



Metropolitan School District of
WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
"Superior Schools in a Supportive Community"

Nikki C. Woodson, Ph.D., *Superintendent*

MSDWT Evaluator Brief
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Web Links and Twitter Favorites

Sometimes, it is good to just "sharpen your saw", both intellectually and spiritually. From time to time, I will share some links and favorites I have discovered and send them in our Evaluator Briefs. Here are a few. Enjoy.

- [The Secret to Effective Motivation](#)
- [Graphic Depicting Levels of Student Engagement](#)
- [13 Things You Don't Need to Lead](#)
- [7 Habits of Inept Leaders](#)
- [Peter Drucker's 9 Functions of a Mentor](#)
- [Top 10 Qualities of Highly Successful People](#)
- [Treat Employees Like Volunteers](#)

Tips from the Tech Department at Standard for Success

Below is a copied email from Standard for Success. These are some good reminders and information regarding some features that you may find helpful.

Previously Able to Do but Want to Remind

- *Check on rubric assignments under Utilities, Reports*
- *Check on group assignments under Utilities, Staff Finalization Categories*

New

- *Added a link on the staff person's page to the post observation questions prior to the evaluation being released to the staff member - that way the admin can see how the staff member felt about the lesson before the observation is sent*
- *We have a goals area that you can now add (customizable). You may have SLOs, goals, both or neither*
- *Building administrators can now (under Utilities, 2nd button on Staff Information):*
 - *Change instrument*
 - *Change number of required observations*
 - *Assign primary and secondary evaluators within their building (They already could do this, but now they can do this on a person by person basis)*

Post Observation Conferences

Post observation conferences can be stressful for both the evaluator and the teacher.

When a teacher is performing extremely well in the eyes of the evaluator, there is a temptation to finish the conference quickly, make a few positive comments and praises, and assume everything is OK.

When a teacher is struggling, the conference can be a stage for what some call “courageous conversations”.

Whether a teacher is performing at a high level or struggling, a good rule of thumb is to spend as much time as possible asking questions.

“ **What was the heart of the objective for the lesson I observed? If you had to boil it down to one or two key points what would those be?** ”

“ **Do you believe all students would have been able to share the objective in a similar way that you explained it to me? How do you know?** ”

“ **I noticed that you used several strategies in the lesson. Did you choose the strategies to vary practices, or did you base the varied strategies on student assessments and assign activities accordingly?** ”

“ **Give me an example of ways you prepared students for this topic – accessing prior knowledge, creating prior knowledge, or delivering an instructional hook to the lesson.** ”

“ **Did you check for understanding? If so, what did you do after? Did you deviate from your plan based on your checks for understanding? Do you vary the method of checks for understanding?** ”

“ **Do you believe there is a difference between an “exit ticket” and lesson closure? What does lesson closure mean to you?** ”

“ **How do you plan to assess students on the information learned during the lesson I observed?** ”

“ **Why did you choose that type of assessment? Are there others that you considered? Why did you not use the other choices?** ”

There are several other questions that you can ask. And you can ask teachers to react to statements or questions they asked or stated to their students. Sometimes, for example, teachers do not realize they are asking rhetorical questions until they hear it said back them. There is little that is more powerful than asking someone to react to his/her own words.

When high performing teachers answer questions like those above, you learn more about the teacher and they learn more about themselves. They tend to be their own worst critic. They begin to build a strategy and game plan right in front of you – which can be a rich and fulfilling experience for both of you.

When a struggling teacher answers the questions, you can follow up with questions that lead them in a direction that may end in the realization that he/she does not yet possess the capacity, desire, or attitude to perform at the level that you, as the leader, seek.

Asking questions is less threatening than making direct statements.

In the end, when the “courageous” part of the conversation comes to pass – you will need to make clear to the struggling teacher that you have concerns. But, if a foundation of understanding was built prior to the tough statement, the teacher will know that your position is based on pedagogical concerns, not personal feelings toward the teacher.

Improvement that sticks is most often a product of intrinsic motivation, not due to a fear of outside consequences. And, while outside consequences are unfortunately a possibility at some point in the process, in most cases, it should not be our first step or starting point when making a genuine effort to improve the learning environment for our students. The “power of asking questions” may be the best place to start – for you and for those you evaluate.

Thank you for another outstanding week in Washington Township.

Enjoy your weekend.

JM

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Zilleman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.