1 Supportive Supervision

THE SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION CONTINUUM

The Supportive Supervision continuum on the facing page is a recurring image and central feature of this book. It graphically depicts the six elements in the Supportive Supervision model: goal setting, lesson planning, observation, professional development, extensive professional commitment, and end-of-year evaluation. When taken together, the central circle, the six connected text boxes, and the arrows form an integrated whole—the Supportive Supervision program.

GOAL SETTING

Goal Setting is the *first* order of business in the Supportive Supervision program. It appears at the top or the first position in the continuum because it both begins and ends the process of Supportive Supervision. Working with appropriate staff members, you must establish goals at the beginning of the school year and evaluate them at the end.

Setting the Goals

Goal setting is a crucial first step in our program.[3] Similar to what is done in successful businesses, it is essential that each year you establish goals. It is important that you set personal goals for yourself, and that as a supervisor, you collaborate with your building staff to establish goals for all your individual departments or curriculum areas, chairpersons, grade leaders, and teachers. These goals should be transcribed using a standard

format with supporting data including the staff members responsible for the goal's implementation.

The Goal

Although they are often used interchangeably, in the Supportive Supervision program we follow Drucker and make important distinctions between the terms *goal, objective,* and *strategy*. A *goal* is the broad, general direction in which you want to go. It is the general educational change you wish to effect. A generic example of a school goal related to raising reading achievement might be written simply as "to improve student reading achievement." Improving the reading achievement of your students is a very broad, almost global educational outcome that invites further analysis and thought if it is to be achieved.

The Data

Before you can formulate objectives or strategies to meet the goal you have set, you must look at the educational *data*. *Data* is all the necessary and important information that is associated with the goal. Educational data are usually expressed in mathematical form as statistics. These can be test scores or results on standardized or state exams, course grades, item analyses of test questions, demographic breakdowns, attendance figures, enrollment statistics, or student percentages of one sort or another. In order to identify trends in the educational data, at least three years of statistics are needed. In the reading example above we would look carefully at how our students performed on the State Reading Exam *over the past three years* to better identify what needs to be addressed. This three-year comparison of test results plus an item analysis of individual questions on the exam would produce sufficient statistical data for us to be able to develop our objectives and strategies. No Child Left Behind requires each state to maintain data on proficiency levels on all students, as well as disaggregated data for specific subgroups. Using a Management By Objective (MBO) management model developed by Peter Drucker, the Supportive Supervision program can assist you in targeting deficient areas while developing strategies to increase student achievement levels.

The Objective

It is only by the careful and methodical analysis of data associated with the goal that we begin to develop the objectives to meet it. Following the Drucker model, in the Supportive Supervision program *objectives* must be data driven and carefully focused on effecting the overall change (the

goal) you want to achieve. In our program, objectives are measurable and are always expressed as quantifiable statements of intent. Again using the State Reading Exam example, suppose that after looking at the past three years of test scores, we discover that the overall trend is down eight points. An appropriate objective to meet the goal of improving student performance on the State Reading Exam might be "to improve student performance on the State Reading Exam by 10 points."

This objective is clearly focused on the overall goal (improving student performance on the exam) based upon an analysis of the data (a three-year trend of scores) and measurable (10 points).

The Strategy

It is only after the data have been analyzed and an objective formulated based upon them that we are ready to create specific actions, or *strategies*, that will affect the outcome. Strategies are specific actions or a series of actions that are designed to achieve the objective. Appropriate strategies must be measurable, time valued, and assigned to specific personnel who will be responsible for their implementation. Like objectives, strategies must also be data driven. In order to reach our 10-point improvement objective in the State Reading Exam example, we would once again look at data. This time we would examine the test results even more closely to determine areas in which our students did poorly on the test. Suppose an item analysis of the test revealed that our students showed the poorest results when asked to interpret meaning in the long nonfiction reading selections. We would then be ready to develop instructional strategies to improve that identified area of weakness. Strategies might include the writing of model instructional units on reading nonfiction text, providing professional development for staff in teaching reading strategies, developing an afterschool reading program, using more nonfiction in English classes, giving more extensive reading homework assignments in science and social studies classes, or adopting different text books.

For the English Department one appropriate strategy might be written as "all English teachers in Grades 9-11 will provide lessons on reading strategies using nonfiction text at least once a week." This is an appropriate strategy for our goal of improving student performance on the State Reading Exam because it fulfills all the necessary requirements: It is directly related to the objective (raising student achievement on the State Reading Exam); it is based upon an analysis of the data (three years of declining scores, item analysis of the test); it is measurable (reading lessons utilizing nonfiction); it is time valued (once a week); and it is assigned to specific personnel (English teachers in Grades 9-11).

In addition to the goals and objectives of the school and its various departments or grades, each instructional staff member in the school needs to develop individual goals and objectives related to the overall instructional plan but clearly focused on the instructional or professional needs of that person. These goals and objectives must be collaboratively developed and should reflect an awareness of teacher needs and concerns for professional growth and development.

LESSON PLANNING

Lesson Planning is the *second* step in the Supportive Supervision program. In the continuum, Lesson Planning appears as the next item clockwise after Goal Setting, which suggests that all lessons should follow and be closely connected to the established curricular and instructional goals for the year. As the continuum makes clear, the writing, development, and review of lesson plans are an integral part of our supervision program.

After appropriate goals, objectives, and specific strategies are developed with the close cooperation of your staff, you must now focus on lesson planning. Although lesson planning is the second component of the Supportive Supervision program and flows directly from goal setting, sound lesson planning is an ongoing process that happens all year long. It is the heart of all instruction. A good lesson plan is both the genesis and the structure, or blueprint, for what happens in the classroom. Just as no general who has any hope for victory goes into battle without a meticulously planned strategy, no teacher who has any hope for success should walk into a classroom without a well thought out lesson plan. In some ways we are more fortunate than the generals. Despite having the best military plan, generals sometimes lose the battle in the field. Armed with a good lesson plan, a teacher will almost always win in the classroom.

Essential Components of an Effective Lesson

Thanks to the important work of Madeline Hunter and many other educational researchers,[4] we know a great deal about the dynamics and structure of effective classroom instruction. There is a growing body of evidence that identifies the most effective teaching practices and instructional methodologies that work best with children. We now know quite clearly how to design an effective lesson. While there is no prescribed lesson plan to fit all types of lessons in all subjects, it is almost universally agreed upon by most researchers and practitioners that the essential

components of an effective lesson are an instructional aim (best articulated as a question, problem, or point of inquiry), a "Do Now" activity related to the instructional aim, a motivational component, some direct instruction and guided practice, pivotal questions, a variety of hands-on instructional activities, a medial summary, pivotal questions, a final summary, and a homework assignment.

Supervisory Review

In using the Supportive Supervision model, you must become an instructional leader who encourages collaboration and team approaches to instructional planning.[5] As a teacher of teachers, you must be a mentor and guide who supports these cooperative instructional growth efforts. You must also regularly review all lesson plans, identify strengths, encourage risk taking, and make suggestions for improvement. As an instructional leader, you should plan on spending a significant portion of each day working with individual staff members and academic or grade level teams in planning instruction. Working with both new and experienced teachers, you must go beyond a simple check that the established curriculum is being followed. You must encourage best practice, invite reflection, and teach teachers how to design effective lessons that engage all students. For the new teacher this will often mean ensuring that all lessons contain the essential components. Experienced teachers should be encouraged to incorporate new or innovative methodologies in their teaching and to share their plans by collaborating with newer members of the department or grade. For marginal teachers, sound lesson planning will be an essential building block in the retraining process.

Keeping Current

Just as we have come to expect physicians, lawyers, and even automobile mechanics to be aware of and use the latest research and techniques in their respective fields, so too as educators we have a similar responsibility to "keep current" in our field. It is important that you establish high expectations for all your staff and ensure that all your teachers are aware of and utilize the very best, most effective methods in the classroom. As a teacher of teachers, you must, of course, know and be able to teach best practice in your field. As is the case in all professions, this can best be accomplished by the regular reading of professional journals, networking with colleagues, attending professional conferences and workshops, and taking inservice or graduate courses.

Sharing Resources

Research tells us that providing opportunities for teachers to plan together and share resources is a good way to improve classroom instruction.[6] We encourage you to use a collaborative approach to instructional planning. It is important that you develop trust among your staff members and foster positive relationships. Through your example, staff members should feel comfortable sharing ideas and teaching plans with each other. In using the Supportive Supervision model, you should encourage collegial sharing, group planning, mentoring, and peer support among all members of your teaching staff. For example, with the cooperation of one of your experienced teachers, ask that new teacher who is having difficulty in creating meaningful "Do Now" activities to observe and work with the experienced teacher on this aspect of lesson planning. Teachers of the same grade level or who are teaching the same course should be encouraged not only to share lesson materials and handouts, but also actually plan instructional activities and units together. It is important for you not only to create such an atmosphere of trust, collegial sharing, and professional development, but as an instructional leader, a teacher of teachers, you should be proactive and provide the time, resources, and opportunities for these professional interactions and relationships to occur.

OBSERVATION

The *third* component in the Supportive Supervision program is Observation. In the continuum Observation appears as the next item clockwise after Lesson Planning, which is meant to suggest that all good classroom lessons must be based on solid planning. As the continuum makes clear, observations are not isolated events but an integral part of our supervision program.

Observation is the foundation of the Supportive Supervision program because it is through this process that we truly become instructional leaders, teachers of teachers. A fully integrated, sound observation process is crucial in developing a successful program of instruction, in providing meaningful staff development, and in building a great school. A strong and comprehensive program of classroom observations is a foundation block for the construction of staff development programs. Direct observations allow you to identify curriculum or program issues, build upon teacher strengths, support effective practice, and address instructional weaknesses.

The Right Approach

As a teacher of teachers, you must approach the observation process as an integral part of the larger Supportive Supervision program. Similar to other supervisory models,[7] observing teachers in our program is not a discrete process. It is not a separate chore to be endured, but a dynamic, collaborative process in the context of the larger instructional improvement and professional development program. With its goal centered on the improvement of instruction through diagnosis and remediation, an observation must be a collaborative effort involving the sharing of ideas, experience, and expertise. To effect growth through the instructional process you must build greater levels of trust with the teacher and always encourage self-analysis and reflection. Teachers need encouragement, time, and a supportive climate in order to reflect meaningfully upon their teaching. You must be a guide helping them identify and articulate effective practices, instructional strengths, and areas of weakness. As a teacher of teachers in the Supportive Supervision model, you should seek to create a risk-free environment, a positive climate of trust and respect, where peer observations are common and a partner relationship is developed with the teacher being observed.

The Wrong Approach

For too many educators, observations are approached as a meaningless ritual, as something supervisors must do and teachers must endure. In many schools, classroom observations have little impact on instructional improvement. Not properly seen as learning vehicles for the teacher's understanding of effective practices and developing skills, too many observations are conducted in a highly charged atmosphere of fear and suspicion. Under such conditions little learning or instructional improvement can occur. From the point of view of many tenured staff in such schools, observations are a universally dreaded, yearly ordeal. For the nontenured teachers, they are often a high stakes obstacle course that must be successfully negotiated without stumbling. We must all seek to change the erroneous, negative perception many teachers have of observations as a game of "gotcha."

Pre-Observation Practices

In the Supportive Supervision program the observation process begins well before you set foot in the classroom. Prior to the date of visitation, you should thoroughly review prior observations with particular attention paid to previous recommendations to identify the specific professional

needs of the teacher. You must also review the previous year's end-of-year evaluation because it will discuss instructional goals or teaching skills in need of improvement for the following year. If the observation is announced, it will be important to review the lesson plan, as well. Always stressing the importance of including all the essential elements in creating lesson plans, use this pre-observation conference time as an opportunity to "teach teachers" effective lesson planning and successful instructional methodology.

Observing the Lesson

The observation process should begin as early in the year as possible in order to give the teacher time to implement the suggestions that will be discussed in the post-observation conference. Normally, observations should be one period in length. It is helpful to arrive early and try to put the teacher at ease. Sit in a position in the room that allows you to observe both the teacher and the students. Since being observed can be a stressful experience for many teachers, you can minimize tension by smiling, listening attentively, and saying a few encouraging words at the end of the lesson. As the lesson develops, make sure you observe and take notes on the items or concerns that you identified prior to the observation. All the essential elements of effective instruction must be noted as well.

The Post-Observation Conference

The post-observation conference is a powerful opportunity to teach best practice. In using the Supportive Supervision program, you prepare a "lesson plan" beforehand and engage the teacher in a directed conversation about the lesson. You ask a series of leading questions to facilitate the teacher's self-reflection and analysis. Rather than tell the teacher your conclusions, it is more effective to use questions. This helps the teacher recognize and articulate what was good in the lesson, why it was an effective practice, and what needs to be improved. In the post-observation conference you must not only encourage self-reflection, but teach best practice, as well. It is here in the post-observation conference that your skills as an instructional leader are put to the test. It is here that you best exercise your skills as a "teacher of teachers."

The Written Report

The written report should be completed in a timely fashion and accurately reflect the discussions during the post-observation conference. In

the Supportive Supervision model observations are conducted as a shared inquiry process that values openness and collaboration, and as such, you should not add anything to the written report that was not discussed in the conference. However, the contrary does not apply since there might be aspects of the lesson discussed at the conference that you choose not to include in the report. Be sure to address all the lesson elements, however, and when a teacher has demonstrated growth in relation to a previous recommendation, note this as a commendation. Indicate that the commendations and the recommendations were discussed at a post-observation conference and were mutually agreed upon. Credit the teacher for the initial identification of a commendation or recommendation.

The Seven Sections of an Observation Report

Quite common because they require little effort to complete, checklist observation formats with blank rectangular boxes for short comments are not very helpful. Good observation reports are written in an essay form and are far more detailed, personalized, and meaningful than a one-page checklist. In the Supportive Supervision model there are seven distinct sections in the written report of an observation. They are an *essential data* section that records the basic facts of the observation; an optional *pre-observation conference summary*, a short paragraph indicating that a pre-observation conference was held and what was discussed; a *lesson description,* a detailed, nonjudgmental paragraph describing what occurred in the lesson; a *post-observation conference summary,* a shorter paragraph indicating that a post-observation conference was held and what was discussed; a *commendations* section, several short paragraphs discussing all the positive aspects of the lesson; a *recommendations* section, no more than three short paragraphs identifying instructional deficiencies in the lesson with specific examples on how to improve; and a *summary,* a final paragraph rating the lesson with an action plan for the teacher to implement the recommendations.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The *fourth* component in the Supportive Supervisory program is Professional Development (PD). In the continuum PD appears at the bottom of the page following Observation. Although the general outline of the year's PD program must be established when establishing goals, its positioning here suggests that PD should be based upon observed needs.

As the continuum makes clear, PD, like Goal Setting, Observation, and Lesson Planning, is not an isolated activity but an integral part of our supervision program.

Perhaps more than any other part of our program, Professional Development must be fully integrated and connected to the other components. Opportunities for PD are fully dependent not only on the district, school, staff, and departmental goals that are established early in the year, but in the case of individual teachers, these activities are conditioned by the lesson planning, teacher feedback, and direct observations that are conducted.

A Traditional View of PD

While relieving teachers of classroom duties and sending them to all-day conferences has its place in the PD program, it is often expensive, and it frequently provides little direct return in the form of improved instruction. In some districts, sending teachers out to conferences is sometimes used as a "reward" for teachers who have given faithful service. The unspoken message given here is clear: PD is a perk, a "day off'" from the real work of school. Although outside workshops can be valuable when related to school goals, they not only disrupt classroom instruction, but they overlook the wealth of talent and opportunity within. We encourage you to take a broader view of what constitutes PD to include many activities beyond attendance at outside conferences and commercial workshops.

A Proactive Approach

A much wider, more proactive approach to PD is not only less expensive, but often far more effective. In the Supportive Supervision model, PD is a fully comprehensive program that includes different levels of district, school, departmental, and individual planning and coordination. It is a carefully planned, ongoing, proactive process keyed to district, school, departmental, and individual teacher needs. In the Supportive Supervision program *only PD opportunities that support the established yearly goals and meet the individual needs of the teacher are considered.* However enticing and glitzy, conferences and workshops that are incompatible with established goals and objectives should be avoided.

Teacher feedback is an important element in developing the Supportive Supervision PD program. Teachers who attend outside conferences or training sessions should be asked to make brief presentations to their colleagues at appropriate meetings and to complete a written

conference report. Reports can act as reflective vehicles for the teacher to process the new information and skills acquired at the workshop, and they can provide you with the valuable feedback you will need to evaluate the program's effectiveness and its suitability in meeting the needs of your staff. In addition to outside conferences, all district- or school-designed PD workshops or training sessions should include evaluative surveys or instruments that participants should be required to complete. This feedback is invaluable in making adjustments to the present PD program and in planning for the future.

With its single focus on supporting the established district, school, department, and teacher goals and objectives for the year, PD in the Supportive Supervision model is closely tied to academic achievement. PD goals and objectives are often set after looking at student achievement data. In addition, the effectiveness and success of PD initiatives are likewise evaluated based upon student outcomes. For example, suppose that an analysis of student test results on last year's district Science finals revealed that few students excelled. Closer examination and an item analysis of questions showed particular weakness on the experimental section of the exam. You might respond with a number of curricular and PD activities to address this weakness. The existing science lab program and training manuals might be revised; new goals and objectives might be established. Perhaps science teachers might collaborate on the creation of new science lab lessons. These teachers might also receive several hours of PD training by outside consultants on best practice in conducting science experiments, as well.

PD Is Professional Interaction

In the Supportive Supervision program, PD may include the writing and planning of lessons in small groups, observations of master teachers, faculty presentations, the assignment and mentoring of student teachers, departmental meetings, the writing of curriculum guides, collaborating on mini grant incentives, interdisciplinary projects, writing new program proposals, grade level meetings, focus group discussions, providing opportunities for teachers to reflect upon and analyze their own teaching, the reading of professional literature, video presentations, teleconferencing, technology mini lessons, and so on. In short, any time teachers interact on a professional level related to identified goals and acquire new knowledge, improve teaching skills, or learn more effective strategies to improve instruction, we are in the realm of professional development. Master teachers were not born with the knowledge of how to achieve excellence in the classroom, they learned it. In fact, great teachers are great learners,

always ready to acquire new skills and eager to find new ways to grow professionally. Teaching is both an exquisite art and a complex science that requires a lifetime of study, observation, and practice to master.

EXTENSIVE PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT

The *fifth* component in the Supportive Supervision program is Extensive Professional Commitment (EPC). In the continuum EPC appears at the bottom left of the page, following Professional Development. Although it appears in this position, EPC is not something that is time valued or sequential in nature. Developing an EPC in your staff is an ongoing process that occurs throughout the year. As the continuum makes clear, however, EPC, like each of the other components, is not an isolated concept but an integral part of our supervision program.

In order to develop an excellent staff and school, an *extensive professional commitment* is essential. Although it occupies the fifth position in the program, developing an EPC in each staff member is ongoing. It should begin when a teacher is first hired, and it needs to continue throughout that teacher's career. In the Supportive Supervision program we seek an *extensive* commitment because it goes beyond what is the norm, what is expected, what is expressly stated in the teacher's terms and conditions of employment. An *extensive professional commitment* is the observed behaviors of a teacher's dedication and commitment to the school, its shared values and culture, its philosophy of education, and its students. It is much more than being "professional" in and out of the classroom. Quite simply, it is a commitment to the belief that in a school the welfare and education of children are primary, that all decisions place the best interests of the child before any other consideration. In effect, it is a teacher's child-centered commitment to be the best teacher he or she can be and to do whatever it takes to help every child succeed.

Some Examples of EPC

It is easier to understand what EPC is by describing a few examples. A teacher who has an EPC arrives early and stays late because that is when he or she can best help kids who might need some extra attention. An EPC teacher drops by the gym before that evening's big basketball game just to say good luck; attends an evening concert of the school's band, orchestra, or chorus; or is the first to help out with a fundraiser by buying a box of decorative pencils she'll never use. Such a teacher eats lunch quickly now and then so he or she can rush back to the classroom to meet a student

who had difficulty finishing the test on time, volunteers to be part of the faculty-student talent show, or agrees to be the advisor to the new alternative music and dance club because the kids asked him. The most effective teachers are those who truly believe that "no child should be left behind."

Identifying and Creating EPC Values

EPC is to a large degree a character and values issue, and as mentioned above, it is a critical element in the hiring process. It is crucial that you seek to hire teachers who have the values, character, personality, and willingness to make an extensive professional commitment to your school. You should review the kind of professional commitment you expect from new teachers with the candidate the first time you meet. It is here at the interview stage that you can best gauge the applicant's suitability by examining how he or she reacts to your expectations of professional commitment.

Although character development in adults is somewhat limited, getting an EPC from each staff member you supervise is not impossible. It is a team effort that begins with building a climate of shared values. It will require not only all your leadership qualities and human relations skills, but more important, it will require an EPC from you, as well. If you are a role model for your staff in terms of your own core values and commitment to education, you will create such values and culture in your teachers.

Five Key Components of EPC

Through careful team building, modeling, and focused discussions, you can create a staff that share core values about children, education, academic achievement, and professional excellence within the school. You must be a role model for your staff, exhibiting the values, professional behaviors, child centered philosophy, and caring attitude toward children that you expect from each teacher you supervise.

There are five key elements that are necessary in order to create an environment of EPC in your school or department:

1. *Acting as a role model for EPC behaviors.* As a supervisor you must model EPC attitudes, values, and behaviors in all the actions that you take and the decisions that you make as the administrative and instructional leader of the school. As teachers are clearly the role models for the students they teach, you, in turn, are a role model for the teachers you supervise.

2. *Using a personal appeal for professional commitment.* It is best to clearly express and seek such a commitment during the hiring of new staff, and to seek out and invite existing staff to make the same type of commitment (advise a new club, coach a team, supervise a school activity, serve on a school committee, provide extra help, etc.).

3. *A child centered philosophy.* Your actions and your decisions must reflect a philosophy of education that places the interests of children first. This often quoted concept has almost become a cliché; nevertheless, it is quite simply the bedrock cornerstone of everything you do in a school. Unless all staff believe in this philosophy and act accordingly, no school can create an environment and culture where EPC prevails.

4. *Professional dress and demeanor.* You should not only act and dress the part of an educational leader, but you must be involved in establishing what is appropriate dress for your staff. Though school rules about *student* dress may vary somewhat from school to school, depending upon the climate and socioeconomic and cultural factors, establishing a professional demeanor and maintaining a dress standard for the professional staff is important. What will constitute appropriate professional dress may vary slightly from school to school, but it is important that our attire is professional, and that our dress and consequent demeanor teach children that schools, similar to houses of worship, are special places where important, life altering activities occur.

5. *Extra help.* You must encourage each staff member to provide what has come to be called "extra help" for children. You must create the opportunities and find the resources so that teachers can extend themselves professionally and reach out to students to learn. These one-on-one teaching opportunities can take place after and/or before school, during lunch periods, or during a teacher's prep, duty, or "free" time. Regardless of the subject or grade level, all teachers must be available and seek out students for this one-on-one interaction. It is a vital part of any great school.

END-OF-YEAR EVALUATION

The *sixth* and final component in the Supportive Supervisory program is End-of-Year (EOY) Evaluation. In the continuum it appears at the top left of the page in the last position before the process begins again with Goal Setting. This is meant to suggest that EOY evaluation is the final summation that takes into account all of the previous elements and points the way to new goals for the following year. As the continuum makes clear,

EOY evaluation, like the previous five components, is an integral part of our supervision program.

The purpose of the EOY evaluation is to provide an insightful, comprehensive, and goal oriented summary of the teacher's professional performance for the entire school year. For far too many supervisors, creating annual evaluations can be a difficult task. It need not be. With the Supportive Supervision program, the EOY evaluation is merely a collaborative process of review and rating. It is the final entity in the program continuum. What will be new will be reaching agreement with the teacher on assigning one of five bottom-line ratings for the year: *unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good, very good*, or *excellent*. Because the EOY evaluation is an important document, great care must be taken to ensure that what is written is both an accurate and fair account of the teacher's performance for that year.

EOY Evaluation Is a Collaborative Process

Like classroom observations, EOY evaluations are process driven. It begins with *data collection*. In this step you must thoroughly and carefully review recommendations and goal areas in last year's EOY evaluation, the individual goals that were established with the teacher at the beginning of this school year, and all formal classroom observations. You must also review the teacher's schedule, including duty assignments and extracurricular activities. In the second step in the process the teacher becomes a partner in this process by providing you with valuable *teacher input.* The teacher's performance and activities for the year are crucial in creating a balanced, fully detailed, and accurate evaluation. Ask the teacher to detail information about model instructional units, awards or honors, participation on school committees, attendance at conferences, advisorship of school activities, and so on. Invite the teacher to "celebrate" this year's classroom success stories. You may also seek input from peers as well, especially in the evaluation of new teachers. A *teacher conference* should follow next. At this conference you should review the input form with the teacher, elicit any additional information, and reach consensus based on evidence on the teacher's overall performance for the year while establishing mutually agreed upon personal goals for the upcoming year. The last step in the process is the writing of the EOY evaluation document.

Writing the EOY Evaluation

In general, the EOY evaluation should include five key elements. Each of these elements should receive at least one paragraph of comprehensive coverage. They are as follows:

1. *Introduction and factual data*. This opening paragraph should refer to years of experience, the subjects or grade level taught, and a general evaluative or descriptive statement about the teacher.

2. *Instructional strengths and weaknesses*. This section deals with the teacher's performance. Reference must be made to the year's instructional goals, formal observations, creative or innovative lessons, classroom success stories, instructional diversity, student achievement data, as well as suggestions for improved performance.

3. *Professional growth*. This section should reflect graduate study or college courses taken, inservice courses, seminars, workshops, and conferences attended, etc. In addition, this section should describe the teacher's committee work, participation in schoolwide or departmental activities, mentoring activities, as well as membership in professional organizations. If a teacher needs specific direction regarding professional development, or needs to demonstrate growth in a particular area, it should be noted here.

4. *Extracurricular activities.* This paragraph should reflect the teacher's contributions to the school's activity program. All teachers with strong EPC will submit copious data in this section. Do not neglect to include everything that these teachers do. If a teacher does not participate, state this as a fact and recommend that he or she do so. Never omit this section.

5. *Summary and rating*. The closing paragraph should provide an overall rating for the current year and point to goals for the next. In the Supportive Supervision program, this rating will have already been discussed at the EOY input conference. Similar to the bottom-line rating of formal observations, we suggest that you use a five-point rating scale for EOY evaluations: unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good, very good, and excellent. Criteria for both the observation and EOY evaluation five-point rating scales will vary from school to school, but it should be provided to the teacher in the beginning of the school year. The final statement in the EOY evaluation may contain individual or departmental goals for the following year and/or some direction as to how the teacher can move to the next level of performance.

The End and the Beginning

It is good to think of EOY evaluations as both an *end* and a *beginning*. For the teacher, it is the final supervisory document of the school year

and, if done properly, it provides a starting point for professional growth for the following year. It is a collaborative document that invites the teacher and peer mentors into the process of evaluation. It values teacher input and reflection. What is written in the EOY evaluation should reinforce what has been stated and discussed during the course of the year. Teachers should never be surprised by the contents of their evaluation. If you have fully collaborated with your teachers and written them carefully adhering to the principles of the Supportive Supervision program, your staff will see EOY evaluations as comprehensive and supportive documents. They will be a fair and written confirmation of their classroom teaching, involvement in school activities, and professional growth for the year. They will also serve your teachers as a road map showing the way toward continued instructional and professional improvement.

Before we examine in more detail each of the six components in the Supportive Supervision program and provide you with some specific examples and key illustrations, it will be very helpful for you to understand some theory. In the next chapter we discuss what constitutes a great school, and the educational philosophy that informs our program and the body of research upon which it is built.