis (Sept-Jan and Feb-June). TPEs are formally observed at least once during each rating period. Tenured teachers enter into the formal observation cycle.

Tenured teachers rated satisfactory will be formally observed every third year instead of yearly as determined by system seniority (Formal observations in years 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21...). In years when the teacher is not formally observed, they will create a Professional Development Plan (PDP in years 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20...)

PAR Panel

The PAR Program is led by a Panel comprised of eight (8) members, four (4) of whom are selected by the Federation and four (4) of whom are selected by the School District. The Chair of the Panel alternates annually between the Superintendent and/or CEO and the President of the Federation, or their designees.

The Panel is divided into PAR Pairs consisting of one (1) Federation appointed member and one (1) District appointed member.

Consulting Teachers (CTs) provide job-embedded support for teachers in PAR. PAR Pairs meet regularly with Consulting Teachers to review their work and the progress of teachers assigned to them.

The Panel makes all discretionary decisions regarding the PGS, including: determining eligibility for the PAR Program; monitoring the overall progress of teachers participating in PAR; making retention recommendations for new teachers and tenured teachers participating in PAR; creating and monitoring processes of the PGS.