

Assessment of a Model for the Evaluation of  
Professional Non-instruction Staff in Elementary Schools

by

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to help improve the evaluation system for school counselors and school psychologists, or non-instructional, certified staff (NICS). A mixed methodology approach was used to describe the existing evaluation system used to evaluate NICS; to develop a new system of evaluation based on recent research; and to determine how administrators, NICS, and experts in the field will respond to this new evaluation system that can assess both school counselors and school psychologists. This study employed change theory to bring about change within a single school district by assessing current practices in the evaluation of NICS, developing a new evaluation system for implementation in the district, and evaluating that system to refine it before full implementation. The study found that administrators did not hold a positive opinion of the current evaluation system's accuracy in assessing NICS, thereby promoting a reason for change. The results of this research suggest that the new system would enhance performance, improve support services, clarify goals and expectations, and provide appropriate and accurate feedback on performance. The findings indicate that the participants responded positively to the new evaluation system, and they hold a more positive opinion of the new system. The majority agreed the current system should be replaced with the new system. The recommendations of this study include developing action plans which follow from applying an action change model to the implementation of the new NICS evaluation system. In addition, in order for the system to evolve it must be piloted, continuing the action research process to revise the system as the implementation process is monitored and evaluated.

## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my daughter Monica. You have been by my side from the very beginning. I've had to haul you through libraries, sleeping on chairs/under desks; you were always waiting for me, reading my assignments to me, supporting me, and encouraging me. I want to inspire you as you have inspired me. I love you. I know that I have dragged you along for sixteen years and at times it feels that I may have over looked you when I haven't been at every event, every meeting, and every practice. I've wanted to be there but I have also wanted to be the role model that you deserve. Hard work does pay off; you have seen me become a doctor, now it is my turn to watch you become one.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The federal government now requires states to implement new teacher and principal evaluation systems in order to either receive additional federal funding (e.g., Race to the Top) or to qualify for a waiver from some of the provisions of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the latest version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) legislation first passed in the 1960s. In order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction, the U.S. Department of Education invited each state to request flexibility on behalf of itself (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). This voluntary opportunity provided state and local leaders with flexibility regarding specific requirements of NCLB in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans. The ESEA Flexibility requires these plans to be designed in such a way that it improves educational outcomes for all students, closes achievement gaps, increases equity, and improves the quality of instruction.

Arizona is one of many states that has developed and agreed to implement bold education reforms in exchange for relief from burdensome federal mandates (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The Arizona State Board of Education proposed a plan to raise standards, improve accountability, and support reforms to improve principal and teacher effectiveness. Part of its plan requires schools to adopt a model framework for a teacher and principal evaluation system that includes quantitative data on student academic progress that is to account for between thirty-three percent and fifty percent of the evaluation outcomes (Arizona Revised Statute § 15-203(A)(38)). Consequently, teachers and administrators are now being held more directly accountable for student

achievement. However, there is a third group of professional personnel within all school systems that is consistently overlooked and often evaluated inadequately (Stronge & Helm, 1992; Helm, 1995; Gorton & Ohlemacher, 1987). This third group is the professional Non-Instructional, Certified Staff, hereafter referred to as NICS. With accountability increasingly putting pressure on all educators to prove the effectiveness of their efforts and for their programs (Studer, 2004), two questions arise: How are NICS being evaluated? and, Should the evaluations of NICS also be tied to student performance?

Stronge and Helm (1992) defined this important group of non-teaching, non-administrative professional personnel as school counselors, deans, librarians/media specialists, curriculum specialists, school psychologists, social workers, athletic directors, and school nurses. To this list, Helm (1995) added work-study supervisors, directors or coordinators of curriculum or instruction, and content specialists or consultants.

Until recently, these other professionally certified staff members within the school had not received the same level of interest and scrutiny by both school systems and the professional literature (Gorton & Ohlemacher, 1987; Helm, 1995; Moody, 1994; Stronge & Tucker, 1995; Stronge & Helm, 1991). These staff members, and the programs they are responsible for, are vital components to a school system. For example, numerous research studies have shown effective mental health programs can positively affect academic outcomes (Charvat, 2008). Yet, in terms of evaluation, these staff members are the most neglected.

There is not only a lack of attention to this third group, but a number of studies in the professional literature also suggest that when NICS are evaluated, they are often

evaluated using inappropriate or inadequate evaluation procedures or forms (Stronge & Tucker, 1995; Helm, 1995; Gorton & Ohlemacher, 1987). Typically, if evaluated at all, NICS are evaluated with teacher evaluation forms (Stronge, Helm & Tucker, 1994; Helm, 1995; Gorton & Ohlemacher, 1987). Even though these professionals have defined job performance tasks and job objectives exist, they are often not evaluated against their job descriptions, or job goals. In addition, the supervisor or the evaluator is usually not trained in the NICS's specific field (Stronge & Helm, 1990; Gorton & Ohlemacher, 1987).

### **Purpose**

The goal of this action research dissertation is to help improve the evaluation system for non-instructional, certified staff within a particular school district, which will be referred to as the MSI district. In general, school systems evaluate NICS for two reasons. First, evaluations are intended to improve job performance by promoting employees' professional growth. Second, evaluations help to define the roles that these professionals play within schools; ideally, they are focused on improving students' social, emotional, and mental health, and thereby play important roles in fostering student achievement. According to Gorton and Ohlemacher (1987), counselors make important contributions to school programs and school psychologists often promote system-wide change by evaluating program effectiveness in K-12 public education (Peterson et al., 1998; Ronas et.al, 2001; Strein, Hoagwood, & Kimberly, 2003).

The goals of this study are 1) to describe the existing evaluation system – including both the process and instruments used to evaluate school counselors and psychologists; 2) to develop a new system of evaluation based on recent research; 3) to

determine how administrators will respond to this new evaluation system that can be used to assess school counselors and school psychologists; 4) to learn how the non-instructional, certified staff members react to a new evaluation system tailored to their specific jobs; and 5) to determine whether administrators, NICS, and experts in the field perceive the new evaluation system positively in the areas of reliability and validity.

### **District Context**

In response to new state requirements (ARS 15-203), the MSI school district adopted a new performance-based evaluation system to systemically transform traditional school-level operations in order to create highly effective and accountable schools. The system is grounded in theory and built on a sound body of research; it was externally developed by a group of professionals, adopted by the district's governing board members, and then implemented (under the direction of an outside agency). However, the focus of this new initiative is only on teacher and principal performance; the system rewards excellence and addresses ineffective teaching and leading.

According to the district superintendent, evaluation has not been a focus for improving student achievement. In the past, evaluations were summative in nature and occurred sporadically, and in some cases not at all. There was a need for a new evaluation system because the existing system could not be used to provide specific feedback on the teacher and principal responsibilities that are believed to have the greatest impact on student achievement. The new performance evaluation instruments and processes have a focus on professional goal setting and development, along with performance improvement. The instrument is comprised of rubrics which contain specific elements. Teachers and principals are observed and evaluated, and receive specific feedback related

to the elements and specific descriptors within the rubric. As the superintendent explained:

Similar to the former teacher and principal evaluation instruments and processes, school counselors and school psychologists have not had performance-based evaluation systems and processes that focus on improving student learning. Counselors and psychologists do not have a handbook or a list of expected performance. In addition, they have not been provided meaningful feedback on their professional responsibilities. In fact, counselors throughout the district perform varying responsibilities and when asked will give you varying responses as to what their main responsibilities are. For school psychologists, federal and state special education timelines and statutes drive many of their professional responsibilities. The focus is on staying in compliance and ensuring the rights of special education students are not violated. However, school psychologists are never given feedback as a level of quality they perform their duties; they don't even have clear expectations that can be used to self-reflect (personal communication, August 1, 2012).

Like many other reform efforts, the focus of the new district evaluation system is not on NICS, and this group has been overlooked. NICS are vital components to a school system. Although they may not directly impact student achievement, they do so indirectly (Gorton & Ohlemacher, 1987; Peterson et al., 1998; Ronas et al., 2001; Strein, Hoagwood, & Kimberly, 2003).

These staff members are due the same level of interest and scrutiny as teachers and leaders, especially in this urban, public, elementary, K-8 school district, located in Phoenix, Arizona, where problems with the evaluation system for NICS is evident. Therefore, the district seeks to implement a performance-based evaluation system in order to create a system of uniformity across all spectrums. The superintendent believes the use of a rubric-based instrument would provide this group clear and focused duties and responsibilities, feedback on their level of performance, and what steps or changes in their practice could lead to higher levels of performance. Furthermore, the superintendent

believes the benefit is not for the district per se but for its staff and the students; better performance by these employees means better support for students and their learning. The main goal of the district is to improve *all* services in order to increase efficacy of instruction. What is needed, then, is a performance-based system that can improve performance of NICS, and ultimately, increase student achievement.

### **Research Questions**

Three research questions are addressed in the present study:

1. How do administrators respond to the new evaluation system?
  - a. Does the new system bring clarity to the NICS job responsibilities and levels of performance?
  - b. Do they suggest changes to the proposed system?
2. How do NICS respond to a tailored evaluation system?
  - a. Does the new system bring clarity to their job responsibilities and levels of performance?
3. Will administrators, NICS, and experts in the field perceive the new evaluation system positively in the areas of reliability and validity?

### **Educational Significance**

When it comes to the evaluation of school counselors and school psychologists, the professional literature contains a number of studies which have documented the use of inappropriate evaluation criteria, inadequate evaluation procedures, improper instruments used for the evaluation of NICS, or have revealed that NICS are evaluated by supervisors who are not trained in their field, if evaluated at all (Anderson, 1994; Chafouleas, Clonan, & Vanauken, 2002; Holdzkom, 1995; Gorton & Ohlemacher, 1987;

Stronge & Tucker, 1995; Helm, 1995). In fact, for over three decades NASP policy has promoted the professional supervision of school psychologists by school psychologists at all levels of practice as a means of ensuring effective practices to support the educational success of all children (NASP, 2012).

Why should school systems be concerned about the performance of the NICS in their buildings? To begin with, appropriate utilization of school-based personnel has been related to student and school success (Lapan, Gysbers, & Sunn, 1997; Miano, Forrest, & Gumaer, 1997). Effective school psychologists increase graduation rates and improve and individualize instruction to close the achievement gap (NASP, 2008). In addition, their work with teachers and students to create and implement academic and behavioral interventions, has shown to increase academic achievement and decrease behavior problems (Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005; Nelson, Martella & Marchand-Martella, 2002). Furthermore, school counselors have a positive impact on student achievement through the programs and services of a comprehensive counseling program (ASCA, 2005), and they widen educational opportunities for students and can positively impact the instructional program (Stone & Dahir, 2004).

There is very little research on performance evaluation systems for school psychologists or school counselors. In fact, to date, there is no empirical evidence that applying student standardized academic scores to the individual performance evaluations of school psychologists is a valid or reliable method for personnel appraisal (NASP, 2012). However since school psychologist are in large part providers of direct and indirect services to children, outcome measures should be sensitive to the overall growth of students as a result of receiving go services. Areas correlated with student learning



outcomes that can and should be monitored for growth in response to direct services delivered by the school psychologist include improvement in social emotional functioning, behavior, academic engagement, and family involvement (NASP, 2012).

Furthermore, according to Elmore (2001), effectiveness in assessment and evaluation is critical to effective counseling yet, school counseling literature has not yielded empirical evidence (evidence is not that clear) that delineates specific competencies that can be measured to assess school counselor effectiveness (Schmidt, 1990). Furthermore, the literature that suggests students may suffer from poorly defined school counseling programs (Ballard & Murgatroyd, 1999), and Gerler (1985) found that elementary school counseling programs can positively affect children's achievement.

Several authors agree that the research concerning performance appraisal of school psychologists is limited (Crespi, Fischetti, & Lopez, 1998; Fischetti and Crespi, 1999; Kruger, 1987; Williams and Williams, 1990). Fairchild (1986) stated evaluation as an integral part of the school psychologist's function is essential, and evaluating the effectiveness of their services enables them to determine which services are necessary or ineffective. Therefore, the performance of school psychologists must be appraised systematically and appropriately because, when it is not, they might not be viewed as essential and funding for school psychologists might be put at risk (Kruger, 1987).

It is clear then that performance appraisals of NICS are essential, not only to understand the job performance of personnel in public schools but also to measure and improve the work performance of all employees (Waldman, Bass, & Einstein, 1987). The present study is important in that it is one of few concerning the performance appraisal of the non-teaching staff. In addition, this study may reveal how NICS' performance

appraisals occur across differing levels of knowledge and expertise of those who evaluate them.

For the purposes of this study, those included in the NICS definition will be limited to the two positions for which there is the greatest amount of literature, the school counselor and the school psychologist. The basic conceptual framework of an appropriate evaluation system will be presented, and will evidence that the current evaluation models available are not sufficiently developed.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of literature revealed how little attention has been dedicated to evaluating this group of support personnel. Because practitioners have committed very little attention to evaluating this group, researchers have spent even less time and effort investigating this area of evaluation. This lack of literature is evidenced by a review of the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). A search using the terms “*teacher evaluation*,” yielded 15,052 journal articles and other documents published between 2002 through 2012. For the same time frame the terms “*school psychologist evaluation*” generated 410 documents and “*school counselor evaluation*” 384 documents. Another search in ERIC, using the term “*teacher performance appraisal*,” yielded 537 journal articles and other documents published between 1960 through 2012. For the same time frame the terms “*school psychologist performance appraisal*” generated 8 documents and “*school counselor performance appraisal*” 19 documents. Helm (1995) reported one of the early attempts to fill this void was her work with Stronge (1991). Since their initial research in the area, little to no follow up and/or continuation of their work has been conducted, thus leaving a gap in the literature.

#### **Evaluation Instruments**

Researchers have expressed the desirability of collecting and assessing multiple sources of data in personnel evaluation systems (Harris, 1987). The method with which most administrators are familiar with (pre-conference, observation, post-conference) is virtually impracticable with non-instructional personnel (Stronge & Helm, 1991). What is needed instead is an evaluation system that uses multifaceted data-collection

techniques. An added benefit of multifaceted data collection is verification, which is using two or more sets of data based on common criteria to make a decision based on their congruence (Harris, 1987).

According to the Personnel Evaluation Standards compiled by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, a variety of data-gathering methods such as observation checklists, products, and tools should be used to help ensure comprehensive and consistent indicators of performance (Gullickson, 2009). Waldron and Prus (2006) identify four key elements that are critical to a credible performance evaluation system: 1. Use of multiple measures, including at least one measure of impact on student outcomes; 2. Reliability and validity, with validity ascribed to the NASP Standards for Professional Practice; 3. Utility for distinguishing different levels of proficiency; and 4. Linkage to professional development and improvement. Stronge and Helm (1991) found the use of multifaceted data-collection techniques is particularly efficacious with the non-instructional personnel and suggest general categories of data sources: observations, questionnaires, rating scales (as a sub category of questionnaires), and self-assessments.

**Observations.** Current school practices suggest that the use of observation is the best data source for evaluation (Stronge, 2006). According to Stronge and Helm (1991), observation, both systematic and incidental, plays a meaningful role in the data-collection process. Accurate observation is assumed to be the cornerstone of accuracy in evaluating performance, and this assumption has received empirical support (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995).

Observations take two primary forms, direct and indirect (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995), and can be systematic or incidental (Stronge & Helm, 1991). All forms intend to provide the evaluator with valuable data that can be used to assess performance.

In direct observation, the supervisor observes an employee in the act of carrying out an activity (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Often, direct observations are also systematic, using a semi-structured, planned observation of the employee who is presenting a formal program to staff or students (Stronge & Helm, 1991). The employee being evaluated is informed ahead of time and the evaluator uses a checklist or note taking to record the observations. Accurate evaluations of job performance require direct, systematic observations of the subordinate's behavior, as well as observations of the results of that behavior. Data can be collected using a checklist, rating scale, or note taking. Currently, Conway School District in New Hampshire utilizes a basic form, where the evaluator records a summary, suggestions and comments, to document a direct observation (Conway School District, 2011).

Incidental observation is less structured than systematic observation (Stronge & Helm, 1991). An example would be an observation of an employee's participation in a faculty meeting or committee meeting. During this type of observation, the evaluator would be attentive for evidence of constructive or destructive contributions to discussion, how the NICS expresses her/his ideas, insightfulness, ability to relate to other staff in the meeting, and so forth (Stronge & Helm, 1991). Conway School District's school psychologist evaluation system also utilizes a basic form to document an indirect observation (Conway School District, 2011).

Indirect observation can be conducted in a variety of ways such as viewing videotapes, reading descriptions of subordinates' behavior, or receiving complaints or letters of praise about the subordinate (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). These two may be done systematically (as when using a checklist while viewing a videotape) or incidental (as when a letter of complaint is received).

Another form of observation that appears to be a valuable source of job performance is peer ratings. Research on peer ratings suggests that peers can provide useful information about an individual's performance, and the available research supports the validity of peer ratings (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995).

There are three advantages of peer ratings: a) peers have more opportunity to observe both task and interpersonal behaviors than non-peers, b) the presence of a peer is less likely to affect behavior, and c) peer ratings can be pooled (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). In Bedford County, Virginia, the evaluation system for the educational specialist includes a direct observation, which can be conducted by a peer, a principal, or a central office supervisor ("Educational specialist performance," 2007). Both the school psychologists and the school counselor are evaluated with the same observation form because the Educational Specialist job title includes guidance counselors, library/media specialists, school psychologists, and school social workers.

In regards to interpersonal relations, behavior observed by peers is both quantitatively and qualitatively different from that observed by supervisors because peers see more and different behaviors. Peers often work directly with one another and, therefore, would be able to observe an employee behave naturally and likely to encounter secondhand information about interpersonal behaviors (i.e., verbal and non-verbal

communication and interactions) (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). For example, interpersonal issues are frequently a topic of conversation among colleagues.

Andrews and Violato (2010) provide examples of peer rating instruments to assess school psychologists; one constructed and intended for use by fellow psychologists, which contains measurements on interpersonal relation and one intended for use by a coworker, non-school psychologist.

**Questionnaires.** The research literature and examination of current practices reveals that most evaluation systems of NICS, utilize questionnaires, which also take form as checklists and rating scales, to gather information on the performance of these personnel in school systems. There are important advantages in using questionnaires in evaluating practice: there is a basis for comparing results, they are structured to systematically and comprehensively elicit the information necessary to measure a target, they are efficient, easy to use, inexpensive, readily available, generally take very little time or effort, and often provide a good deal of information (Bloom, Fischer, & Orme, 1995).

As a tool to assess services offered within a school system, DeRoche (1981) created a questionnaire for the evaluation of personnel services, used to assess counseling services, social and psychological services, and health and welfare services.

**Rating Scales.** Most of the research on performance appraisal utilizes rating scales. Rating scale format is the most voluminous area of research on performance appraisal (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Such scales are the most commonly used appraisal format because they can be easily constructed and have high levels of user acceptability and face validity (Cardy & Dobbins, 1994). Bloom, Fischer, and Orme

(1995) suggest the benefits of using rating scales include: they can be tailored to measure specific targets, can be used to operationalize and measure outcomes, are inherently flexible, do not require much time to administer and score, can be used to evaluate thoughts and feelings, can be used to measure the intensity of the target, and they have high face validity.

Currently, the American School Counselor Association (American School Counselor Association, 2012) supports a national model and framework for school counseling programs and the Arizona School Counselor Association maintains a rubric as an evaluation instrument (Arizona School Counselors Association, 2012). It is noteworthy to mention that unlike the state and national school counselor associations, neither the Arizona Association of School Psychologists nor the National Association of School Psychologists possess a performance appraisal instrument or evaluation system for school psychologists.

Some rating scales are constructed so that they may be used by multiple raters to assess the effectiveness of personnel and the quality of services provided to them and to the students. Teacher evaluation of services is important because teachers are a valuable source of information about the effectiveness of these personnel and the quality of services provided to them and their students (DeRoche, 1981; Sandoval & Lambert, 1977). A variety of evaluation instruments to examine counseling and psychological services was presented by DeRoche (1981): a rating scale that may be used by an administrator or teacher to assess the performance and professional qualities of the school counselor and the school psychologist, a rating scale to be used by principals or teachers to evaluate services rendered by counselors and psychologists, and a rating scale that



combines both a principal/supervisor evaluation and a self-evaluation used to assess a counselors relationships with others.

To date, there seems to be a void in research regarding the use of parents as evaluators. The literature review results conclude research of parents as evaluators of NICS, or of parents as evaluators of counseling and psychological services, have yet to be conducted. Given this finding, there are authors' who propose, or maintain the theory that a more consistent, and effective, feedback system includes the use of the consumers of services (school staff, parents, and students) as evaluators (Conti & Bardon, 1974; Andrews & Violato, 2010).

As part of their proposal for a competency-based assessment system for school psychologists, Andrews and Violato (2010) created a family questionnaire to be used by families of students who received services from the school psychologist. Conti and Bardon (1974) contend that the addition of consumer evaluation to the repertoire of professional activities holds promise for enriching knowledge of efforts as well as providing a new dimension in psychologist-consumer relationships. What was created, then, was a series of three scales to be completed by the consumers of school psychological services, to be used by psychologists interested in determining the outcomes of their professional efforts (Conti & Bardon, 1974).

After a review of instruments used to evaluate school counselors and school psychologists, within school systems, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction created a resource manual, with tools to implement a comprehensive school-counseling program, which includes an evaluation form for parents (North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction, 1988).

Students are yet another consumer of counseling and psychological services within schools. However, the literature is also lacking research on students as evaluators of performance or services. Conti and Bardon's (1974) Rating Scales B and C are both instruments that include students as users of the evaluation tools. Jackson Public School District, in Mississippi, currently utilizes four, optional, rating sheets in the counselor performance evaluation; the school counselor has the option of obtaining feedback on his or her performance by using Student Feedback Sheets (Jackson Public School District, 2005).

**Self-Assessments.** According to Cardy and Dobbins (1994) self-ratings have great potential benefits and can be part of a useful tool for identifying system factors that are restricting performance and clarifying role expectations. Self-raters often have more information about their performance than do other raters, asking employees to evaluate their own performance sends a powerful message that the organization values employees' opinions and ideas, and sometimes self-raters are the only viable source of ratings due to isolated jobs (Cardy & Dobbins, 1994). According to Stronge and Helm (1991), self-assessment is the most appropriate in formative evaluation and for purposes of professional growth. Furthermore, they suggest the purposes of self-assessment are threefold: (a) to assist the employee in analyzing her/his current performance, (b) to provide information for a progress review conference with supervisor, and (c) to help the employee identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas of potential as well as help make plans for improvement.

Andrews and Violato (2010) created a self-assessment questionnaire to be utilized as a systemic and standardized procedure in the assessment of school psychologists in

practice. A review of practical application instruments revealed Park Hill School District in Missouri includes a self-evaluation form in their appraisal of school counselors, which requires the school counselors to respond to questions in narrative form. The Wichita Falls Independent School District in Texas requires school counselors to complete a self-report rating scale, which generates a score that is factored into their performance evaluation. In its performance-based professional school counselor evaluation, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires school counselors to answer ten open-ended questions, in narrative form, prior to developing a professional development plan. Tables 1 and 2 summarize evaluation instruments for school counselors and school psychologists.

Table 1

*Summary of School Counselor Instruments*

Instruments	Source	Subscales	Number of items
Counselor Self Report Appraisal System	Wichita Falls Independent School District, Texas, n.d	1. Program Management 2. Guidance 3. Counseling 4. Consultation 5. Coordination 6. Student Assessment 7. Professional Behavior 8. Professional Standard	33
Elementary Counseling Evaluation for Parents	North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (1988)	N/A	7
Evaluating Counselor Relationships	DeRoche (1981)	N/A	10
Evaluation Checklist	Arizona School Counselors Association (2011)	1. Development & Management 2. Implementation 3. Accountability 4. Systems Change Agent	22

Evaluation of Services	DeRoche (1981)	A. Comprehensive B. Accessible C. Coordinated D. Continuous E. Evaluated F. Personnel Qualified	38
Grades 1 & 2 Feedback	Jackson Public School District, Mississippi, n.d.	N/A	10
High School Feedback	Jackson Public School District, Mississippi, n.d.	N/A	10
Kindergarten Feedback	Jackson Public School District, Mississippi, n.d.	N/A	10
Middle School Feedback	Jackson Public School District, Mississippi, n.d.	N/A	10
Performance Appraisal	American School Counselor Association (2005)	Standards 1 – 13	43
Self-Assessment	Park Hill School District in Missouri, 2010	N/A	9
Self-Evaluation Form	Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2000)	N/A	10

Table 2

*Summary of School Psychologist Instruments*

Instruments	Source	Subscales	Number of items
Coworker Questionnaire	Andrews & Violato (2010)	N/A	16
Evaluating Services: A Form for Principals and Teachers	DeRoche (1981)	N/A	11
Family Questionnaire	Andrews and Violato (2010)	N/A	18
Form for Evaluating a School Psychologist	DeRoche (1981)	1. Performance 2. Personnel/Professional Qualities	24
Formal Observation Form	Conway School District (2011)	N/A	1
Informal Observation Form	Conway School District (2011)	N/A	None

Observation Form	Bedford County Public Schools (2007)	1. Knowledge of the Learning Community 2. Planning & Program Management 3. Program Services & Support	3
Post-Observation Conference Record	Bedford County Public Schools (2007)	4. Assessment 5. Communication 6. Professionalism 7. Student/Program Process	4
Psychologist Colleague Questionnaire	Andrews & Violato (2010)	N/A	29
Rating Scale A	Conti & Bardon (1974)	N/A	8
Rating Scale B	Conti & Bardon (1974)	N/A	2
Rating Scale C	Conti & Bardon (1974)	N/A	5
Self-Assessment	Andrews & Violato (2010)	N/A	29

## Evaluation Systems

Interventions used to assess the performance of NICS include both simple and complex evaluation systems that are comprised of 1) a process with a number of stages and 2) one or more modes of data collection, including rating scales, questionnaires, direct and indirect observation, and the like. More complex systems include collection of information from supervisors, parents, students, peers, and the professional being evaluated. These data may be descriptive (e.g., what services are provided) and evaluative (e.g., what is the quality of these services).

In researching current evaluation practices the focus was on finding performance-based systems as well as processes used by school districts to assess the performance of NICS. This section has two objectives 1) to look at the current evaluation system utilized in MSI district, 2) and then to look at state of the art systems, including those from different states, currently being used to evaluate the performance of school counselors and school psychologists. The review of literature unveiled three evaluation systems that

evaluate both the school psychologist and the school counselor utilizing the same system. In this section, along with the MSI evaluation system, the following three evaluation systems will be reviewed and summarized:

- Professional Education Personnel Evaluation Program of Alabama (Alabama Department of Education)
- Educational Specialist Performance Evaluation Handbook (Bedford County Public Schools in Bedford, Virginia)
- Instructional Performance Evaluation and Growth System (Miami-Dade County Public Schools in Miami, Florida)

**Current System.** In MSI school district, the evaluation of school psychologists and school counselors has two prongs: what the official policy states and what is actually being done. The current system consists of two separate checklists, one for school psychologists (Appendix A) and one for school counselors (Appendix A). Each checklist contains a three-level rating scale: Meets Requirements/Expectations, Needs Improvement, and Unsatisfactory). The district's focus is on improving student learning through performance-based evaluation systems and processes, a focus not addressed by this approach. The broad policy for the evaluation of professional staff members reads:

The process of evaluation for professional staff members shall lead to improvement of the quality of instruction and the strengthening of the abilities of the professional staff.

Certain elements in an effective evaluation process shall be emphasized:

- Evaluation shall be a cooperative endeavor between evaluator and evaluatee.
- Open communication shall be considered essential.
- The agreed-upon purpose of evaluation shall be to work toward common goals for the improvement of education. This shall include attention to student and staff success, which shall include all certificated staff members.
- Evaluation shall be continuous, flexible, and sensitive to need for revision.
- The result of evaluation(s) shall be courses of action for the improvement of instruction. These courses of action shall be set in motion by specific recommendations mutually reviewed by the evaluator and the evaluatee. Evaluation shall be considered one aspect of effective management, rather than a discrete entity. Effective evaluation depends on accurate information; therefore, input from all appropriate sources shall be used. Evaluation(s) shall be based on, but not limited to: Job expectations within the district, instruments for assessment, and personal observation. (p. 1)

Although the evaluation system for school psychologists and school counselors is not job specific or well developed, it is utilized by different administrators to evaluate the professionals. The school counselors, who are evaluated by school principals, are considered “support staff,” which in the district’s policy is defined as “all employees of the district who are not required by state law or by a District policy, regulation, or job

description to possess teaching certificates from the Arizona Department of Education for the purpose of performing their jobs....” The policy for the Evaluation of Support Staff

Members states:

All support personnel shall be evaluated by the appropriate supervisor or administrator. A written evaluation of effectiveness of each support staff member shall be completed during the first year of employment and not later than ninety (90) days after the first day of work. A second first-year evaluation will be not later than the anniversary date of employment. At least once each year thereafter, an evaluation will be conducted. The evaluation will be used to increase job proficiency and for recommending continued employment. (p.1)

There is a lack of specificity and overall vagueness in policy and procedures. For example, no district regulation exists pursuant to this policy for the evaluation of support staff members. Therefore, the existing system lacks the rigor expected in contemporary systems.

The evaluation of school psychologists, which is also underdeveloped and lacking in clarity and specificity, is found in the Evaluation of Administrators and Psychologists policy: “The District shall establish a system for the evaluation of the performance of principals, other school administrators, and psychologists. The District will seek advice from District administrators and psychologists in the development of this performance evaluation system” (p. 2).

The district regulation for the Evaluation of Administrators and Psychologists reads:

Continuous evaluation of all aspects of the total educational program, including student progress, personnel, curriculum, and facilities, will include a formal process of evaluating all certificated administrators and psychologists. The purpose of this evaluation shall be the improvement of the quality of the educational program in the District. The evaluation will be a cooperative procedure, with the evaluator and the evaluatee having full knowledge of the criteria, process, and results.

The following statements give more specific purposes for evaluation:



- Evaluations determine how well the objectives held by the school and District are being carried out. The success of the educational program is dependent upon many factors, which include the quality of classroom instruction, student evaluation, supervision, and administration.
- Evaluations provide the basis for motivation and for self-improvement, permitting administrative personnel to be aware of strengths and weaknesses in order to improve the operation of the District's programs.

The specific format for the evaluation system for certificated administrators and psychologists will be developed under the leadership of the Superintendent. (p. 6)

With regard to the evaluation system, and the current practices within the District, the school psychologists and school counselors are both evaluated once per year, typically during the months of May and June, as there are no timelines to adhere to. A district administrator evaluates the counselors and the director of special education evaluates the psychologists. Neither evaluators have been trained in or have experience with either fields of practice.

Evaluation instruments for both the counselors and psychologists are checklists, based solely on objectives. The counselors are evaluated against the following five objectives: Professional Knowledge and Skills (there are nine sub-objectives), Collaboration (six sub-objectives), Needs Assessment/Evaluation (four sub-objectives), Communication (seven sub-objectives), and Professionalism (four sub-objectives). The

psychologists are evaluated against the following ten objectives: Establishes good rapport and communicates effectively with parents (eight sub-objectives), Exhibits professional conduct in working with teachers and staff (three sub-objectives), Participates and communicates effectively with teachers and staff during CST or informally (five sub-objectives), Administers tests and determines eligibility for exceptional children within limits of applicable federal, state, and distinct guidelines (four sub-objectives), Maintains and submits case records and required reports accurately and punctually (three sub-objectives), Makes appropriate recommendations to parents and/or teachers (two sub-objectives), Participates as a team member making placement decisions in special education classes (four sub-objectives), Assists and/or organizes in-service training for school personnel (four sub-objectives), Interacts as a team member with school principal in the principal's administration of special education (five sub-objectives), and Maintains and submits appropriate materials prior to staffing (three sub-objectives).

Neither the school counselor nor the school psychologist evaluation processes require other sources of data such as clearly specified, systematic direct or indirect observations, surveys, self-assessments, portfolios or input from another source. Instead, the evaluations are based on general perceptions, informal observations, or principal input. Furthermore, neither evaluation instrument focuses on improving student learning or on providing the staff member with meaningful feedback or suggestions/recommendations for professional growth.

**Alabama Department of Education.** The Alabama Professional Education Personnel Evaluation (PEPE) Program is an evaluation system, which includes teachers and specialty area educators (i.e., school counselor, school psychologist, library/media

specialist). The evaluation criteria, procedures and instruments for the evaluation system were developed from research findings regarding effective teaching and effective schools, job descriptions approved by the state board of education, and input from a large number of administrators and teachers (Alabama State Department of Education, 2002).

The performance evaluation system is summative and formative and has five components: 1) A set of evaluation criteria to be assessed, 2) a set of instruments for collecting information about an individual's performance in all competencies and indicators, 3) a set of procedures for collecting, scoring, and synthesizing evaluation data, and reporting results to the educator and others who need to know, 4) an optional form and procedures for facilitating a self-assessment, and 5) a form and procedures for assisting the teacher in creation of a professional development plan based on performance patterns identified in the evaluation data.

The evaluation system uses a four-point scale for scoring all competencies, indicators, and definition items: 1 (Unsatisfactory), 2 (Needs Improvement), 3 (Area of Strength), 4 (Demonstrates Excellence). Both educators are scored in eight competency indicators, but each rubric differs slightly. The counselor rubric has a total of 23 competency scores, and the school psychologist rubric has a total of 25 competency scores.

Data sources common to both counselors and psychologists include: the Structured Interview, the Supervisor's Review Form (SRF), the Professional Development Plan (PDP), Surveys, and Portfolios. All personnel either directly responsible for students or for programs serving students who receive mostly 3s and 4s on their Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) must define at least one specific objective in

their PDP for improvement in student achievement or development to be accomplished over the coming year.

The evaluation process is conducted over the course of one school year. For non-tenured educators, the evaluation process must be conducted annually until tenure is achieved. Once tenure is achieved, the educator is placed on a multi-year evaluation cycle consisting of full, basic evaluation followed by one or a maximum of two years of assessment in accordance with the professional development plan. The following is a brief description of the evaluation steps:

*Orientation* - All persons to be evaluated should be oriented to the evaluation process and requirements no later than October 15.

*Self-Assessment* - If the educator chooses to complete the self-assessment, he/she should complete the self-assessment form before formal data collection is begun.

*Structured Oral Interview/Written Option* – The option for the Structured Interview/Written Option is conducted no later than late March. Interviews with first year educators are conducted second semester.

*First Classroom/Instructional Observation* - This observation is the first of three for non-tenured educators. For tenured personnel and counselors, this observation could be conducted as late as November since only two observations are required. (Note: There is no observation of psychologists.)

*Second Classroom/Instructional Observation* - For tenured personnel, the second observation could be conducted as late as March.

Distribution of Survey - Dependent upon the evaluation system, the evaluatee will distribute surveys to teachers, students, and/or parents.

Preparation and Submission of Survey Data – Educator collects the surveys, then analyzes and interprets the data and offers reflections on the results. Survey results are provided to the supervisor for the appropriate indicators covered by the SRF.

Preparation of Portfolio - The educator is responsible for developing lines of evidence to demonstrate the level of one’s competency in the areas being assessed by the portfolio.

Submission of Portfolio - The portfolio is to be submitted to the evaluator by April 1.

Completion of the SRF - The evaluator (immediate supervisor) should complete the SRF by April 1 and place it in the educator’s performance evaluation file.

Scoring the Professional Development and Leadership Competency - At the conclusion of each full evaluation, the evaluatee and evaluator will prepare a PDP. Preparation of Evaluation Summary Report - By April 10, the evaluator analyzes data collected from all instruments and procedures and prepares the ESR.

Evaluation Summary Conference - By April 15, the evaluator and educator should have held an evaluation summary conference. This conference has three purposes: 1) to share with the educator the results of the evaluation, 2)

to solicit the educator's insights and comments, and 3) to complete with the educator a PDP.

*Evaluation Results/Recommendations* - The evaluation should be completed by May 1. The file containing evaluation materials, results, and recommendations should be handled according to local school system policies and procedures.

A key component of this evaluation system is the “Evaluator Standards” requirement (evaluators complete a training program). Evaluators must take a knowledge test (and demonstrate 80% correct), demonstrate reliability on two Structured Interviews and two Classroom Observations, and demonstrate competency in analyzing and scoring (plans, forms, rubrics, etc.). Administrators or evaluators who have not met standards may not evaluate educators.

Lastly, an evaluatee has the right to request a formal review. If the concern is not satisfactorily resolved, the educator can file for a local administrative review. If still unsatisfied, he/she may submit a written request for review to the local board of education.

In summary, the state has specified how to do the evaluation in detail, but does not give direction on what to do with the evaluation data. This policy is more directive overall, but still leaves important elements to local districts. It is noteworthy to mention the PEPE program is currently in the process of being replaced by an online formative evaluation process for all educators in Alabama, however this new approach is still a work in progress.

**Bedford County Public Schools.** The foundation of Bedford County Public Schools' educational specialist evaluation system is clearly defined professional responsibilities. It is noteworthy to mention that the Project Consultant in the development of the evaluation system and the handbook was Dr. James Stronge (Bedford County Public Schools, 2007). The handbook notes the system is structured, balanced, and flexible, and its goal is to support the continuous growth and development of each educational specialist (e.g., guidance counselors, library/media specialists, school psychologists). There are no guidelines for an appeal process if a specialist disagrees with the evaluation, or for evaluator training.

The evaluation system includes the following characteristics: benchmark behaviors for each of the seven performance standards, a focus on the relationship between educational specialist performance and improved student academic achievement and/or service delivery, system for documenting educational specialist performance based on multiple data sources, a procedure for conducting performance reviews that stresses accountability, promotes professional improvement, and increases educational specialist involvement in the evaluation process, and a support system for providing assistance when needed.

The system uses multiple data sources in order to provide for a comprehensive evaluation of the educational specialists work. The data sources include: Goal Setting (at least one must be related to student data such as achievement tests), Observations (formal and informal), Artifacts,

Documentation Log (provides the specialist the opportunity for self-reflection), Client Surveys (teachers, students, parents) and Summary Report.

The system utilizes a performance appraisal rubric that consists of four levels: Exceeds Standard, Meets Standard, Needs Improvement, and Unsatisfactory. The performance rubric is a behavioral summary scale that describes acceptable performance levels for each of the seven standards. The ratings for each performance standard are based on multiple sources of information. If performance does not meet expectations, the educational specialist may be placed on an improvement plan.

The evaluation schedule occurs over one school year and the following is a brief description of the system:

Assessment of performance quality - occurs only at the summative evaluation stage, which comes at the end of the evaluation cycle (i.e., one year for probationary educational specialists and three years for continuing contract educational specialists). The integrated data constitute the evidence used to determine the performance ratings for the summative evaluation for educational specialists in their summative evaluation year.

Probationary first year - educational specialists participate in a comprehensive orientation at the beginning of the school year and induction activities throughout the school year. For all probationary educational specialists, the evaluator: collects and documents information related to performance in each dimension; identifies strengths and weaknesses in performance relative to the performance standards;



counsels, coaches, and assists specialists during their induction contract period.

Probationary first year - specialists are observed a minimum of four times per year. Probationary first year specialists (excluding first year) and continuing contract specialists in Year 3 of the evaluation cycle are observed three times per year. Specialists on improvement plans are observed quarterly. Continuing contract specialists in Year 1 or Year 2 of the evaluation cycle are observed once per year.

When conducting observations, a two-pronged approach is used:

- For probationary contract employees and continuing contract employees in Year 3 of the evaluation cycle, the evaluator conducts the observations. Employees on plans of improvement are observed using this approach.
- For continuing contract employees in Year 1 or Year 2 of the evaluation cycle, employees recommend to their evaluators another educational specialist in the same position or in a like-position who is also on a continuing contract to observe them.

Continuing-contract educational specialists receive summative evaluations every three years. Years 1 and 2 are formative cycle years in which educational specialists work on enhancing their professional practice. In Year 3, a summative evaluation report is written by the evaluator and discussed with the educational specialist. The three-year cycle is contingent upon a high level of educational specialist performance. The

educational specialist's evaluator may recommend a change in the evaluation cycle in the event that a continuing contract specialist is not meeting the performance standards.

**Miami-Dade County Public Schools.** Miami-Dade County Public Schools utilizes the Instructional Performance Evaluation and Growth System (IPEGS). This system encompasses Dr. James Stronge's Goals and Roles Assessment and Evaluation Model; it is structured, flexible, and allows for creativity and individual initiative (Miami-Dade County Public Schools, 2011). An advantage of this model is that it is comprehensive, adaptable, and can be used with a variety of educational positions. The Student Services Personnel position includes school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, and speech and language pathologist. The goal of this system is to support the continuous growth and development of each professional by monitoring, analyzing, and applying data in order to generate valuable feedback.

Training for both evaluators and evaluatees are incorporated within this system. The district school boards provide training programs and ensure that all individuals with evaluation responsibilities understand the proper use of the assessment criteria and procedures. New employees are required to participate in a comprehensive orientation session at the beginning of the school year. The orientation consists of written and oral explanations of IPEGS.

The IPEGS consists of a multiple source data system in order to more accurately assess the personnel. Data sources include observations, learner progress, required documentation and parental input. The following is a brief overview of the system:

*Observation:* Personnel will have at least one formal observation a year.

An observation lasts a minimum of 20 minutes. Observations focus on six

performance standards, may be conducted in either instructional or non-instructional settings, and may be scheduled or unscheduled visits.

Learner Progress: Professionals set goals for improving learner progress based on the results of performance measures. Appropriate measures of learner performance are identified to provide information on learning gains, such as state and local standardized test results as well as other pertinent data sources.

Required Documentation: Specific items are submitted to provide evidence of performance related to specific standards. A required item is the Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP).

Parental Input: Parental input is obtained through surveys, and evidence of communication with parents can be reflected on their communication log.

Seven performance standards and sample indicators were developed for the student services personnel, and a performance appraisal rubric with four rating levels was developed for each performance standard. The rubric provides a description of well-defined performance standards. The rating scale describes four levels of how well the standards are performed on a continuum from “highly effective” to “unsatisfactory.” The use of the scale enables evaluators to acknowledge student services personnel who exceed expectations (*highly effective*), identify those who effectively meet the standard (*effective*), those who need assistance/support to meet the standard (*developing/needs improvement*), and for those who consistently do not meet expectations (*unsatisfactory*).

The evaluation cycle, referred to as the IPEGS Work Plan, occurs over one school year. Within the first thirty days of employment, the professional develops and submits

their IPDP. By the end of the first grading period, the IPDP is reviewed and approved and the first observation is conducted. If a second observation is necessary, it is conducted by the third grading period. All required documentation must be submitted at least thirty-five calendar days prior to the last day of school, and all summative evaluation meetings are completed no later than seven calendar days prior to the last day of the school year.

Professionals whose performance is unsatisfactory must be placed on an Improvement Plan and provided with a 90-Calendar Day Probation period. If an employee disagrees with an evaluator’s recommendation, he/she must file an appeal and follow the proper policies and procedures.

Table 3 summarizes the components of the current evaluation system in MSI, as well as the components of the three evaluation systems that are considered state-of-the-art.

Table 3

*Summary of Evaluation Systems*

School District	Summative	Formative	Orientation	Evaluator Training	Performance Standards	Self-Assessment	Goal Setting	Interview	Observation	Surveys	Portfolio	Professional Development Plan	Supervisor's Review Form	Evaluation Summary Report	Conference	Results/Recommendations
MSI School District	X													X	X	X
Alabama Department of Education	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Bedford County Public Schools	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
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Miami-Dade County Public Schools	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
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**Process of Change**

In executing action research, change knowledge or change theory must be taken into consideration. Change knowledge can be very powerful in informing education reform strategies and in turn, getting results (Fullan, 2006). Fullan, Cuttress and Kilcher (2005) define change knowledge as the understanding and insight about the process of change and the key drivers that make for successful change in practice. This study proposes a new evaluation system that will be ready for implementation. History of educational reform in education is satiated with good ideas or policies that fail to get implemented due to the absence of change knowledge (Fullan, Cuttress & Kilcher, 2005). Consequently, theory of change must be taken into consideration prior to implementation in order to increase the likelihood of success.

Fullan (2001) proposes four phases in the change process: initiation, implementation, continuation, and outcome. Initiation involves creating a plan of action and preparing for change. It is the process leading up to and including the decision to proceed to the next phase; this phase can be lengthy especially because decision-making and planning can take years. The implementation phase involves putting the change to practice. Key factors in this phase include characteristics (need, clarity, complexity),

local characteristics (school district, community), and external factors (government and other agencies). Continuation is the continuing of the change, and is considered an extension of the implementation phase in that the change is sustained for specific timeframe. Funding, interest, and support all affect this phase. Finally, outcome is the results of the change, or degree of improvement. In general, Fullan (2001) notes that moderate change can take from 2 to 4 years, and that more complex change can take 5 to 10 years.

There are numerous factors that operate at each phase, and the process is not linear. Examples of some variables concern the scope of change, or who initiates the change. Decisions can be made at anyone phase which can then alter previous or subsequent phases. In researching strategies to create effective and lasting change, Fullan, Cuttress and Kilcher (2005) present eight drivers or lessons about grading change.

1. Engaging people's moral purposes. Moral purpose is knowledge about the why of change; it is also about improving society through improving educational systems.
2. Building capacity. This involves policies, strategies, resources, and actions designed to increase people's collective power to move the system forward; it also includes developing new knowledge, skills, and competencies.
3. Understanding the change process. The process of change is difficult and frustrating; it requires leaders to take into account factors they would rather not have to deal with.
4. Developing cultures for learning. This involves strategies designed for people to learn from each other and become committed to improvement.

5. Developing cultures of evaluation. This is assessment for learning, not just assessment of learning. This includes serving external accountability as well as internal data processing.
6. Focusing on leadership for change. This consists of knowing what kind of leadership is best for leading productive change.
7. Fostering coherence making. This involves alignment, being clear about how the big picture fits together, and investing in capacity building.
8. Cultivating tri-level development. This is the realization about system transformation at three levels; it is developing better individuals while simultaneously developing better organizations and systems.

There is enough research on implementation to support without change knowledge or change theory the outcome is failure (Fullan, Cuttress & Kilcher, 2005). Change is too important to leave to the experts; it is a process that is exceedingly complex, and it is the combination of individuals (every person is a change agent) that makes a difference (Fullan, 1993). Furthermore, he contends that it is the complexity that prohibits a prescriptive approach to change -- you can prepare for it but you cannot prescribe a blueprint (Fullan, 1993).

### **Summary**

There is very limited research on the evaluation of NICS. There are many articles and studies that look at school psychology and school counseling in general, but there is very little literature regarding evaluation criteria and procedures. Furthermore, the literature is lacking in empirical studies on performance evaluation systems of school

counselors and school psychologists. The result of the literature review confirms little research has been done since the late 1990's.

Ideally, the NICS increase the emotional, mental, and social well-being of a bath school. There are components to their jobs that require them to help establish school programs, provide counseling services, provide guidance services, consult with staff, parents, and outside agencies, administer tests, assess and interpret data, conduct direct interventions for students, train staff, and provide student support.

As evidenced in the research, traditional evaluation systems for NICS were ineffective for improving support services or guiding professional growth. Currently, the MSI District has employed an inadequate evaluation system which uses a single, three-level, rating scale instrument to determine whether or not the staff member has met a certain objective. There is a lack of formal procedures, and the system is not tied to student performance. Furthermore, the evaluation process does not seem to provide the staff member with meaningful feedback or useful information for professional growth. The present study intends to create a new evaluation system that is grounded in research, specifically designed for non-instructional, certified staff that could be used for specific feedback, reliable and fair evaluations, and development of professional growth with an ultimate goal of improving student achievement.



## Chapter 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs action research to bring about change within a single school district by assessing current practices in the evaluation of non-instructional, certified staff (NICS), developing a new evaluation system for implementation in the district, and evaluating that system to refine it before full implementation.

The purpose of this study is to help improve the evaluation system for NICS within the MSI school district. This section describes how a new evaluation system was designed and validated. The design process included the development of performance-based rubrics, two different pre- and post-surveys consisting of Likert scale rating questions and open-ended questions. The study involved three phases of activity, which are described below: Phase 1 (Analysis of Existing Evaluation System), Phase 2 (Create and Propose a New Evaluation System), and Phase 3 (Review Revision of New System). Also included is a description of how the surveys were administered, who participated in the study and how the data were analyzed.

This research is exploratory in nature, as very little significant or formal research has been conducted in the last 20 years on evaluation systems specifically for school psychologists and school counselors. Although the primary purpose is to develop and assess a system of evaluation for NICS in one school district, the study also is intended to serve as a resource for further inquiry into this area of performance appraisal.

## **Restatement of the Problem**

The following research questions, which concern the third phase, were designed to assess the implications of a new evaluation system for school counselors and school psychologists within a school district.

1. How do administrators respond to the new evaluation system?
  - a. Does the new system bring clarity to the NICS job responsibilities and levels of performance?
  - b. Do they suggest changes to the proposed system?
2. How do NICS respond to a tailored evaluation system?
  - c. Does the new system bring clarity to their job responsibilities and levels of performance?
3. Will administrators, NICS, and experts in the field perceive the new evaluation system positively in the areas of reliability and validity?

## **Research Design Procedures**

Mixed methods design was used to create a new evaluation system, revise it, and then ready it for implementation. The study focused on 1) gathering an understanding of the existing evaluation system and policy from participants, 2) gaining responses from an expert panel regarding a proposed evaluation system developed from a review of literature, revising the system, and then 3) gaining detailed views about the new system from participants. The following is a description of the three phases of activity:

- Phase 1 (Analysis of Existing Evaluation System): 1. Describe the existing policy and evaluation system from documents. 2. Survey

administrators and NICS (pre-survey) to gather perceptions regarding the existing evaluation system and policy.

- Phase 2 (Create and Propose a New Evaluation System): 1. Review the literature. 2. Analyze survey data. 3. Develop the proposed evaluation system and policy. 4. Obtain expert panel responses on proposed evaluation system and policy. 5. Revise proposal of evaluation system and policy.
- Phase 3 (Review Revision of New System): 1. Introduce new system to participants. 2. Survey administrators and NICS (post-survey) on revised evaluation system. 3. Analyze survey data.

Figure 1 provides a visual depiction of the research design and procedures.

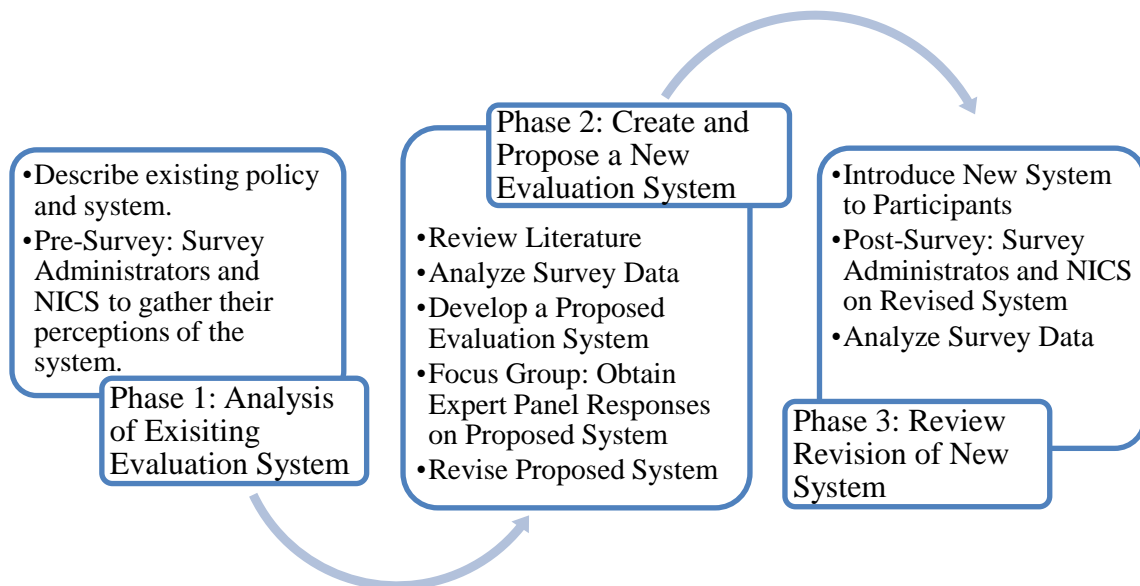


Figure 1. Illustration of research design procedures

## **Methodology**

A mixed method approach brings together the strengths of both forms of research (quantitative and qualitative) to compare and corroborate results. Quantitative and qualitative data was obtained through open- and closed-ended survey questions, as well as a focus group. School counselors, school psychologists, and administrators who volunteered to participate in the study completed the surveys. The only participants in the focus group were members of an expert panel. The study began with a survey and then a group of experts were asked to participate in a focus group to collect detailed views for revisions, therefore a mixed methods approach was used (Creswell, 2009).

In a quantitative research study, variables are related to answer a research question or to make predictions about what the researcher expects the results to show. Quantitative methods allow the researcher to test the impact of an intervention on an outcome. Survey research is one quantitative strategy of inquiry. It provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (Creswell, 2009). In this study, survey was the preferred type of data collection procedure, as the advantages include the economy of the design, the rapid turnaround in data collection, and the advantage of identifying attributes of a large population from a small group of individuals.

Creswell (2009) states, “Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). Qualitative procedures rely on text and image data. Case study research is neither new nor essentially qualitative, but is a common way to do qualitative inquiry (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2008). In instrumental case study, the researcher examines a case mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

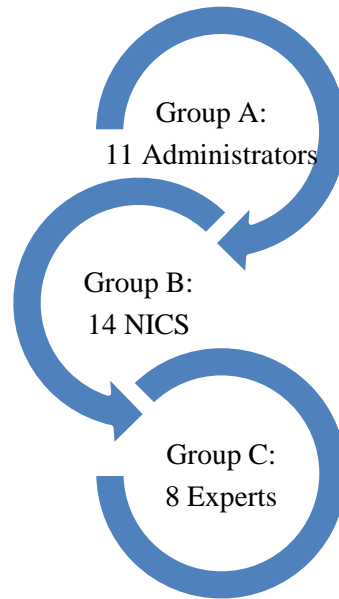
### **Setting and Participants**

**Setting.** At the time, MSI school district enrolled about 7,000 students and was comprised of one Title I preschool, one Title I middle school, and nine Title I elementary schools. Ninety-two percent of the students in the district qualified for free and reduced lunch. The ethnicity make-up of the district's student population was: Hispanic, 95%, Black, 3%, White, 1%, American Indian/Alaskan Native, 0.6%, Asian, 0.3%, and two or more ethnicities, 0.1%. The average number of students, for the district identified as English Language Learners was 29.7%. The district employed 10 principals, 10 curriculum specialists, 9 librarians/media specialists, 10 school nurses/nurse assistants, 8 counselors, 7 school psychologists, 4 assistant principals, 5 content specialists, and 1 director of curriculum.

**Participants.** This dissertation included three groups of participants: administrators, NICS, and experts. Eleven administrators responsible for the performance evaluations of school counselors and school psychologists, as well as eight school counselors and seven school psychologists participated in this study. All of these employees work in the same urban, elementary, Title I, school district in Maricopa County, Arizona.

The focus group consisted of eight participants who are considered experts in their field. The eight experts were selected from the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). The

panel was asked to respond to the proposed evaluation system and provide feedback and suggestions. Figure 2 illustrates the three groups of participants in the study.



*Figure 2.* Groups of participants

### **Intervention**

After analyzing the data of the pre-surveys and the evaluation models identified in the literature review, a new evaluation system was created. A key part of the system was the development of a performance-based rubric. The primary sources of documentation required in the overall evaluation process included: performance-based rubrics, observations, self-assessment, artifacts or documents such as checklists or surveys completed by parents, students, and staff regarding the services provided.

Along with the rubric, this new system included instruments such as scoring forms and surveys, a timeline, an improvement plan and a flowchart of the process. The goal was to create a performance-based system that would: provide feedback; identify

areas that need improvement; accurately measure performance; provide suggestions for meeting goals and standards; and give recommendations for professional growth.

### **Instrumentation**

There were five data collection instruments used in the study. The first two instruments included pre-surveys, one that was completed by group A (administrators) and another pre-survey that was completed by group B (NICS). The third instrument involved a focus group with experts in the fields of school psychology and school counseling. The final two instruments were the post-surveys, completed by the same participants; one post-survey completed by group A, the second completed by group B. The NICS and administrators pre- and post-surveys were developed to obtain quantitative data through Likert scaled questions and categorical selection questions. The qualitative data was obtained through the open-ended questions on the surveys, and in the focus group with the experts.

**Instrument 1: NICS Pre-Survey.** A pre-survey was used to gather qualitative and quantitative data on NICS' perception and understanding of the current evaluation system. The school psychologists and school counselors were asked to complete a survey consisting of questions about their most recent evaluation, the evaluation process, and their overall perception of the existing evaluation system. The survey had 7 demographics questions, 16 questions regarding their most recent evaluation, 5 open-ended questions regarding strengths, weaknesses and recommendations, 11 questions regarding the evaluation system, 12 questions regarding impact of evaluation system, 3 reliability questions, and 9 validity questions.

**Instrument 2: Administrators Pre-Survey.** A pre-survey was used to gather qualitative and quantitative data on administrators understanding of the current evaluation system. The administrators were asked to complete a survey consisting of questions about their experience with and knowledge of evaluating school counselors and school psychologists, as well as the existing evaluation system and process. The survey had 9 demographics questions, 11 questions regarding their most recent experience with the evaluation process, 5 open-ended questions regarding strengths, weaknesses and recommendations, 12 questions regarding the evaluation system, 8 questions regarding impact of evaluation system, 6 reliability questions, and 8 validity questions.

**Instrument 3: Focus group of expert panel.** After the proposed evaluation system was drafted, each expert was asked to examine the components, format elements, and rating scale of the evaluation system. Panel members were asked to provide input on the forms, instruments and process of the system. The experts were first asked to review the draft of the system, and then were asked to participate in a group discussion.

During the focus group, the discussion consisted of questions regarding the systems ease of use, clarity, understanding, conciseness, verbiage, and organization. The panel members were asked to evaluate the forms for appropriateness of rating scale, length, formatting, ease of use, appropriateness of language used, and comprehensiveness of criteria. There was also time allotted for comments, questions, and suggestions.

After the session ended, all participants were asked to complete a survey consisting of questions about the evaluation system they had just reviewed. The survey was used to gather qualitative and quantitative data on their perception and understanding of this new system. The survey had 9 demographic questions, 4 questions regarding the



evaluation system, 4 questions regarding impact of evaluation system, 2 reliability questions, 9 validity questions, and 3 open-ended questions regarding strengths, weaknesses and recommendations. The evaluation system was then revised using the data collected from the panel members (i.e., comments and recommendations).

**Instrument 4: NICS Post-Survey.** The NICS were asked to examine the revised evaluation system. Then, they were asked to complete another survey consisting of questions about the new evaluation system. A post-survey was used to gather qualitative and quantitative data on NICS' perception and understanding of this new system. The survey had 11 questions regarding the evaluation system, 12 questions regarding impact of evaluation system, 4 reliability questions, 8 validity questions, and 3 open-ended questions regarding strengths, weaknesses and recommendations.

**Instrument 5: Administrators Post-Survey.** The administrators were asked to examine the revised evaluation system, and then asked to complete another survey consisting of questions about the new evaluation system. The post-survey was used to gather qualitative and quantitative data on administrator's perception and understanding of this new system. The survey had 12 questions regarding the evaluation system, 9 questions regarding impact of evaluation system, 6 reliability questions, 9 validity questions, and 3 open-ended questions regarding strengths, weaknesses and recommendations for the new evaluation system.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Prior to collecting data, permission from the school district was required. Along with a brief proposal, the school district requested IRB approval of the action research study. Permission was obtained and all administrators who evaluate NICS, all school

counselors and all school psychologists were contacted via email. Contact consisted of emailing a letter requesting participation in the study. The letter explained the position of the researcher, that participation was completely voluntary, approximate time commitment, and the purpose and significance of the study.

**Phase 1.** Using an online survey instrument (surveymonkey.com), a pre-survey was developed. This survey was used to analyze the current situation by describing and gathering perceptions of the existing policy and evaluation system. The appropriate link to the pre-survey was emailed to all administrators who evaluate NICS, as well as all school counselors and all school psychologists.

The survey contained open-ended and closed-ended questions, and sought to collect data related to the current evaluation system: what is the process, is policy followed, is the system appropriate, does it accurately measure performance, were administrators and staff oriented to the process, were evaluators trained to evaluate, etc. The findings from this survey was analyzed and summarized.

**Phase 2.** The first step in this phase involved a review of literature on research instruments used to evaluate school counselors and school psychologists, and also on current evaluation systems used to appraise their performance. The goal was to determine what is considered state of the art. The second step of this phase involved developing a proposed evaluation system and policy using the results of the surveys and the review of literature.

The third step of this cycle involved soliciting an expert panel of members to examine a proposed evaluation system and policy. Examination by an expert panel

ensured that the proposed evaluation system is tailored to the specific standards and fundamental job responsibilities identified by NASP and ASCA.

Using the NASP and ASCA databases, twenty members were asked to participate in this study. Ten experts from each association were solicited, via email. Only those who were considered experts in the field of practice were solicited. This was determined by credentials, awards and years of service, as listed in the databases.

Each panel member was asked to participate in a focus group. The purpose of the focus group was to revise and refine, and critique the proposed evaluation system. Participants provided feedback, suggestions, and recommendations to improve the proposed evaluation system. The experts were first given a draft of the proposed system and were asked to review it prior to the focus group. During the focus group, the experts were asked questions regarding the systems ease of use, clarity, understanding, conciseness, verbiage, and organization. The panel members were also asked to evaluate the performance-based rubric for appropriateness of rating scale, length, formatting, ease of use, appropriateness of language used, and comprehensiveness of criteria.

The results and findings from the focus group were used to revise the evaluation system, and the improvements and suggestions were implemented. The result was a revised evaluation system, ready to be presented to the district administrators and NICS.

**Phase 3.** The third and final phase of the data collection process involved introducing the revised evaluation system to administrators and NICS, and then asking them to complete a post-survey. This phase sought to obtain quantitative and qualitative data related to the research questions.

Using an online survey instrument (surveymonkey.com), a post-survey was developed. The survey consisted of open-ended and closed-ended questions, and attempted to collect data related to the current evaluation system versus the proposed evaluation system. The link to the post-survey was emailed to groups A and B, and participants were asked questions regarding their perceptions of the new system. The findings from this survey were analyzed and summarized, and then used to evaluate the reflections and perceptions of the participants.

**Data Analysis**

The data from both pre- and post-surveys collected from groups A and B were entered into SPSS to produce statistical reports for analysis. Scale items on the surveys were analyzed by categorizing the questions by reliability, validity, and usefulness. Descriptive statistics of central tendency were calculated for both the pre- and post-surveys. The open-ended questions on the surveys were analyzed for themes. Qualitative data from the responses were coded and condensed.

To ensure that the research data answered the research questions and provided a means to report the generated data, a three-way match of the research questions, instrumentation sources and data analysis was developed. Table 4 shows the match of research questions to corresponding sources of information and data analysis/reporting procedures.

Table 4

*Match of Research Questions to Corresponding Sources of Information and Data Analysis/Reporting Procedures*

Research Question	Corresponding Source(s) of Information	Corresponding Data Analysis/Reporting Procedure(s)
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Question #1: How do administrators respond to the new evaluation system?	<p>Post-Survey for Administrators Questions 1-12; Rate the following Questions regarding the Evaluation System.</p> <p>Open-ended Post-Survey Q1; What are some of the strengths of the new evaluation system?</p> <p>Open-ended Post-Survey Q3; What suggestions do you have to increase the likelihood of a successful implementation?</p>	<p>Summary Descriptive; frequency tables and bar graphs with means, percentages and totals</p> <p>Coding and categorizing; summary narrative</p> <p>Coding and categorizing; summary narrative</p>
Question #1a: Does the new system bring clarity to the NICS job responsibilities and levels of performance?	Post-Survey for Administrators Questions 13-21; Rate the following Questions regarding the Impact of the System.	Summary Descriptive; frequency tables and bar graphs with means, percentages and totals
Question #1b: Do they suggest changes to the proposed system?	Open-ended Post-Survey Q2; What are some changes that should be made to the new evaluation system? Explain.	Coding and categorizing; summary narrative.
Question #2 How do NICS respond to a tailored evaluation system?	<p>Post-Survey for NICS Questions 1-12; Rate the following Questions regarding the Evaluation System.</p> <p>Open-ended Post-Survey Q1; What are some of the strengths of the new evaluation system?</p> <p>Open-ended Post-Survey Q3; What suggestions do you have to increase the likelihood of a successful implementation?</p>	<p>Summary Descriptive; frequency tables and bar graphs with means, percentages and totals.</p> <p>Coding and categorizing; summary narrative.</p> <p>Coding and categorizing; summary narrative.</p>

Question #2a: Does the new system bring clarity to their job responsibilities and levels of performance?	Post-Survey for NICS Questions 13-21; Rate the following Questions regarding the Impact of the System.	Summary Descriptive; frequency tables and bar graphs with means, percentages and totals.
Question #3 Will administrators, NICS, and experts in the field perceive the new evaluation system positively in the areas of reliability and validity?	<p>Post-Survey for Administrators and Post-Survey for NICS Questions 22-27; Rate the following Questions regarding Reliability.</p> <p>Post-Survey for Administrators and Post-Survey for NICS Questions 28-36; Rate the following Questions regarding Validity.</p>	<p>Summary Descriptive; frequency tables and bar graphs with means, percentages and totals.</p> <p>Summary Descriptive; frequency tables and bar graphs with means, percentages and totals.</p>

**Research Question 1.** To analyze research question number one, how do administrators respond to the new evaluation system, a post-survey was administered on-line using Survey Monkey to all administrators who evaluate school counselors and school psychologists. Administrators responded to parallel survey questions about a proposed evaluation system for NICS, and were asked to answer questions using a Likert scale of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Disagree or Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree. Three additional open-ended questions solicited responses regarding strengths and changes suggested in the system. The quantitative findings were coded, categorized and presented in narrative form.

Question 1a investigated whether the new system brought clarity to the NICS job responsibilities and levels of performance. Instrumentation for this question was the post-survey for administrators. In questions 13-21, groups A and B were asked to rate the impact the new evaluation system had on NICS, their job responsibilities and their

performance. Questions were answered using a Likert scale of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Disagree or Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree. The quantitative findings were presented in a descriptive statistical table.

To analyze research question 1b, do administrators suggest changes to the proposed system, administrators were asked an open-ended question on the post-survey. Question 2 in the comments section read, what are some changes that should be made to the new evaluation system? The qualitative data was coded and categorized. Common themes were identified, categorized and presented in a summary narrative form.

**Research Question 2.** Research question two investigated how NICS respond to a new tailored evaluation system. Data were collected using Survey Monkey. The survey was administered to all school counselors and all school psychologists in the MSI school district. They responded to parallel survey questions about the proposed evaluation system, and were asked to answer questions using a Likert scale of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Disagree or Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree. Three additional open-ended questions solicited responses regarding strengths and changes suggested in the system. The quantitative findings were coded, categorized, and presented in both narrative form and in a descriptive statistical table.

To investigate question 2a, whether the new system bring clarity to their job responsibilities and levels of performance, NICS were asked to complete a post-survey using a Likert scale of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Disagree or Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree. In questions 12-23, participants were asked to rate the impact the new evaluation system had on their job responsibilities and their performance. The quantitative findings were presented in a descriptive statistical table.

**Research Question 3.** A focus group was organized, and consisted of a panel of experts in fields of school counseling and school psychology. Experts were asked to respond to questions regarding the proposed evaluation system. Open-ended questions asked were related to reliability and validity, the systems ease of use, clarity, understanding, conciseness, verbiage, and organization. The qualitative findings were coded, categorized and presented in narrative form.

Additionally, a post-survey was administered to groups A and B using Survey Monkey. Administrators and NICS responded to 15 parallel survey questions regarding reliability and validity. They were also asked to answer questions using a Likert scale of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Disagree or Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree. The quantitative findings were presented in a descriptive statistical table.



## Chapter 4

### FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

#### **Introduction**

The researcher investigated the current status of an existing evaluation system within a public school district and the need for its renewal in view of recent policy changes. This chapter describes the results of that investigation as well as how a new evaluation system was designed and validated. The design process included the development of performance-based rubrics, two different pre- and post-surveys consisting of Likert scale rating questions and open-ended questions. This chapter describes the activity that occurred in each of the three phases: Phase 1 (Analysis of Existing Evaluation System), Phase 2 (Create and Propose a New Evaluation System), and Phase 3 (Review Revision of New System). Also included is a description of how the surveys were administered, who participated in the study and how the data were analyzed.

The goals of this study were 1) to describe the system's existing evaluation system – including both the process and instruments used to evaluate school counselors and psychologists; 2) to develop a new system of evaluation based on recent research; 3) to determine how administrators will respond to this new evaluation system that can be used to assess school counselors and school psychologists; 4) to learn how the non-instructional, certified staff members react to a new evaluation system tailored to their specific jobs; and 5) to determine whether administrators, NICS, and experts in the field perceive the new evaluation system positively in the areas of reliability and validity.

This mixed methods study specifically investigated the following research questions:

1. How do administrators respond to the new evaluation system?
  - a. Does the new system bring clarity to the NICS job responsibilities and levels of performance?
  - b. Do they suggest changes to the proposed system?
2. How do NICS respond to a tailored evaluation system?
  - a. Does the new system bring clarity to their job responsibilities and levels of performance?
3. Will administrators, NICS, and experts in the field perceive the new evaluation system positively in the areas of reliability and validity?

To address the research questions, survey and focus group data were collected from three different groups of participants: administrators (Group A), NICS (Group B), and experts (Group C). The study included a total of 33 participants; 11 in Group A, 14 in Group B, and 8 in Group C. Chapter three describes and explains the five data collection instruments that were utilized. Beginning with *Instrument 1* and closing with *Instrument 5*, the data were analyzed and reported in the order in which they were collected.

Therefore, this chapter will first report the data collected and analyzed from *Instrument 1*, then *Instrument 2*, and so on. The data are being reported in the order collected to be consistent with the research design and procedures (see *Figure 1*).

## **Findings and Results**

**Instrument 1: NICS Pre-Survey.** The pre-survey gathered qualitative and quantitative data on NICS' perception and understanding of the current evaluation

system. The school psychologists and school counselors completed a survey consisting of questions about their demographic information, their most recent evaluation, the evaluation process, and their overall perception of the existing evaluation system.

The sample of the NICS participating in the study included a total of 14 respondents. Of those participants, the majority were female (n=13), white non-Hispanic (n=5) or Hispanic (n=5), were 51 years of age or older (n=9), have education beyond a master’s degree (n=9), have been in their current profession for 14 years or less (n=9), and have three years or less of teaching experience (n=9). Of the 14 respondents, 35.71% were certified in school psychology, 35.71% in counseling, and 7.14% in social work. Three respondents reported they held no certification, a state masters in social work, or certification in elementary education, special education, and as a reading specialist. In addition, 50% of this group services a K-5 school, 42.86% services K-8, and 7.14% services a 6-8 campus. Table 5 lists more detailed demographic information of the NICS participants.

Table 5

*Individual Characteristics of Group B as a Percentage of the Sample*

Demographic Characteristic	Frequency Count	Percent
Gender		
Male	1	7.1
Female	13	92.9
Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	7.1
Black non-Hispanic	2	14.3
White non-Hispanic	5	35.7
Hispanic	5	35.7
Other	1	7.1

Age		
31-40	3	21.4
41-50	2	14.3
51-60	7	50.0
60+	2	14.3
Highest Degree		
Master's	5	35.7
Master's + Credits	7	50.0
Ed.D./Ph.D	2	14.3
Years in Current Profession		
0-4	3	21.4
5-9	4	28.6
10-14	2	14.3
20-24	3	21.4
25-29	1	7.1
30+	1	7.1
Area of Certification		
School Psychology	5	35.7
Counseling	5	35.7
Social Work	1	7.1
Other	3	21.4
Grade Levels Currently Serviced		
K-5	7	50.0
K-8	6	42.9
6-8	1	7.1
Years of Teaching Experience		
No teaching experience	7	50.0
0-3	2	14.3
4-6	2	14.3
11-15	1	7.1
15 or more	2	14.3

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In open-ended question format, respondents were asked to describe the current evaluation process from the beginning of the year until the end. Some stated they have not been evaluated (n=2), there was not a process (n=2), or they were unfamiliar with the process (n=2), and a few said their evaluator conducted an observation (n=3) and others stated there was no observation, just a conference (n=4). Respondents were also asked to report their last evaluation date; responses included 06/01/2012 (n=5), 05/01/2012 (n=3), May 2012 or end of last school year 2012 (n=2), 08/28/2012 (n=1), spring 2011 (n=1), two years ago (n=1), and 04/07/2009 (n=1). When asked how their observation was actually conducted, some stated the evaluation was just handed to them and they were asked to sign (n=4), and others said via a brief meeting or conference to review the evaluation (n=7).

When asked to describe the tools or instruments included in the evaluation process, responses included none or unknown, an observation, discussions (from principal and vice principal), and a performance evaluation rating scale. When asked how they were informed of the evaluation process, responses included verbally (n=2), in writing (n=4), formal training (n=1), and was not informed (n=4).

In regards to their most recent evaluation, more than half of the participants reported they received feedback (n=8), and half reported the feedback they received was valuable (n=7). The majority of the participants reported the results of their evaluation provided accurate assessments of their true job performance (n=11), and almost all agreed with their evaluation rating (n=12).

In the next section of the survey, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements regarding the current evaluation system. The results are presented in Table 6, with the highest percentages in boldface.

Table 6

*Group B Percentage of Agreement with Statements Regarding the Current System*

Statements	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Average Rating	Response Count
1. All School Psychs/School Counselors are evaluated twice a year to provide feedback on performance improvement.	0.0	21.4	28.6	<b>35.7</b>	14.3	2.57	14
2. The most important purpose of the system is to provide feedback for improving job performance and services rendered.	21.4	<b>57.1</b>	14.3	7.1	0.0	3.93	14
3. Other artifacts (i.e., surveys) or a portfolio are evaluated as part of the evaluation system.	0.0	7.1	<b>42.9</b>	<b>42.9</b>	7.1	2.50	14
4. I write an individual professional development plan based on my evaluation data.	0.0	14.3	28.6	<b>42.9</b>	14.3	2.43	14
5. Formally scheduled observations provide the most accurate description of my performance.	0.0	21.4	28.6	<b>35.7</b>	14.3	2.57	14
6. New School Psychs/School Counselors are evaluated more often than veteran School Psychs/School Counselors.	0.0	14.3	<b>50.0</b>	28.6	7.1	2.71	14
7. The evaluation system includes a direct and indirect observation.	0.0	<b>42.9</b>	28.6	21.4	7.1	3.07	14
8. The evaluation process addresses strengths and recommended areas of growth.	7.1	<b>57.1</b>	21.4	14.3	0.0	3.57	14
9. The current system helps me grow professionally.	0.0	14.3	<b>42.9</b>	28.6	14.3	2.57	14
10. The current evaluation process accurately assesses my job performance.	7.1	21.4	<b>50.0</b>	14.3	7.1	3.07	14

11. The current evaluation system should be replaced with a new evaluation system.	28.6	21.4	<b>42.9</b>	0.0	7.1	3.64	14
12. The current evaluation system fosters a climate for professional growth and improvement.	0.0	0.0	<b>57.1</b>	21.4	21.4	2.36	14
13. The current instrument provides objective information about my performance.	7.1	28.6	<b>42.9</b>	14.3	7.1	3.14	14
14. The current evaluation system enhances discussion and understanding between School Psychs/School Counselors and evaluators about effective job performance.	7.1	<b>28.6</b>	21.4	<b>28.6</b>	14.3	2.86	14
15. The system increases School Psychs/School Counselors and administrator commitment to professional standards.	0.0	21.4	<b>35.7</b>	21.4	21.4	2.57	14
16. The system recognizes my contribution to the school as a whole.	7.1	<b>28.6</b>	14.3	<b>28.6</b>	21.4	2.71	14
17. The most important purpose of performance evaluation is to provide feedback for improving job performance.	14.3	<b>64.3</b>	14.3	7.1	0.0	3.86	14
18. The system helps to define the role I play within the school.	0.0	21.4	<b>50.0</b>	21.4	7.1	2.86	14
19. The system delineates clear job goals and expectations.	0.0	21.4	<b>42.9</b>	21.4	14.3	2.71	14
20. The system helps promote student achievement.	0.0	7.1	<b>42.9</b>	35.7	14.3	2.43	14
21. I regularly receive focused follow-up and support based on my evaluations.	7.1	7.1	<b>35.7</b>	<b>35.7</b>	14.3	2.57	14
22. I focus my professional development efforts on activities that directly help me achieve the evaluation standards.	0.0	28.6	<b>35.7</b>	21.4	14.3	2.79	14
23. The evaluation has an impact on my professional performance.	7.1	21.4	<b>35.7</b>	14.3	21.4	2.79	14

24. I am confident that my administrator interprets and scores my evaluations consistently.	7.1	<b>42.9</b>	28.6	14.3	7.1	3.29	14
25. I am confident that administrators from other campuses interpret and score evaluations similar to my site administrator.	7.1	14.3	<b>57.1</b>	14.3	7.1	3.00	14
26. My evaluator has been adequately trained to consistently evaluate my performance.	7.1	14.3	<b>42.9</b>	14.3	21.4	2.71	14
27. I understand the meaning of each descriptor and level of performance used in the current evaluation instrument.	14.3	<b>35.7</b>	21.4	28.6	0.0	3.36	14
28. The descriptors focus on key behaviors that positively impact student learning.	14.3	14.3	<b>35.7</b>	28.6	7.1	3.00	14
29. The standards used in the current evaluation system are fair.	7.1	21.4	28.6	<b>35.7</b>	7.1	2.86	14
30. Working towards improving my performance on the evaluation standards also helps me to improve the quality of my services.	0.0	<b>35.7</b>	<b>35.7</b>	21.4	7.1	3.00	14
31. The evaluation standards define good practice.	7.1	28.6	<b>35.7</b>	28.6	0.0	3.14	14
32. The evaluation incorporates indicators of student learning in the evaluation process.	0.0	7.1	28.6	<b>42.9</b>	21.4	2.21	14
33. The evaluation instrument provides specific feedback that helps guide individual professional development plans.	0.0	21.4	<b>35.7</b>	28.6	14.3	2.64	14
34. The evaluation instrument includes clear expectations for each performance descriptor.	7.1	21.4	<b>35.7</b>	28.6	7.1	2.93	14
35. The instrument provides School Psychs/School Counselors with objective information about services provided.	7.1	21.4	<b>35.7</b>	28.6	7.1	2.93	14



**System.** In regards to the current evaluation system in general, seven respondents disagreed that all NICS are evaluated twice a year (four answered “neutral”), seven disagreed artifacts or a portfolio are part of the system (six were “neutral”), and eight disagreed they write an individual professional development plan based on evaluation data (four were “neutral”). Four respondents disagreed the system includes a direct and indirect observation (four answered “neutral”), six disagreed the system helps them grow professionally (six were “neutral”), and three disagreed the evaluation process accurately assesses their job performance (seven were “neutral”). Only one respondent disagreed that the current evaluation system should be replaced with a new evaluation system (six answered “neutral”). *The most important purpose of the system is to provide feedback for improving job performance and services rendered* was the statement with the highest level of agreement (n=11).

**Impact of system.** Overall, the perception of the impact of the current system is somewhat negative. Five respondents disagreed the current instrument provides objective information about performance (five answered “neutral”), six disagreed the system fosters a climate for professional growth and improvement (eight were “neutral”), and four disagreed the system helps to define the role they play within the school (seven were “neutral”). Seven respondents disagreed they receive focused follow-up and support (five answered “neutral”), seven disagreed the system helps promote student achievement (six were “neutral”), and five disagreed their evaluation has an impact on their professional performance (five were “neutral”).

**Reliability.** In assessing the reliability of the current system, the researcher cannot conclude whether or not the current system is perceived as reliable. Of the three

questions, respondents indicated “neutral” answers 18 times. Seven respondents agreed their administrator interprets and scores their evaluations consistently (four answered “neutral”), three agreed administrators from other campuses interpret and score evaluations similar to their own administrator (eight were “neutral”), and three agreed their evaluator has been adequately trained to consistently evaluate their performance (six were “neutral”).

**Validity.** In assessing the validity of the current evaluation system, again respondents were more inclined to indicate a “neutral” response; of the first eight questions, “neutral” was selected 38 times. Six respondents, or 42.9%, disagreed the standards used in the current system are fair and six respondents disagreed the evaluation instrument provides specific feedback that helps guide individual professional development. The statement with the highest level of disagreement was *the evaluation incorporates indicators of student learning in the evaluation process* (n=9).

The last question asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with the accuracy of assessment in four areas. Although at least three respondents indicated a “neutral” response for all four areas, figure 3 shows eight (or 57.1%) respondents disagree the current evaluation system accurately assesses their job performance, seven (or 50.0%) disagree it assesses the impact of overall performance, nine (or 64.3%) disagree it assesses an increase in student learning, and eight (or 57.1%) disagree it accurately assesses the ability to use data and assessment information.

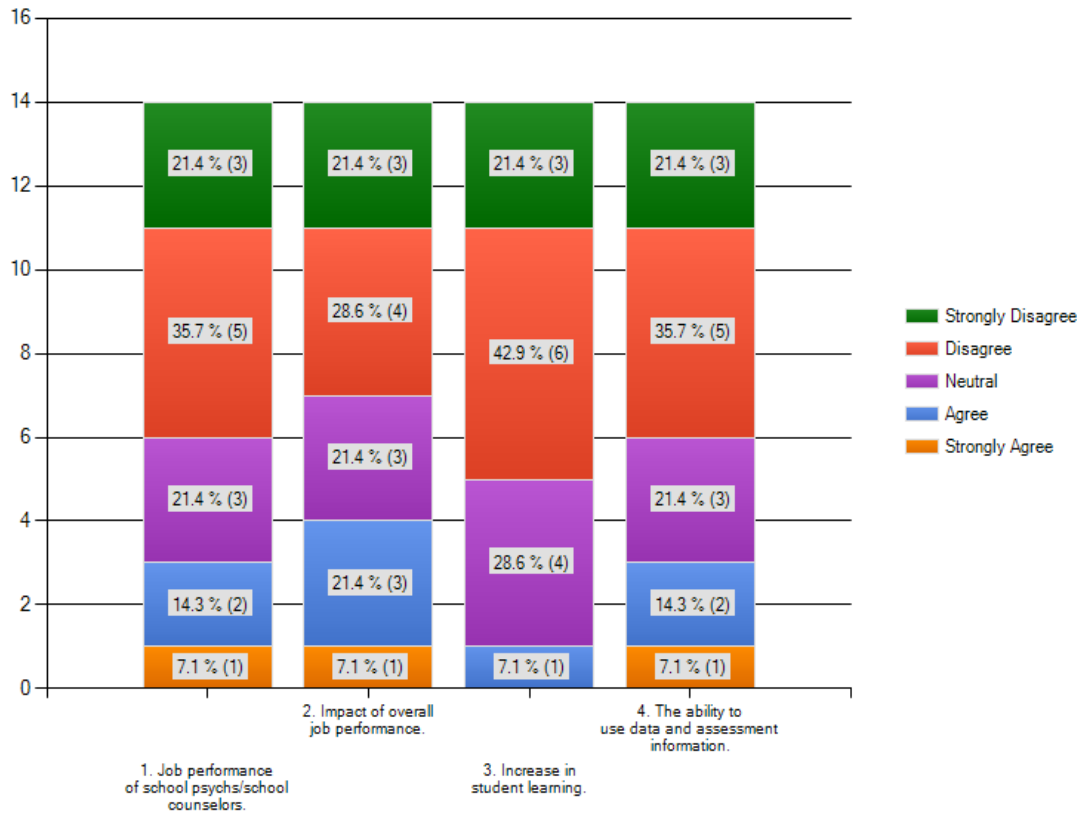


Figure 3. Group B level of agreement with accuracy of assessment

The final questions on the pre-survey consisted of open-ended questions regarding strengths, weaknesses and recommendations. When asked what additional support is needed to implement effective and efficient services, most respondents indicated professional development or training (n=7), a few specifically cited access to conferences and workshops (n=3), and two responded “not sure.”

The next question asked about the strengths of the current evaluation system. Some respondents reported there “were none” or they were “not sure” (n=5). Others reported the system was accurate or useful (n=2), and some said the strengths were the systems evaluation of multiple areas, it is more than a simple rating scale, it is informal,

and it allows for limited communication (n=5). When asked what changes should be made to the current system, some respondents suggested tailoring the system specifically to counselors and psychologists (n=4), a few suggested clarifying expectations and standardizing the system (n=2), and three stated “don’t know” or “not sure.” Other suggestions included: conducting the evaluation before June, include an “Exceeds” rating, include multiple data sources, and one respondent suggested no changes be made.

Respondents were then asked to report their opinion of the current evaluation system’s applicability to school psychology or school counseling. Some respondents reported the current system was not very applicable to their field of practice (n=5), and few reported “don’t know” or “unsure” (n=3). Other responses included: it is comparable to what is being used in other districts, it is a good instrument for the counselors, it is fair, parts of it are good and parts are lacking, and it does not give any direction for growth.

Finally, when asked how accurately the current system assesses overall performance as a counselor or psychologist, most respondents stated either “it does not” or “not at all” (n=6), or “I don’t know” or “unsure” (n=3). There were also some who stated the system assesses their overall performance well or fairly well (n=4).

**Instrument 2: Administrators Pre-Survey.** The pre-survey gathered qualitative and quantitative data on administrators understanding of the current evaluation system. The administrators completed a survey consisting of questions about their experience with and knowledge of evaluating school counselors and school psychologists, as well as the existing evaluation system and process.

The sample of the administrators participating in the study included a total of 11 respondents. Most of the respondents reported they have been evaluating school

psychologists or school counselors for less than six years (n=7). The results from the demographic questions indicate that most respondents were female (n=7), Hispanic (n=7), were 41 years of age or older (n=6), have education beyond a master's degree (n=10), have spent between five and 14 years in administration (n=9), and have between seven and 25 years of teaching experience (n=8). Of the 11 respondents, none have training in school psychology (n=0), and one has training in school counseling. In addition, 45.5% of this group services a K-5 school, 45.5% services K-8, and 9.1% services a 6-8 campus. Table 7 lists detailed demographic information of the school administrators.

Table 7

*Individual Characteristics of Group A as a Percentage of the Sample*

Demographic Characteristic	Frequency	
	Count	Percent
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	4	36.4
Female	7	63.6
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Black non-Hispanic	3	27.3
White non-Hispanic	1	9.1
Hispanic	7	63.6
<b>Age</b>		
31-40	5	45.5
41-50	3	27.3
51-60	3	27.3
<b>Highest Degree</b>		
Master's	1	9.1
Master's + Credits	7	63.6
Ed.D./Ph.D	3	27.3

Years in Administration		
5-9	5	45.5
10-14	4	36.4
15-19	2	18.2
Has training in school psychology		
Yes	0	0
No	11	100
Has training in school counseling		
Yes	1	9.1
No	10	90.9
Grade levels currently serviced		
K-5	5	45.5
K-8	5	45.5
6-8	1	9.1
Years of teaching experience		
4-6	2	18.2
7-10	4	36.4
11-15	4	36.4
15 or more	1	9.1

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In open-ended question format, respondents were asked to describe their experience with, and opinions of, the current evaluation system. Some of the respondents mentioned meeting with the counselor, reviewing expectations, creating goals and then evaluating at the end of the year (n=4). Three respondents specifically mentioned using the district evaluation instrument, two mentioned having to collaborate with another administrator (due to the NICS being “assigned to more than one school”), and one mentioned “the evaluation process is not clearly defined.”

When asked to describe the tools or instruments included in the evaluation process, the majority of the respondents stated they used the district evaluation

instrument/form (n=8). One respondent stated that they let the psychologist and counselor complete a reflection on practice form, and two stated that they collaborate with another administrator to complete the evaluations. Respondents were then asked whether they have had to modify portions of their performance evaluation tool to better evaluate the NICS job performance. Some respondents said yes, they have had to modify portions of the evaluation tool (n= 6).

The respondents were asked to indicate how they communicate the results of the evaluation. Almost all respondents reported they conduct a formal post-conference and communicate evaluation during the conference (n =10). Only one respondent reported they do not conduct a formal post-conference and that they communicate evaluation results via email. In regards to communicating job goals and expectations, almost all of the respondents stated that they did so (n =10). One respondent indicated no communication about job goals and expectations. Likewise, the majority of the respondents indicated that they do give specific feedback, including job recommendations (n=10), and one respondent said no specific feedback was given.

When respondents were asked to describe their targets in the evaluation (what they look for), two respondents mentioned looking for competency in all areas listed on the evaluation instruments; three stated they evaluate based on job description and responsibilities; two mention compliance with timelines and adherence to federal and state guidelines; one respondent reported evaluation is based on best practices; another respondent stated reported evaluation is based on level of collaboration with staff, the amount of support for teachers, students, and families, and for contribution to the learning

community; and one reported “I look to see how their role impacts our school community.”

The next question asked respondents to indicate what training they received in order to understand and implement the current evaluation system. Most of the respondents said they did not receive any training (n= 8), two stated they received informal training (brief overview in meeting), and one stated they received formal training. When asked how often they evaluate and provide NICS with feedback on performance, almost all of the respondents stated they provide feedback once per year (n= 10), and only one respondent reported feedback is provided twice per year.

In the next section of the survey, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements regarding their perceptions of the current evaluation system. The results are presented in Table 8, with the highest percentages in boldface.

Table 8

*Group A Percentage of Agreement with Statements Regarding the Current System*

Statements	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Average Rating	Response Count
1. All School Psychs/School Counselors are evaluated twice a year to provide feedback on performance.	0.0	9.1	0.0	<b>72.7</b>	18.2	2.00	11
2. The most important purpose of the system is to provide feedback for improving job performance and services rendered.	9.1	<b>72.7</b>	18.2	0.0	0.0	3.91	11
3. Other artifacts (i.e., surveys) or a portfolio are evaluated as part of the evaluation system.	0.0	<b>27.3</b>	18.2	<b>27.3</b>	<b>27.3</b>	2.45	11



4. I focus professional development efforts on activities that directly help counselors/psychologists achieve the evaluation standards.	0.0	<b>27.3</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>27.3</b>	18.2	2.64	11
5. Formally scheduled observations provide the most accurate description of their job performance.	0.0	36.4	9.1	<b>54.5</b>	0.0	2.82	11
6. New School Psychs/School Counselors are evaluated more often than veteran School Psychs/School Counselors.	9.1	27.3	27.3	<b>36.4</b>	0.0	3.09	11
7. The evaluation system includes a direct and indirect observation.	0.0	<b>54.5</b>	27.3	9.1	9.1	3.27	11
8. The evaluation process addresses strengths and recommended areas of growth.	0.0	<b>72.7</b>	27.3	0.0	0.0	3.73	11
9. The current system helps counselors/psychs grow professionally.	0.0	27.3	<b>54.5</b>	9.1	9.1	3.00	11
10. In evaluating school psychologists and school counselors, I was adequately trained to observe, collect and analyze data, identify strengths and weaknesses, provide constructive feedback, and write valuable comments on the evaluation instrument.	0.0	0	18.2	<b>45.5</b>	36.4	1.82	11
11. The current evaluation system should be replaced with a new evaluation system.	<b>45.5</b>	18.2	36.4	0.0	0.0	4.09	11
12. The current evaluation system fosters a climate for professional growth and improvement.	0.0	9.1	<b>45.5</b>	27.3	18.2	2.45	11
13. The current instrument provides objective information about job performance.	0.0	27.3	<b>36.4</b>	27.3	9.1	2.82	11
14. The current evaluation system enhances discussion and understanding between School Psychs/School Counselors and evaluators about effective job performance.	0.0	18.2	<b>54.5</b>	18.2	9.1	2.82	11

15. The system increases School Psychs/School Counselors and administrator commitment to professional standards.	0.0	9.1	<b>63.6</b>	27.3	0.0	2.82	11
16. The system recognizes the contribution Counselors/Psychs give to the school as a whole.	0.0	18.2	<b>36.4</b>	27.3	18.2	2.55	11
17. The current system defines the role the Counselor/Psychologist's play within the school.	0.0	18.2	<b>36.4</b>	<b>36.4</b>	9.1	2.64	11
18. The system delineates clear job goals and expectations.	0.0	18.2	27.3	<b>45.5</b>	9.1	2.55	11
19. The system helps promote student achievement.	0.0	0.0	<b>45.5</b>	<b>45.5</b>	9.1	2.36	11
20. Improves the quality of School Psychologists/School Counselors performance.	0.0	9.1	<b>72.7</b>	18.2	0.0	2.91	11
21. I ensure that evaluations of School Psychs/School Counselors are conducted following district guidelines.	9.1	<b>45.5</b>	<b>45.5</b>	0.0	0.0	3.64	11
22. The performance evaluation tool is consistent in evaluating school psychologists/school counselors.	0.0	18.2	<b>63.6</b>	9.1	9.1	2.91	11
23. I feel comfortable utilizing the performance evaluation system to evaluate Counselors/Psychologists.	0.0	18.2	<b>45.5</b>	27.3	9.1	2.73	11
24. I am confident that administrators from other campuses interpret and score evaluations in the same manner as I do.	0.0	0.0	<b>54.5</b>	18.2	27.3	2.27	11
25. I have been adequately trained to consistently evaluate the performance of school psychologists/school counselors.	0.0	0.0	27.3	27.3	<b>45.5</b>	1.82	11
26. I understand the meaning of each element and level of performance used in the current evaluation instrument.	0.0	<b>45.5</b>	36.4	18.2	0.0	3.27	11
27. The descriptors focus on key behaviors that positively impact student learning.	0.0	9.1	<b>63.6</b>	18.2	9.1	2.73	11

28. The standards used in the current evaluation system are fair.	0.0	27.3	<b>54.5</b>	18.2	0.0	3.09	11
29. The evaluation standards define good practice.	0.0	27.3	<b>45.5</b>	18.2	9.1	2.91	11
30. The evaluation incorporates indicators of student learning in the evaluation process.	0.0	0.0	<b>45.5</b>	<b>45.5</b>	9.1	2.36	11
31. The evaluation instrument provides specific feedback that helps guide individual professional development plans.	0.0	18.2	<b>54.5</b>	27.3	0.0	2.91	11
32. The evaluation instrument includes clear expectations for each performance descriptor.	0.0	9.1	<b>45.5</b>	36.4	9.1	2.55	11
33. The instrument provides School Psychs/School Counselors with objective information about services provided.	0.0	9.1	<b>45.5</b>	36.4	9.1	2.55	11

**System.** Regarding the current evaluation system, eight respondents disagreed all NICS are evaluated twice a year, six disagreed artifacts or a portfolio are part of the system (two were “neutral”), and five disagreed they focus professional development efforts on activities that directly help NICS achieve evaluation standards (three were “neutral”). Six respondents disagreed formally scheduled observations provide most accurate description of job performance, and five disagreed the current evaluation system fosters a climate for professional growth and improvement (five answered “neutral”). Six respondents agreed the system includes a direct and indirect observation (three answered “neutral”), eight agreed the evaluation process addresses strengths and recommended areas of growth (three were “neutral”), and four agreed new NICS are evaluated more often than veterans (three were “neutral”).

Only three respondents reported the current system helps NICS grow professionally (six answered “neutral”). Seven respondents agreed the current evaluation system should be replaced with a new evaluation system (four were “neutral”). *The most important purpose of the system is to provide feedback for improving job performance and services rendered* was the statement with the highest level of agreement (n=9). The statement with the highest level of disagreement was, *I was adequately trained to observe, collect and analyze data, and provide constructive feedback on the evaluation instrument* (n=9).

**Impact of system.** Five disagreed the system helps to define the role NICS play within the school, six disagreed the system delineates clear job goals and expectations, six also disagreed the system helps promote student achievement (five were “neutral”), and two disagreed the system improves the quality of NICS performance (eight were “neutral”).

Four respondents disagreed the current instrument provides objective information about performance, three disagreed the system enhances discussion and understanding about effective job performance (six were “neutral”), five disagreed the system recognizes the contribution NICS give to the school as a whole, and three respondents disagreed the system increases NICS and administrator commitment to professional standards (seven were “neutral”).

**Reliability.** In assessing the reliability of the current evaluation system, five respondents stated they ensure evaluations are conducted following district guidelines (five were “neutral”). Five respondents stated they disagreed with the statement *I am confident that administrators from other campuses interpret and score evaluations in the*

*same manner as I do* (six were “neutral”). Six respondents disagreed they understand the meaning of each element and level of performance in the evaluation instrument (five answered “neutral”), four disagreed they feel comfortable utilizing the performance evaluation system (five were “neutral”), and two disagreed the evaluation tool is consistent in evaluating NICS (seven were “neutral”). The statement with the highest level of disagreement was, *I have been adequately trained to consistently evaluate the performance of NICS* (n=8). Of the six questions assessing reliability, respondents indicated “neutral” 31 times.

**Validity.** In assessing the validity of the current evaluation system, most respondents almost always indicated a “neutral” response; of the first eight questions, “neutral” was selected 39 times. Three respondents agreed the standards used in the current system are fair. Three respondents disagreed the descriptors focus on key behaviors that impact student learning, three disagreed the evaluation standards define good practice, and three disagreed the instrument provides specific feedback that helps guide professional development. Five respondents disagreed the instrument includes clear expectations for each performance descriptor, and five disagreed the instrument provides NICS with objective information about services provided. The statement with the highest level of disagreement was *the evaluation incorporates indicators of student learning in the evaluation process* (n=6).

The final question asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with the accuracy of assessment in four areas. Again, at least three respondents indicated a “neutral” response for all four areas. Figure 4 shows five of the respondents disagree the current evaluation system accurately assesses the job performance of NICS, five disagree

it assesses the impact of overall performance, six disagree it assesses an increase in student learning, and seven disagree it accurately assesses the ability to use data and assessment information.

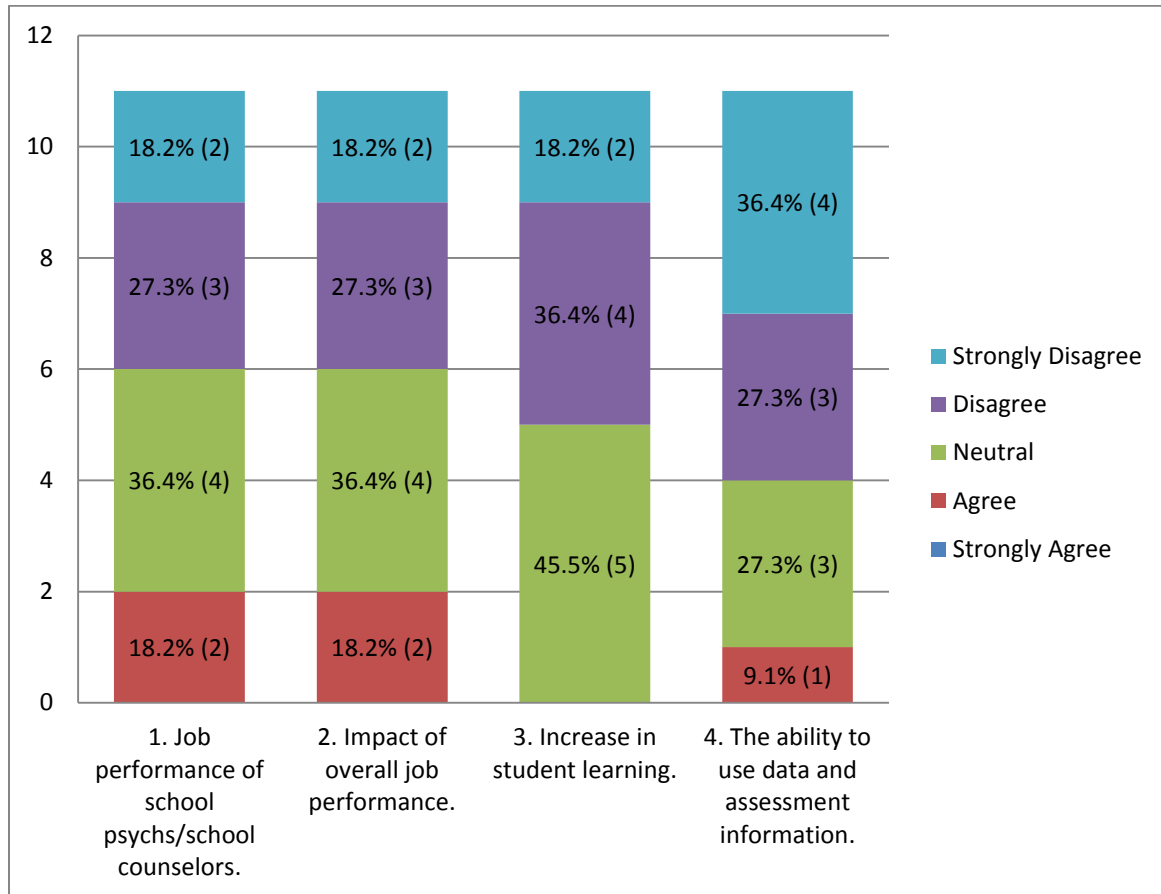


Figure 4. Group A level of agreement with accuracy of assessment

The final questions on the pre-survey consisted of open-ended questions regarding strengths, weaknesses and recommendations. When asked what additional support, training, etc. is needed to implement effective and efficient services, most respondents suggested training on the instrument as well as the system (n=6), one mentioned professional development, one stated “a review of the instrument will suffice ,” and one stated “unsure.”

The next question asked about the strengths of the current evaluation system. Some respondents reported the variety of indicators on the current instrument (n=4), one reported there were “limited strengths,” one reported there were “none,” and one stated it is aligned to national standards. When asked to list changes that should be made to the current evaluation system, a few respondents suggested adding a student achievement component to evaluation system (n=3), and some suggested having more clear and aligned expectations of the NICS (n=4). Also, one respondent suggested adding timelines and a system of improvement and formal improvement plan, and another suggested specifying key components to include details (as opposed to having very general indicators).

Respondents were then asked to report their opinion of the current evaluation system’s applicability to school psychology or school counseling. Some reported that it was too general, basic, or outdated (n=3), a few stated that the system needed to be revised (n=3), one stated that the system does not apply to what NICS are expected to do, and one stated there is very little accountability.

Finally respondents were asked to report how accurately the current system assesses the overall performance of the NICS. Overall, responses were generally more negative than positive. Some respondents stated “it does not,” “not very,” or “not well” (n=3), some reported it was difficult to determine or that it was limited (n=3), and two stated no opinion. There were two respondents that reported “somewhat” and “well.”

**Instrument 3: Focus group with expert panel.** Each of the eight participants in the expert panel was given a copy of the proposed system in advance, and was invited to participate in a group discussion. The experts examined the components, format

elements, and rating scale of the evaluation system, and then were asked to provide input, including feedback on the forms, instruments, process and policies. After the conclusion of the session, participants were asked to complete a survey consisting of questions about the new evaluation system. The survey gathered qualitative and quantitative data on their perceptions of the new systems impact, reliability, and validity.

The majority of the participants were male (n=5), were 56 years of age or older (n=5), had a doctoral level education (n=5), and have spent more than 15 years in their current profession (n=5).

Of the eight participants, five had training in school psychology, and three had training in school counseling. In addition, 50% of this group service grades K-8, 12.5% service grades K-12, 12.5% service a high school campus, and 25% service students at the university level. Half of the participants reported they have been supervising school psychologists or school counselors for 7 to 10 years, while the other half reported having 10 or more years of supervisory experience. Table 9 lists detailed demographic information of the expert panel.

Table 9

*Individual Characteristics of Group C as a Percentage of the Sample*

Demographic Characteristic	Frequency	
	Count	Percent
Gender		
Male	5	62.5
Female	3	37.5
Age		
36-45	3	37.5
56-65	5	62.5



Highest Degree		
Master's + Credits	3	37.5
Ed.D./Ph.D	5	62.5
Years in Current Profession		
7-10	1	12.5
10-15	2	25.0
15+	5	62.5
Has training in school psychology		
Yes	5	62.5
Has training in school counseling		
Yes	3	37.5
Grade levels currently serviced		
K-8	4	50.0
K-12	1	12.5
High School	1	12.5
University	2	25.0
Years supervising school psychologists		
7-10	2	25.0
10-15	1	12.5
15+	2	25.0
Years supervising school counselors		
7-10	2	25.0
10-15	1	12.5

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In open-ended question format, the focus group participants were asked to make recommendations and suggestions for the improvement and revision of the new system. Qualitative data from the focus group were coded, condensed, and categorized into themes. Themes were identified in the areas of refinement, time line, clarity, content, and

process. The results indicate most revisions and recommendations were given in three sections: Observations (n=9), Improvement Plan (n=9), and Rubric (n=16). A summary of the recommendations and suggestions are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

*Group C Summary of Recommendations & Suggestions*

Section	Comments	Revision Made
General Overview	Should begin with big picture: What is the purpose?	Purpose statement added
	Table of Contents should be added.	Table added
	Indicate what NICS is; define it.	Acronym defined
Observations	Describe and define formative and summative evaluation.	Glossary of terms added
	Time line unclear.	Bulleted procedures Added
	Observation by September 30 too soon.	Changed date to October 15
	When employee orientation occurs is unclear.	Time line added Changed to "formative"
	Mid-year conference should not be in October (too soon).	
	Description of formal observation is too vague.	Added, "shall be situation specific to major duty of"
	Conference is held in 5 days (is that calendar).	Added "school"
	List of possible activities to observe should be clear (what's formal).	List divided into Formal and Informal
Due process or hearing should not be included.	Both were eliminated	
Growth Plan	PGP? (what is that)	Defined
	The next few sections seem out of sequence (portfolio, survey, growth plan).	Sections reorganized
Portfolio	Unclear if portfolio is a requirement.	Clarified it is a requirement
	What about school psych logs and reports?	Both added
Improvement Plan	Unclear when improvement plan starts.	Added rating label and rating average score to clarify
	Is it based on arithmetic average?	Scoring formula

		added
	"Needs Improvement" rating should be consistent with rubric.	Changed to "Ineffective"
	On flow chart, clarify definition of deficiency.	Added "inadequate"
	Use consistent language, "Deficiency."	Changed to "Inadequacy"
	Plan should include line for start date and projected end date.	Added both lines
	Include two questions regarding deficiencies in performance.	Two questions added
	Note the process can start at any time.	Notation added
	Clarify what recommendation form is for.	Added "Non-renewal"
Time Line	Dates need to be included with Month.	Dates added
	Have a visual picture, like flow chart.	Graph added
Evaluator Training	Who are the evaluators?	Evaluators described
	Do not use evaluators "will learn."	Word changed to understand or introduced to
	Consequence for not passing exam is not clear.	Added "required to repeat training"
	The 5th session sounds similar to session 2.	Deleted two bullet points
Observation Forms	"Pre-Observation" should not be title.	Renamed to "Pre-Conference"
	Do not use "lesson;" what about psychologists?	Changed to "lesson/activity"
	Include signature lines at bottom to show an agreement.	Signature lines added
	Change title of "Post-Observation" form.	Renamed to "Post-Formal"
	Do not use "students;" what if observation was not with students?	Changed to participants
	Should not use "teach this lesson."	Changed to "perform"
Professional Growth Plan	Add dates to clarify due date and review date.	Dates added
	Change Student "Achievement."	Renamed to "Progress"

	A log for the psychologists should be added.	Added Direct Services Log
Rubric	Add rating labels (instead of just listing score). In 1b, "assessments" isn't an accurate description.	Rating labels added Added "/methods"
	Element 1c does not really fit, should be deleted.	Element eliminated
	Elements 3b and 3c sound similar & are redundant; combine.	Elements combined
	Element 4b, include word intervention.	Word added
	4c, delete the word "crisis;" don't always have a crisis	Word deleted
	5a and 5e are similar/redundant; combine.	Elements combined
	5b, "shows professionalism," too broad.	Element deleted
	5g is redundant; delete.	Element deleted
	6b is similar to 7b; delete one.	Element 7b deleted
	7f is so school specific, not everyone can do it.	Element deleted
	8a should not just say "counsels;" what about psychologists?	Changed to "direct services"
	8a should read the professional identifies needs.	Phrase added
	8e is redundant; delete.	Element deleted
	8g is redundant; delete.	Element deleted
	9a, change "high level" to a different word/phrase.	Phrase changed
Formative Evaluation	Add definitions of rating labels.	Definitions added
	Add "directions."	Directions added
Summative Evaluation	Each element should be listed separately.	Elements listed separately
	Add a place to sum scores.	Area added
	Show the math formula to be used.	Formula displayed
	Add section with a grand total.	Section added
	Not clear if it (rating) is based off an average score.	Clarification added
	Note the process for any unscored elements.	Notation added
Self-Assessment	Add a column to score each element.	Column added
	Add section showing overall rating scales.	Section added

Near the conclusion of the focus group, participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements regarding their perceptions of the new evaluation system.

The results are presented in Table 11, with the highest percentages in boldface.

Table 11

*Group C Percentage of Agreement with Statements Regarding the New Evaluation System*

Statements	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Average Rating	Response Count
1. Improves the quality of NICS performance.	<b>75.0</b>	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.75	8
2. Promotes student achievement.	12.5	<b>87.5</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.13	8
3. Defines the role NICS play within the school.	<b>87.5</b>	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.88	8
4. Helps to delineate clear job goals and expectations.	<b>100</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.00	8
5. Provides NICS with objective information about their performance.	<b>62.5</b>	37.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.63	8
6. Enhances discussion and understanding between NICS and evaluators about effective job performance.	<b>62.5</b>	37.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.63	8
7. Recognizes the contribution NICS make to the school as a whole.	<b>50.0</b>	25.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	4.25	8
8. Increases NICS and administrator commitment to professional standards.	<b>75.0</b>	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.75	8
9. I understand the meaning of each element and level of performance used in the new evaluation system.	12.5	<b>87.5</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.13	8
10. The performance evaluation tool is consistent in evaluating school psychs/ counselors?	0.0	<b>100</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.00	8
11. The standards in the new evaluation system are fair.	<b>50.0</b>	<b>50.0</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.50	8

12. The evaluation descriptors focus on the key behaviors that positively impact student learning.	<b>75.0</b>	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.75	8
13. The evaluation standards define good practice.	<b>75.0</b>	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.75	8
14. The evaluation incorporates indicators of student learning in the evaluation process.	25.0	<b>75.0</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.25	8
15. The new instrument provides specific feedback that can help guide individual professional development plans for NICS.	<b>75.0</b>	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.75	8
16. The evaluation instrument includes clear explanations for each performance descriptor.	<b>50.0</b>	<b>50.0</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.50	8
17. The instrument provides psychs/counselors with objective information about services provided.	<b>62.5</b>	37.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.63	8
18. The new performance evaluation tool measures what school psychs/counselors do?	37.5	<b>62.5</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.38	8

*System.* All of the participants agreed that the new evaluation system would provide NICS with objective information about their performance (100%), that it would enhance discussion and understanding about effective job performance (100%), and that it would increase NICS and administrator commitment to professional standards (100%). All but two of the eight participants agreed that it would recognize the contribution NICS make to the school as a whole.

*Impact of system.* The results show the group of experts perceived the impact of the new evaluation system as positive. All participants agreed the new system would improve the quality of NICS performance (100%), promote student achievement (100%),

define the role NICS play within the school (100%), and that help to delineate clear job goals and expectations (100%).

**Reliability.** In assessing their perception of the reliability, the results show all participants perceive the new evaluation system as reliable. All participants agreed they understood the meaning of each element and level of performance used in the new evaluation system (100%) and that the performance evaluation tool is consistent in evaluating school psychologists and school counselors (100%).

**Validity.** The results show that all participants perceive the new system as valid. All participants agreed the standards in the system are fair (100%), the evaluation descriptors focus on behaviors that impact student learning (100%), the evaluation standards define good practice (100%), the evaluation incorporates indicators of student learning (100%), and that the performance tool measures what school psychologists and school counselors do (100%).

In addition all participants agreed the new instrument provides specific feedback that can guide professional development (100%), the instrument includes clear explanations for each performance descriptor (100%), and that provides school psychologists and school counselors with objective information about services provided (100%).

The final question asked participants to rate their level of agreement with the accuracy of assessment in four areas. Figure 5 shows all of the participants agree the new evaluation system accurately assesses the job performance of school psychologists and school counselors (100%), and that it accurately assesses the ability to use data and assessment information (100%). Furthermore, the majority of the participants agree it

accurately assesses the impact of overall performance (75%), and that it accurately assesses an increase in student learning (75%).

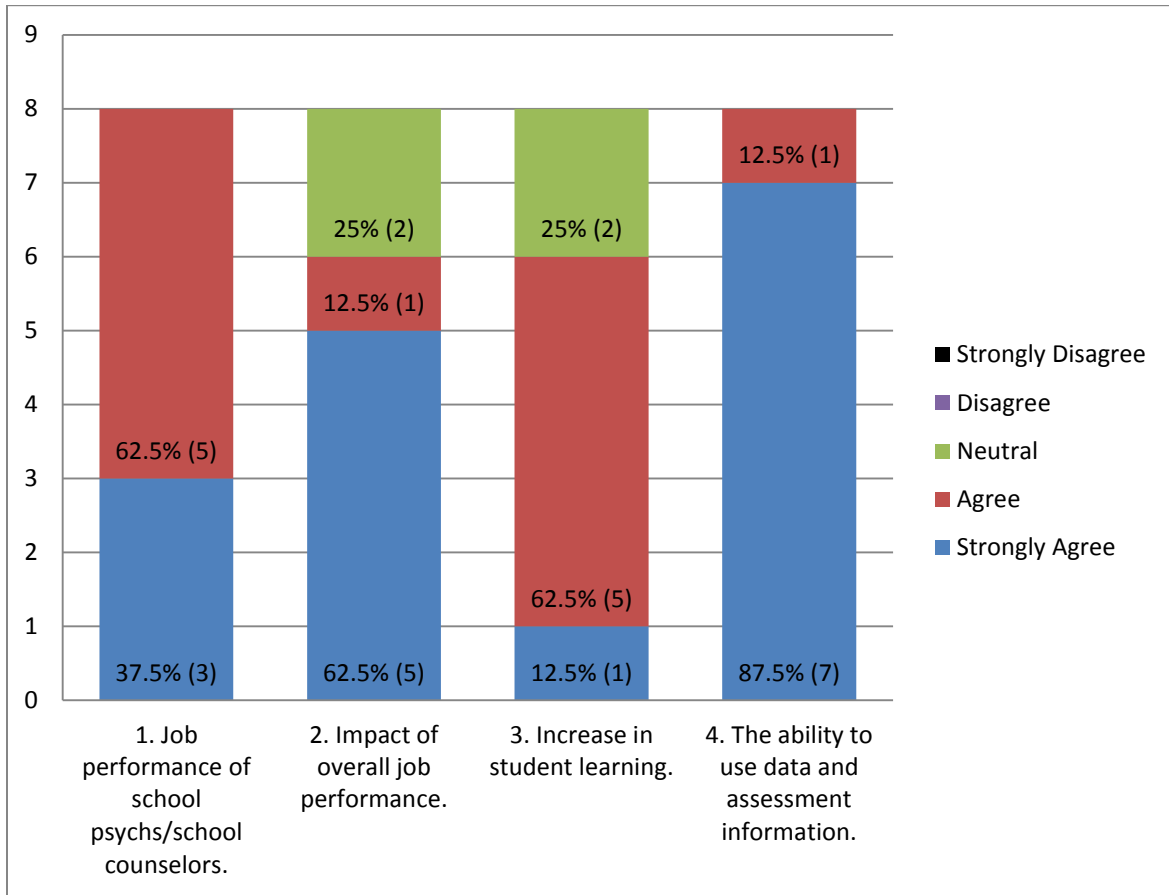


Figure 5. Group C level of agreement with accuracy of assessment

The final questions during the focus group consisted of open-ended questions regarding strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations. When asked to report the strengths of the proposed system, responses included: “it is more objective, more encompassing,” “it includes some direct observation,” “the delineation of expectations,” “follows specific descriptors in job description,” “creates a way to evaluate multiple competencies,” and “it is ground breaking work that represents the beginning of an evaluation process for NICS.”



The next question asked participants to suggest changes that should be made to the new system. Responses included: “changes can be made as the instrument is tested,” “fine tune rubric items,” “define terms,” and “add comment sections.” When asked to make suggestions regarding the ease of use, clarity, understanding, and organization of the system, participants stated: “reduce items when possible,” training of evaluators must include understanding of NICS job responsibilities,” “operationalize definitions,” and “some verbiage is too technical and will need to be adjusted.”

Participants were then asked to give feedback on the performance-based rubric. Responses included: “the length could be reduced,” the format is strong and easy to use,” “the language is very solid,” “sub-areas can be combined,” and “combine like elements to possibly shorten.” Finally, when asked to provide suggestions for increasing the likelihood of a successful implementation, participants stated: “reinforce the tone: this instrument is to help the evaluator improve in their job performance. It is not a punitive tool, but a growth tool;” “pilot parts of it, train and obtain buy-in;” “conduct professional development to staff on the evaluation tool;” and “make sure to include a clear overview at the beginning- maybe a term page.”

Overall, the focus group participants were very positive about the proposed system. Several comments were made regarding the rubric and the increase in accountability. The entire evaluation system was then revised using the assessment collected from the expert panel members.

**Instrument 4: NICS Post-Survey.** The new evaluation system was presented to the NICS; they were given a copy of the system in advance and were asked to examine it with care. They were then asked to complete a post-survey consisting of questions about

the new evaluation system. The survey gathered qualitative and quantitative data on NICS' perception and understanding of this new system.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements about the new evaluation system. The results are presented in Table 12, with the highest percentages in boldface.

Table 12

*Group B Percentage of Agreement with Statements Regarding the New Evaluation System*

Statements	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Average Rating	Response Count
1. All NICS should be evaluated twice a year to provide feedback on performance improvement.	21.4	<b>50.0</b>	28.6	0.0	0.0	3.93	14
2. The most important purpose of evaluation systems should be to provide feedback for improving job performance and services rendered.	28.6	<b>64.3</b>	7.1	0.0	0.0	4.21	14
3. In addition to observation data, other artifacts or a portfolio should be evaluated as part of the new evaluation system.	28.6	<b>50.0</b>	14.3	7.1	0.0	4	14
4. I would benefit from writing an individual professional development plan based on my evaluation data.	7.1	<b>50.0</b>	42.9	0.0	0.0	3.64	14
5. Formally scheduling observations provides the most accurate description of my performance.	14.3	28.6	<b>42.9</b>	14.3	0.0	3.43	14
6. New NICS should be evaluated more often than veteran NICS.	7.1	<b>35.7</b>	28.6	14.3	14.3	3.07	14
7. The evaluation system should include a formal and informal observation.	21.4	<b>71.4</b>	7.1	0.0	0.0	4.14	14

8. The evaluation process will address strengths and recommended areas of growth.	14.3	<b>71.4</b>	14.3	0.0	0.0	4	14
9. This new evaluation system will help me grow professionally.	7.1	<b>50.0</b>	42.9	0.0	0.0	3.64	14
10. This new evaluation process will accurately assesses my job performance.	0.0	42.9	<b>57.1</b>	0.0	0.0	3.43	14
11. The current evaluation system should be replaced with this new evaluation system.	21.4	<b>42.9</b>	35.7	0.0	0.0	3.86	14
12. The process used in the new evaluation system fosters a climate for professional growth and improvement.	14.3	<b>50.0</b>	35.7	0.0	0.0	3.79	14
13. The evaluation instruments will provide me with objective information about my performance.	7.1	<b>71.4</b>	21.4	0.0	0.0	3.86	14
14. The evaluation system enhances discussion and understanding between NICS and evaluators about effective job performance.	7.1	<b>64.3</b>	28.6	0.0	0.0	3.79	14
15. The new evaluation system increases NICS and administrator commitment to professional standards.	14.3	<b>64.3</b>	14.3	7.1	0.0	3.86	14
16. The system recognizes my contribution to the school as a whole.	21.4	<b>57.1</b>	14.3	7.1	0.0	3.93	14
17. The most important purpose of performance evaluation is to provide feedback for improving job performance.	7.1	<b>64.3</b>	28.6	0.0	0.0	3.79	14
18. The system will help to define the role I play within the school.	21.4	<b>42.9</b>	28.6	7.1	0.0	3.79	14
19. The system will help to delineate clear job goals and expectations.	21.4	<b>50.0</b>	28.6	0.0	0.0	3.93	14
20. The system will help promote student achievement.	14.3	<b>35.7</b>	<b>35.7</b>	14.3	0.0	3.5	14

21. The new system will provide me with focused follow-up and support based on my evaluation.	7.1	<b>50.0</b>	42.9	0.0	0.0	3.64	14
22. The new system will allow me to focus my professional development efforts on activities that directly help me achieve evaluation standards.	14.3	<b>78.6</b>	7.1	0.0	0.0	4.07	14
23. The new system will have an impact on my professional performance.	0.0	<b>71.4</b>	28.6	0.0	0.0	3.71	14
24. I am confident that my administrator will interpret and score evaluations consistently.	0.0	35.7	<b>64.3</b>	0.0	0.0	3.36	14
25. I am confident that administrators from other campuses will interpret and score evaluations similar to my site administrator.	0.0	14.3	<b>57.1</b>	28.6	0.0	2.86	14
26. I understand the meaning of each descriptor and level of performance used in the new evaluation instrument.	7.1	<b>64.3</b>	21.4	7.1	0.0	3.71	14
27. My evaluator will be adequately trained to consistently evaluate my performance.	0.0	35.7	<b>50.0</b>	14.3	0.0	3.21	14
28. The standards used in the new evaluation system are fair.	0.0	<b>78.6</b>	21.4	0.0	0.0	3.79	14
29. Working towards improving my performance on the new evaluation standards will also help me to improve the quality of my services.	7.1	<b>64.3</b>	28.6	0.0	0.0	3.79	14
30. The descriptors focus on key behaviors that positively impact student learning.	7.1	<b>64.3</b>	28.6	0.0	0.0	3.79	14
31. The evaluation standards define good practice.	14.3	<b>64.3</b>	21.4	0.0	0.0	3.93	14
32. The evaluation incorporates indicators of student learning in the evaluation process.	7.7	<b>61.5</b>	30.8	0.0	0.0	3.77	13

33. The evaluation instrument provides specific feedback that can help guide individual professional development plans.	14.3	<b>64.3</b>	21.4	0.0	0.0	3.93	14
34. The evaluation instrument includes clear expectations for each performance descriptor.	7.7	<b>61.5</b>	30.8	0.0	0.0	3.77	13
35. The new instrument provides NICS with objective information about services provided.	7.1	<b>78.6</b>	14.3	0.0	0.0	3.93	14

*System.* In regards to the new evaluation system, most of the respondents agreed that all NICS should be evaluated twice a year to provide feedback on performance (71.4%), that the current evaluation should be replaced with this new system (64.3%), and that other artifacts or a portfolio should be included as part of an evaluation (78.6%). A majority of the respondents also agreed the system should include a formal and informal observation (92.8%), the most important purpose of evaluation systems should be to provide feedback for improving performance and services (92.9%), and the new process will address strengths and areas for growth (85.7%).

Eight respondents agreed they would benefit from writing an individual professional development plan (six answered “neutral”), six agreed formally scheduling observations provides the most accurate description of performance (six were “neutral”), and six agreed new NICS should be evaluated more than veterans (four were “neutral”). There were two questions that were rated positively, but also had at least 42.9% of respondents rating “neutral:” the new evaluation system will help me grow (n=8) and the new process will accurately assess my performance (n=6).

**Impact of system.** Overall, the perception of the impact of the new system was positive. Most respondents agreed the system recognizes the contribution to the school (n=11); the instruments provide objective information (n=11); the system enhances discussion about performance between NICS and evaluators (n=10); the most important purpose for evaluation is to provide feedback (n=10); the system will help them to clarify goals and expectations (n=10); the system will impact their professional performance (n=10); and that the system increases their commitment to professional standards (n=11).

Also, nine respondents agreed the new process fosters a climate for professional growth and improvement, nine agreed the system will help them to define the role they play, and eight indicated the system will provide them with focused follow-up (six answered “neutral”). *The new system will allow me to focus my professional development efforts on activities that directly help me achieve evaluation standards* was the statement with the highest level of agreement (n=13).

**Reliability.** In assessing the reliability of the new system, the researcher cannot conclude it is perceived as reliable. Of the four questions, respondents indicated “neutral” answers 27 times. Five respondents agreed their administrator will interpret and score their evaluations consistently (nine answered “neutral”), two agreed administrators from other campuses interpret and score evaluations similar to their administrator (eight were “neutral”), and five agreed their evaluator will be adequately trained to consistently evaluate their performance (seven were “neutral”). The statement with the highest level of agreement was *I understand the meaning of each descriptor and level of performance used in the new evaluation instrument* (n=10).

**Validity.** In assessing the validity of the current evaluation system, the data shows most respondents perceive the new system as valid, and are confident about its contents. Almost all respondents agreed the standards used in the current system are fair (n=11), working towards improving their performance will help them to improve their services (n=10), the descriptors focus on key behaviors that impact student learning (n=10), the standards define good practice (n=11), and the instrument includes clear expectations for each descriptor (n=9). The statement with the highest level of agreement was *the new instrument provides NICS with objective information about services provided* (n=12).

The last question asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with the accuracy of assessment in four areas. Nine (or 64.3%) respondents agree the new evaluation system accurately assesses their job performance, 11 (or 78.6%) agree it assesses the impact of overall performance, six (or 42.8%) agree it assesses an increase in student learning, and nine (or 64.3%) agree it accurately assesses the ability to use data and assessment information.

The final questions on the post-survey consisted of open-ended questions regarding strengths, weaknesses and recommendations. When asked to describe some of the strengths of the new evaluation system, three respondents mentioned the system's adherence to national standards, four mentioned the system is more tailored toward their job descriptions and expectations, and two indicated that the system structures the evaluation for administrators. Only one respondent stated, "not really sure."

The next question asked respondents to suggest changes that should be made to the new evaluation system. Five respondents did not have any suggestions. Two

respondents suggested shortening the instrument, two respondents indicated exceptions should be made due to emergencies and high caseloads, one respondent suggested “lots and lots of admin[istrator] training,” and one respondent was concerned about the subjectivity of the evaluation.

Finally, when asked to list suggestions for increasing the likelihood of a successful implementation, some respondents mentioned ensuring sufficient, mandatory (and frequent) training for evaluators as well as counselors and psychologists (n=6). One respondent suggested utilizing an outside evaluator first, one respondent mentioned ensuring “buy-in” from counselors and psychologists, and one respondent questioned whether or not their evaluator would have the proper time to fully execute the evaluation. There were two respondents that did not have any suggestions.

**Instrument 5: Administrators Post-Survey.** The new evaluation system was formally presented to the group of administrators who were given copies of the proposed system in advance. They were asked to examine the revised evaluation system, and complete a post-survey consisting of questions about the new evaluation system. The survey gathered qualitative and quantitative data on their perception and understanding of this new system.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements about the new evaluation system. The results are presented in Table 13, with the highest percentages in boldface.

Table 13

*Group A Percentage of Agreement with Statements Regarding the New Evaluation System*



Statements	Strongly					Average Rating	Response Count
	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Disagree (1)		
1. All NICS should be evaluated at least twice a year to provide feedback on performance improvement.	27.3	<b>45.5</b>	18.2	9.1	0.0	3.91	11
2. NICS should be evaluated in ALL national standards.	<b>36.4</b>	27.3	27.3	9.1	0.0	3.91	11
3. I will focus professional development efforts on activities that directly help counselors/psychologists achieve the evaluation standards?	0.0	<b>63.6</b>	18.2	9.1	9.1	3.36	11
4. The most important purpose of evaluation systems should be to provide feedback for improving job performance and services rendered.	45.5	<b>54.5</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.45	11
5. In addition to observation data, other artifacts or a portfolio should be evaluated as part of the new evaluation system.	36.4	<b>45.5</b>	9.1	9.1	0.0	4.09	11
6. New NICS should be evaluated more often than veteran NICS.	18.2	18.2	<b>27.3</b>	<b>27.3</b>	9.1	3.09	11
7. Formally scheduling observations provides the most accurate description of job performance.	9.1	18.2	27.3	<b>36.4</b>	9.1	2.82	11
8. The evaluation system should include a direct and indirect observation.	18.2	<b>54.5</b>	18.2	9.1	0.0	3.82	11
9. The new process addresses strengths and recommended areas of growth for those being evaluated.	27.3	<b>63.6</b>	9.1	0.0	0.0	4.18	11
10. The new system helps counselors/psychologists grow professionally.	18.2	<b>72.7</b>	9.1	0.0	0.0	4.09	11
11. The current evaluation system should be replaced with the new evaluation system.	<b>45.5</b>	27.3	27.3	0.0	0.0	4.18	11
12. In evaluating NICS, the new system will adequately train me to observe, collect and analyze data, identify strengths and weaknesses, provide constructive feedback, and write valuable comments on the evaluation instrument.	27.3	<b>45.5</b>	18.2	9.1	0.0	3.91	11
13. Improves the quality of NICS performance.	10.0	<b>80.0</b>	0.0	10.0	0.0	3.90	10

14. Promotes student achievement.	10.0	<b>80.0</b>	0.0	10.0	0.0	3.90	10
15. Defines the role NICS play within the school.	10.0	<b>70.0</b>	20.0	0.0	0.0	3.90	10
16. Helps to delineate clear job goals and expectations.	20.0	<b>70.0</b>	0.0	10.0	0.0	4.00	10
17. Provides NICS with objective information about their performance.	0.0	<b>88.9</b>	11.1	0.0	0.0	3.89	9
18. Enhances discussion and understanding between NICS and evaluators about effective job performance.	10.0	<b>70.0</b>	10.0	10.0	0.0	3.80	10
19. Recognizes the contribution NICS make to the school as a whole.	10.0	<b>80.0</b>	10.0	0.0	0.0	4.00	10
20. Increases NICS and administrator commitment to professional standards.	20.0	<b>70.0</b>	10.0	0.0	0.0	4.10	10
21. Fosters a climate for improvement and professional development.	10.0	<b>80.0</b>	0.0	10.0	0.0	3.90	10
22. I understand the meaning of each element and level of performance used in the new evaluation system.	9.1	<b>54.5</b>	27.3	9.1	0.0	3.64	11
23. I will be adequately trained to consistently evaluate the performance of NICS.	9.1	<b>54.5</b>	27.3	9.1	0.0	3.64	11
24. I will feel comfortable conducting the performance evaluation system to evaluate school counselors/school psychologists.	9.1	<b>45.5</b>	36.4	9.1	0.0	3.55	11
25. The performance evaluation tool is consistent in evaluating school psychologists/school counselors.	9.1	<b>63.6</b>	18.2	9.1	0.0	3.73	11
26. I will ensure that evaluations of NICS are conducted following the new district guidelines.	18.2	<b>81.8</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.18	11
27. I believe that administrators from other campuses will interpret and score evaluations in the same manner as I do.	0.0	<b>45.5</b>	36.4	18.2	0.0	3.27	11
28. The standards in the new evaluation system are fair.	9.1	<b>63.6</b>	9.1	18.2	0.0	3.64	11
29. The evaluation descriptors focus on the key behaviors that positively impact student learning.	9.1	<b>81.8</b>	0.0	9.1	0.0	3.91	11

30. The evaluation standards define good practice.	9.1	<b>81.8</b>	9.1	0.0	0.0	4.00	11
31. The evaluation incorporates indicators of student learning in the evaluation process.	9.1	<b>72.7</b>	9.1	9.1	0.0	3.82	11
32. The new instrument provides specific feedback that can help guide individual professional development plans for NICS.	9.1	<b>81.8</b>	0.0	9.1	0.0	3.91	11
33. The evaluation instrument includes clear explanations for each performance descriptor.	9.1	<b>81.8</b>	9.1	0.0	0.0	4.00	11
34. The instrument provides counselors/psychologists with objective information about services provided.	0.0	<b>90.9</b>	9.1	0.0	0.0	3.91	11
35. The new performance evaluation tool measures what counselors/psychologists do.	9.1	<b>63.6</b>	18.2	9.1	0.0	3.73	11

**System.** In regards to the new evaluation system, most of the respondents agreed that all NICS should be evaluated twice a year to provide feedback on performance (72.8%), that the current evaluation should be replaced with this new system (72.8 %), and that other artifacts or a portfolio should be included as part of an evaluation (81.9 %). A majority of the respondents also agreed the system should include a formal and informal observation (72.7 %), the most important purpose of evaluation systems should be to provide feedback for improving performance and services (100%), and the new process will address strengths and areas for growth (90.9 %).

Seven respondents agreed NICS should be evaluated in all national standards (three answered “neutral”), seven agreed they will focus professional development efforts on activities that help NICS achieve standards (two were “neutral”), ten agreed the new system helps NICS grow professionally (one was “neutral”), and eight agreed the new

system will adequately train them to observe, collect, analyze data, and provide constructive feedback (two were “neutral”).

***Impact of system.*** Overall, the perception of the impact of the new system was positive. Of the nine questions regarding the impact of the system, at least eight respondents indicated they agreed with every statement. Most respondents agreed the new system recognizes the contribution NICS make to the school (n=9); would provide NICS with objective information about their performance (n=8); would enhance discussion about performance between NICS and evaluators (n=8); would help them to clarify goals and expectations (n=9); and would increase NICS and administrators commitment to professional standards (n=9).

Also, nine respondents agreed the new process would foster a climate for professional growth and improvement, eight agreed the system will help define the role NICS play, nine agreed the new system will promote student achievement, and nine agreed that it will improve the quality of NICS’ performance.

***Reliability.*** In assessing the reliability of the new system, the data shows most of the administrators perceive the new evaluation system as reliable. Of the six questions, at least five respondents agreed with every statement. The statement with the highest level of agreement was *I will ensure that evaluations of NICS are conducted following the new district guidelines* (n=11).

Seven respondents agreed they understand the meaning of each element and level of performance in the new system (three answered “neutral”); seven agreed they will be adequately trained to consistently evaluate the performance of NICS (three were “neutral”); six agreed they will feel comfortable conducting the evaluation (four were

“neutral”); eight agreed the evaluation tool is consistent in evaluating NICS (two were “neutral”); and five agreed that administrators from other campuses will interpret and score in the same manner as they do (four were “neutral”).

**Validity.** In assessing the validity of the current evaluation system, the data shows most respondents perceive the new system as valid, and are confident about its contents. Almost all respondents agreed the descriptors focus on key behaviors that positively impact student learning (n=10), the standards define good practice (n=10), the new instrument provides specific feedback that can help guide professional development (n= 10), the evaluation instrument includes clear explanations for each performance descriptor (n=10), and that the new instrument provides NICS with objective information about services provided (n=10).

Also, eight respondents agreed the standards used in the current system are fair (one answered “neutral”), nine agreed the evaluation incorporates indicators of student learning (one was “neutral”), and eight agreed the new performance evaluation tool measures what NICS do (two were “neutral”).

The last question asked respondents to rate whether the new evaluation process would accurately assess performance in four areas. Ten (or 90.9%) respondents agree the new evaluation system would accurately assess the job performance of NICS, nine (or 81.8%) agree it would assess their impact of overall job performance, seven (or 63.6%) agree the new process would assess an increase in student learning, and nine (or 81.8%) agree it would accurately assess the ability to use data and assessment information.

The final questions on the post-survey consisted of open-ended questions regarding strengths, weaknesses and recommendations. When asked to describe some of

the strengths of the new evaluation system, three respondents mentioned the rubric and the addition of multiple sources of data, four stated the new system is detailed and more comprehensive, two indicated it is tailored to the NICS' job description and responsibilities, and one mentioned the system's adherence to national standards.

The next question asked respondents to suggest changes that should be made to the new evaluation system. Three respondents stated they did not have any suggestions. Three respondents suggested the evaluation be shortened, one respondent suggested "more training," and two respondents were concerned about the contents of the portfolio and the documentation that would be submitted.

Finally, when asked to provide suggestions for increasing the likelihood of a successful implementation, some respondents mentioned professional development; professional development on the system itself and then with all stakeholders (n=4). Three respondents suggested training for administrators as well as counselors and psychologists, and two suggested ensuring inter-rater reliability. Two administrators stated they did not have any suggestions.

## **Summary**

This chapter presents the findings and results that emerged from the three-phase process that investigated a new evaluation system. The findings and results were then used to answer all of the research questions. How do administrators respond to the new evaluation system? The results indicate that, overall, the administrators held a positive opinion of the new system. Does the new system bring clarity to the NICS job responsibilities and levels of performance? They agreed that it does outline clear job expectations and responsibilities and define the roles NICS play in school. They also

report the new system outlines expectations of levels of performance. Do they suggest changes to the proposed system? Several administrators suggested changes to the proposed system. All suggested changes were considered and then implemented.

How do NICS respond to a tailored evaluation system? Overall they perceived the new system to be an improvement from the previous system. They especially appreciated the systems adherence to national standards. Does the new system bring clarity to their job responsibilities and levels of performance? Most agreed that the new system brought clarity to their job responsibilities and levels of performance.

Will administrators, NICS, and experts in the field perceive the new evaluation system positively in the areas of reliability and validity? The results showed that all experts who participated in the focus group perceived the new evaluation system as reliable and valid. Most NICS perceived the new evaluation system as valid, however were apprehensive about the evaluation systems reliability. The results also indicated that most administrators perceived the new evaluation system both as reliable and valid.

In conclusion, after assessing a current evaluation system, conducting research and creating a new evaluation system (based on what is considered state-of-the-art), data were collected and analyzed and used to revise the new system. Feedback was solicited from all three groups of participants, and multiple changes were made as a result of all suggestions that were given. More specifically, revisions were conducted in multiple series which resulted in an overall approval of the new evaluation system. The end result was a new system, perceived by all to be an improvement from the previous system, prepared and ready for implementation.

## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Introduction**

An extensive search of the literature on performance appraisals of school psychologists and school counselors revealed limited information regarding the evaluation criteria and procedures for these professionals. Much of the research revealed traditional evaluation systems for NICS are ineffective for improving services or guiding professional growth. Research evidenced a lack of attention to this group of professionals, as well as the use of inappropriate or inadequate evaluation procedures and forms when NICS are evaluated (Stronge & Tucker, 1995; Helm, 1995; Gorton & Ohlemacher, 1987). More importantly, the research also indicated school psychologists and school counselors are often not evaluated against their job descriptions, and are usually not evaluated by someone who is trained in their specific field (Stronge & Helm, 1990; Gorton & Ohlemacher, 1987).

The purpose of this study was to bring about change within an urban school district by improving the evaluation system for NICS. The plan was to accomplish this by assessing current practices and policies, developing a new evaluation system for implementation, and then refining it for full implementation.

The literature review revealed that performance evaluation systems that utilize multifaceted approaches – that is, multiple sources of data collection -- are considered best practice as they yield more accurate results compared to a single source of data (Harris, 1987; Stronge & Helm, 1991). The general categories of data sources include observations, questionnaires, rating scales, and self-assessments (see Tables 1 and 2). The



literature review also included an analysis of the current evaluation system utilized in the MSI district and an examination of evaluation systems that are considered state-of-the-art; i.e., that are currently being used to evaluate the performance of school psychologists and school counselors. The result was the unveiling of three systems that evaluate the performance of the school psychologist and the school counselor using a single system: the Professional Education Personnel Evaluation Program of Alabama ("Professional education personnel," 2002), the Educational Specialist Performance Evaluation Handbook of Bedford County, Virginia ("Educational specialist performance," 2007), and the Instructional Performance Evaluation and Growth System of Miami-Dade County, Florida ("Instructional performance evaluation," 2011).

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) embraces the critical importance of accurate and reliable evaluation for the purpose of enhancing professional practices and improving related student outcomes. As such NASP created a springboard for the development of an evaluation tools specific to the walls of school psychologists, also known as the NASP Practice Model. The model consists of 10 domains: 1. database decision-making and accountability, 2. Consultation and collaboration; 3. Interventions and instructional support to develop academic skills; 4. Interventions and mental health services to develop social and life skills; 5. School-wide practices to promote learning; 6. Preventative and responsive services; 7. Family-school collaboration services; 8. Diversity in development learning; 9. Research and program evaluation; 10. Legal, ethical, and professional practice. Additionally, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) created competencies, to help ensure school counselors are equipped to establish, maintain and enhance a comprehensive school counseling program

addressing academic achievement, career planning and personal and social development. These competencies are known as the ASCA national model, which is a framework for a data-driven school counseling program. The model consists of four quadrants: 1. Foundation; 2. Delivery; 3. Management; and 4. Accountability. The proposed evaluation system was then developed based on the NASP and ASCA models, as well as findings from the literature review, and is now connected to some of these national standards.

The components of the new system were developed utilizing the findings from the research on single-systems and on evaluation instruments. The process and procedures of the new evaluation system were developed from the three evaluation systems from Alabama, Virginia, and Florida. The end result was a new system, tailored to the NICS in the MSI school district. The proposed system is a little more comprehensive than the other system, in that it incorporates key components of all of them. For example, it now consists of 15 of the 16 criteria for evaluation of NICS listed in Table 3. In retrospect, Alabama's system has 15 of the 16 criteria; Virginia's has 15; and Florida's has 15. The existing evaluation system in the district did not measure up against any of the other systems, whereas the new system does. Table 14 shows a comparison between the current system and the new, proposed, evaluation system for NICS.

Table 14

*Comparison of Current System to Proposed System*

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School District	Summative	Formative	Orientation	Evaluator Training	Performance Standards	Self-Assessment	Goal Setting	Interview	Observation	Surveys	Portfolio	Professional Development Plan	Supervisor's Review Form	Evaluation Summary Report	Conference	Results/Recommendations
Current System	X													X	X	X
Proposed System	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

The mixed methods research was conducted in three phases. The first phase analyzed the existing system by describing the existing policy and system from district documents, and then surveyed two separate groups of participants to gather perceptions of the existing system and policy. The second phase involved developing a proposed evaluation system and policy that is grounded in research, and then revising that system based on feedback received from an expert panel. The third and final phase consisted of presenting the proposed system to the first two groups of participants, surveying them on their perception of the new system, and then revising the proposed system again, based on data collected.

### Discussion of Findings

**How do administrators respond to the new evaluation system?** In general administrators responded positively to the new evaluation system. Compared to the ratings they gave the current evaluation system, administrators hold a more positive opinion of this new system and the majority agreed the current system should be replaced

with the new system. Most of them viewed the new system as promising a more accurate appraisal of performance because it includes a formal and informal observation as well as a portfolio of artifacts. Gullickson (2009), Waldron and Prus (2006), and Stronge and Helm (1991) all found that a variety of data-gathering methods, including the use of multifaceted data-collection, ensure comprehensive and consistent indicators of performance.

The pre-survey results showed some administrators indicated the current system does not provide NICS with objective information about quality of services they provide, or clear expectations for performance. Many administrators believe that the current system does not align with job description or clearly define expectations; that it lacks standards, and that it is not standards-based. These concerns were addressed in the new system, including the addition of national standards, and administrators largely agreed that the new system would address these shortcomings.

The study found that administrators did not hold a positive opinion of the current evaluation system's accuracy in assessing NICS, thereby promoting a reason for change. Administrators indicated that the new system would more accurately assess performance of NICS. The findings of this research also suggest that the new system would enhance performance, improve support services, clarify goals and expectations, and provide appropriate and accurate feedback on performance.

The most frequent suggestion by respondents was to shorten the evaluation and to make it less complex and time-consuming. Some administrators expressed concern about the contents of the portfolio and the paperwork/forms that would actually be submitted. Some administrators appear concerned whether the new system could measure an

increase in student learning, and many agreed that training and professional development in the use of the new system was necessary and should be mandatory for both the administrators as well as NICS.

**How do NICS respond to a tailored evaluation system?** Overall, NICS responded positively to the new system. The study found that NICS perceive the new system to be an improvement from the current system. Many respondents reported they appreciated the new system's adherence to national standards, alignment to job descriptions, and clarity in performance expectations all an improvement from the current system. Nearly half of the respondents were neutral about statements regarding professional growth as a result of the evaluation. All of the respondents agreed that the current evaluation system should be replaced by the new system, a change from the pre-survey where seven respondents did not agree that the current system should be replaced.

Generally, most agreed that the new evaluation system would accurately assess their performance. Most agreed that the new system outlines uniform expectations and addresses specific job descriptions. Two respondents noted that the system structures the evaluation process for their evaluators. NICS also identified strengths of the new system that appear to contrast with the current evaluation system's process as described in the pre-survey. For example, the new system would ensure that every NICS would be evaluated annually, the system requires performance to actually be observed, the performance-based rubric provides NICS with specific feedback, the evaluation process is clearer, and job expectations are clearly defined. In the pre-survey, many NICS reported not being evaluated or being unclear on the evaluation process. The structured specificity of the new system addresses these issues. In addition, the current system does

not clearly delineate job goals and expectations or provide feedback, which NICS identified as qualities present in the new system.

**Will administrators, NICS, and experts in the field perceive the new evaluation system positively in the areas of reliability and validity?** The study found that all of the expert panel participants perceive the new evaluation system as having high reliability and validity. All participants agreed the standards in the system are fair, focus on behaviors that impact student learning, define good practice and measure what school psychologists and counselors actually do.

The finding suggests that some perceived the system as reliable, but almost all NICS perceived the system as valid. It is noteworthy to mention that reliability was measured as reliability in theory, as opposed to reliability in practice. Many agreed that the instrument utilizes evaluation standards that define good practice, and respondents were most confident about the content of the evaluation system. However, the respondents were least confident about the implementation of the evaluation system by administrators. Some respondents were concerned that administrators would not interpret evaluations consistently across campuses, and a few did not believe their evaluator would be adequately trained to evaluate them. In addition, some expressed concerns about training that would be received on the new evaluation system, and others were concerned with inter-rater reliability.

The study found most of the administrators perceive to the new evaluation system as reliable and valid. Almost all respondents agreed the standards define good practice, are fair, and incorporate indicators of student learning. Most respondents agreed they understood the meaning of each element and level of performance in the new system, and

all stated they would ensure to conduct evaluations of NICS following the new district guidelines. However, some administrators expressed concern about the standardization of evaluation across campuses, and some seem to be concerned about their own ability to evaluate NICS effectively.

**Participant Perceptions.** The results of this study could not determine whether or not participants believed the new system would have a positive impact on student achievement. In group A, four participants did not agree that the new system would impact student learning; in group B eight did not agree, or were neutral; and in group C two were neutral. Participants still see this as a problem; since the system has not been implemented, measure of impact on student achievement cannot yet be demonstrated, and therefore the pilot will have to address this issue. To assess the success of the new evaluation system for NICS, data will need to be collected on specific student outcomes.

### **Next Steps**

Future planning and next steps should be developed as a continuation of the action research process. Action research is a cyclical change process; a process by which changes in practices are refined through reflection action research is about improving practice through both action and research (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010). McNiff, Lomax, and Whitehead (1996) propose a basic action research plan: 1. Review current practice; 2. Identify a concern; 3. Think of a possible way forward; 4. Try it out; 5. Monitor the action by gathering data to show what is happening; 6. Evaluate progress; 7. Modify plan in light of the evaluation; 8. Evaluate the modified action; and 9. Continue until satisfied with that aspect of work.

The first three steps of this nine-step model have already been taken (see Figure 1), thereby completing one third of the action-reflection cycle. The next steps then would be Phases 4 through 6. Figure 6 is an illustration of the next three proposed steps.

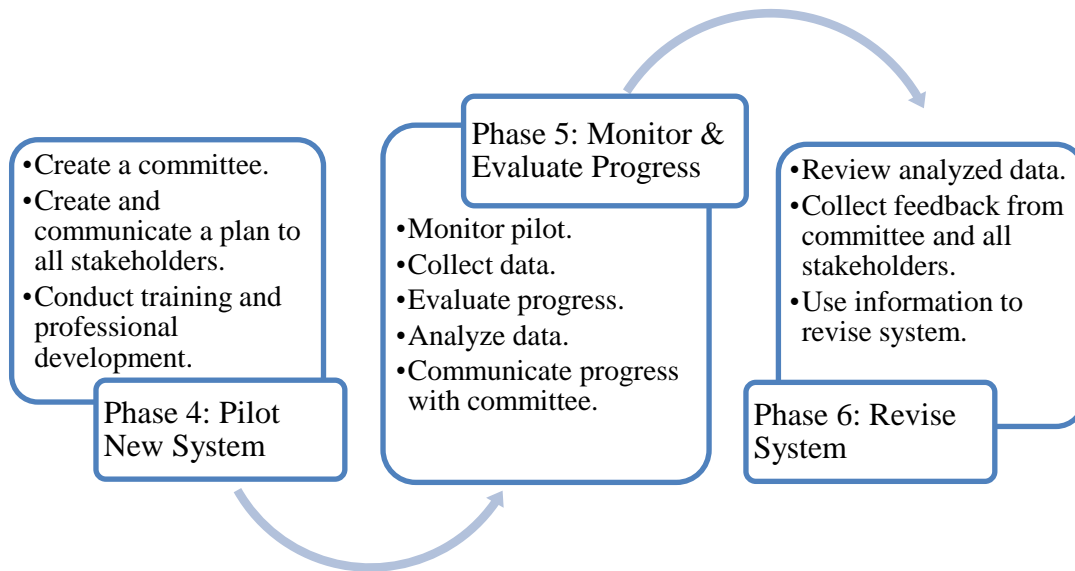


Figure 6. Illustration of next three phases

**Leading change.** Implementing change in any organization is difficult. In order for the implementation of this evaluation system to be successful, a key factor will be how the change is managed. Kotter (1996) defines change management as a set of processes and a set of tools and a set of mechanisms that are designed to make sure that when you do try to make some changes, A, it doesn't get out of control and, B, the number of problems associated with it don't happen. Kotter (1996) created a model of an eight-stage change process that he has concluded will lead to successful change. He suggests that for change to be successful there needs to be a 75% buy-in rate. He notes one has to work hard; create urgency (for change to happen there needs to be a shared sense of urgency around the need for change); form a coalition (to persuade



people that change is necessary it takes strong leadership); create a vision (create a clear coherent vision that people can grasp and remember); communicate that vision (effectively and consistently share and communicate your vision); remove obstacles (there will be resistance to change, identify it early and take steps to deal with it finding and resolving the root causes); create short-term wins (set achievable short-term targets); build on the change (build momentum and make continuous improvement an embedded part of culture); and anchor change into culture (change should become part of the culture, and leaders must continue to support change).

Due to the development process used in this study, there is already a buy-in rate which exists at MSI district; however, the percentage or degree of support is unknown. Throughout this study, the buy-in rate appeared to have increased. One telling factor was the participation rate: 100% of all staff members (administrators and NICS) participated in the study. In addition, there were some NICS (approximately four) who had requested to be evaluated with the new system for this school year.

Currently, there is a new teacher and administrator evaluation system being implemented in the district. It differs from the NICS evaluation, though. There are two contrasting approaches; the two models are different and the circumstances are different. The teacher and administrator system was externally developed, introduced, and immediately implemented by an outside agency. In contrast, the NICS new evaluation system was internally developed, feedback was solicited, suggestions were requested, and initial development was based on input. In addition, implementation will not be immediate and will not include outside agencies. Consequently, the response appears to have been much more positive. The inclusion of the staff in the process seems to be

significant factor. In the future, it would be interesting to see which model resulted in achieving their goals.

In anticipation of full implementation, the appointed committee should follow Kotter's (1996) change model in order to manage the change successfully. This should not only result in better results, as opposed to imposing the change on the organization from outside, but it should also result in more cooperation, participation, and involvement from all involved, thereby leading to the internalization of the principles, values, and behaviors that will lead towards more effective performance of professional responsibilities.

**Create a committee.** According to respondents, creating a steering committee would also benefit the implementation process and support the new evaluation system. The committee could be responsible for the implementation of the system, as well as be a support system for shortcomings and adjustments. The committee could further improve the evaluation system by making recommendations on future trainings and revisions. The committee could also support the implementation process for all other staff involved.

**Conduct training.** The study found that several participants, and all three groups, suggested a thorough training be provided to all evaluators and NICS; training on the school system's policies and procedures, training on the instruments, and training for evaluators to ensure accuracy and consistency. In addition, professional development was also recommended for the teaching staff in order for them to understand the role and responsibilities of NICS. Many participants stated that ensuring training for all is a necessary next step.

**Pilot the proposed system.** To improve the effectiveness and validity of the new system, piloting the system for at least one school year is necessary, in view of the respondents. While the findings from this study have resulted in a complete evaluation system now ready for implementation, one can expect additional adjustments will be needed. Therefore, initial implementation could take place during the 2013-2014 school year with the new system as an instrument for professional development, but not yet as evaluation. After the first year of implementation, more revisions and refinements could be made by the appointed committee, with full implementation during the 2014-2015 school year.

## **Recommendations**

**Recommendations for practice.** Before implementing the new evaluation system, several action plans must be developed which follow from applying the change model to the implementation of the new NICS evaluation system.

1. *Create a committee.* Form a committee to support the implementation process, as well as to persuade staff that change is necessary.
2. *Increase “buy-in.”* Create a plan to increase the buy-in rate.
3. *Create a vision that focuses on improving support services.* Create a clear vision that focuses on improving mental and behavioral health services through increase accountability and professional development.
4. *Create a communication plan.* Create a specific plan, that includes all stakeholders, to communicate vision and goals.

5. *Conduct evaluator training for administrators.* Provide several training opportunities for administrators that will support the development of knowledge and skills in evaluating NICS, as well as increase inter-rater reliability.
6. *Professional development.* Provide multiple professional development opportunities for all educators that will support NICS in professional growth within their field.
7. *Additional resources.* Provide resources and support for both the administrators as well as the NICS, including professional development support, such as mentors and coaches.

**Recommendations for future research.** The design of the study was limited to a single school district, with a small participant count even though all relevant personnel in the district participated. Eleven administrators and 14 NICS were included in the study, which could have affected validity and reliability conclusions if considered in a broader perspective. Future research should include replicating this study in other school districts, and obtaining more feedback from other evaluators (who may not necessarily be administrators) and other certificated school psychologists and school counselors. Some possibilities could include implementing the evaluation system in rural districts or in larger urban districts. School counselors and school psychologists may play different roles within different districts. Therefore, having a system that is comprehensive enough to fit across districts, across job descriptions, and across job expectations would be more valuable.

More data are needed on the evaluation of school psychologists and school counselors. As legislatures continue to call for accountability within the public school system, this certificated group needs to remain a focus. Their services need to be identified as critical and their performance appraised in a credible manner. However, in order to acquire an evaluation system that is deemed effective and reliable, more research is needed on which facets of the new system are sustainable and which need adjustment. Other longitudinal studies could include collecting data for a five to seven year time period to investigate whether or not this new evaluation system really does improve performance.

In order for the system to evolve further, it needs to be piloted repeatedly. Connecting back to action research, as a cyclical change process by which changes in practices are refined through cycles of action, the new system must be implemented and revised continuously until satisfied (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010). The purpose of the cycles is to revise the system as the implementation process is monitored and evaluated, thus allowing the system to evolve as practices are refined. Revisions are made to improve the system and to adopt it to changing circumstances within the organization.

Revisions to the new evaluation system are undoubtedly necessary, but only after a sufficient amount of implementation time. Future revisions should only be made after one year of implementation. There needs to be more time and practice with scoring in order to obtain accurate feedback. Furthermore, revisions should focus on condensing the length of the evaluation system as a whole and on strengthening inter-rater reliability amongst evaluators.

Another limitation of the study was the sample size of the expert group. Future research could include secondary and tertiary revisions by other experts in the field, including some from outside of Arizona. Furthermore, presenting the new system to national associations (i.e., of school psychology and school counseling), and obtaining feedback from these professional groups would also strengthen the validity and reliability of the system as well as increase the overall effectiveness.

The final recommendation for future research would be to explore the use of an all-digital system. The proposed evaluation system does contain a number of documents that must be utilized, including the forms the administrators complete, the rubric, and the forms the NICS complete. If the system were to be implemented in a larger urban district it would be more feasible if the system was completely digital. Not only would in all digital system reduce waste, but it would also improve the efficiency of the system. An all-digital system would entail NICS submitting digital portfolios, administrators utilizing electronic forms, and creating and maintaining a database for reporting and storing of evaluation documentation. However, in a small district, the task of developing such a system would outweigh the benefits.

### **Reflections**

This study has had a significant impact on me both professionally and personally. Most profound however was knowledge and experience I gained from attempting to change a component within the educational organization. The change model was not at the forefront of consideration in the beginning of this research. The complexity of this study, however certainly has allowed me to gain an appreciation of the challenges of

leading and promoting change. In addition, it is helped me to recognize the many stakeholders who I had not in the first place recognized.

I have come to realize that change affects culture and climate. I have actually observed firsthand that change can disrupt the entire organization. From my observations and experience I have learned a few key practices that will alter my professional practice. For example, I have learned communication is critical. Clear and frequent communication can make or break an initiative within an organization. I have learned that different people respond differently to change, so before implementing change it is best to be prepared to field the different responses that may be received. I have also learned that including others in the change process will yield better results. If others are included in the process and their feedback and opinions valued, then change will occur more smoothly and quickly, than with purely top-down initiatives.

In recognizing the many other stakeholders are involved, my attitude has changed in that I will now think about the bigger picture, looking at the broader perspective of things, before making decisions or implementing change. I now know that more planning and preparation, and even predicting, must come before any decisions are made. In other words, everyone must be taken into consideration at all times.

Lastly, my research has made me a better educational leader. Just having to create, develop, and orchestrate something so big, from the district level, has greatly improved my abilities. So many skills were involved in this study, such as communication, organization, collaboration, and even the ability to manage people. Along the way I have had to reflect upon my leadership style and monitor and adjust my

approach to presenting a new evaluation system. I believe this self-evaluation, in addition to the process of this action research, to be a professional growth experience.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the potential of performance-based appraisal instruments and policy as a new professional evaluation system to improve student support services. Within the five month study, participants showed a more favorable response toward the new system. Administrators and NICS were both concerned with training and scoring. However, both groups believed with more training and professional development, the new system would more accurately appraise professional performance.

This study argues that certificated non-teaching staff members are due the same level of interest and accountability as teachers and principals. The findings reveal problems with the current evaluation system used in the district studied, and led to the development of a performance-based evaluation system which is believed to provide this group with clear and focused duties and expectations as well as a means to improve services for students.

Appropriate utilization of school-based personnel has been related to student and school success, such as increased student achievement and increased graduation rates. The findings from this study indicate that school psychologists and school counselors are more often evaluated against inappropriate evaluation criteria, with improper instruments, and by supervisors who are not trained in their field, if they are even evaluated at all.

This study contributes to the scarce research on evaluation systems for school psychologists and school counselors. It is distinctive in that it combines the evaluation of both of these professionals within a single system. This approach would not only be more



practical, but also more efficient for evaluators (only having to learn and utilize one performance system).

Evaluation of school psychologists and school counselors are essential to their functioning successfully within the school system and evaluating the effectiveness of their services is a necessary correlate. Therefore, their performance ought to be appraised systematically and appropriately, especially when on occasion competition for funding seems to place their positions at risk.

Our students deserve the very best education we can possibly give them. We must prepare them for the 21<sup>st</sup> century; we must prepare them to be able to compete in the global economy. To accomplish this, the school district must provide educators with the tools they need in order to grow professionally and improve their professional practice. By providing them with a more comprehensive evaluation system, that includes tools to improve practice and professional growth, NICS can better serve the needs of our children and thus improve their educational careers.

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APPENDIX A  
CURRENT EVALUATION SYSTEM

**SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST EVALUATION**

**PAGE 1**

<p><b>MEETS EXPECTATIONS</b> – Fully accomplished all basic position requirements; adequately fulfilled all assignments and responsibilities. General level of performance meets district standards.</p> <p><b>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</b> – Did not fully accomplish all basic position requirements. Potential for improvement evident, given reasonable effort. Written improvement recommendations will be included.</p> <p><b>UNSATISFACTORY</b> – Exhibits unacceptable performance, potential for improvement must be evident and demonstrated. Written improvement requirements will be provided.</p> <p><b>NOT APPLICABLE</b> - Defines an area that does not apply to the person being assessed.</p>	<p><b>RATING SCALE</b></p>
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**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**OBJECTS TO BE EVALUATED:**

1.	Establishes good rapport and communicated effectively with parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Exhibits professional conduct in working with teachers and staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Participates and communicates effectively with teachers and staff during CST or informally.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Administers tests and determines eligibility for exceptional children within limits of applicable federal, state, and district guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Maintains and submits case records and required reports accurately and punctually.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Makes appropriate recommendations to parents and/or teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Participates as a team member making placement decisions in special education classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Assists and/or organizes in-service training for school personnel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Interacts as a team member with school principal in the principal's administration of special education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Maintains and submits appropriate materials prior to staffing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST EVALUATION**

**PAGE 2**

<p><b>MEETS EXPECTATIONS</b> – Fully accomplished all basic position requirements; adequately fulfilled all assignments and responsibilities. General level of performance meets district standards.</p> <p><b>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</b> – Did not fully accomplish all basic position requirements. Potential for improvement evident, given reasonable effort. Written improvement recommendations will be included.</p> <p><b>UNSATISFACTORY</b> – Exhibits unacceptable performance, potential for improvement must be evident and demonstrated. Written improvement requirements will be provided.</p> <p><b>NOT APPLICABLE</b> – Defines an area that does not apply to the person being assessed.</p>	<p><b>RATING SCALE</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>A</td> <td>U</td> <td>I</td> <td>M</td> </tr> </table>	N	A	U	I	M
N	A	U	I	M		

1.0 ESTABLISHES GOOD RAPPORT AND COMMUNICATES EFFECTIVELY WITH PARENTS:

1.1	Provides opportunities for comments from parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Listens to parents and considers their input.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3	Is available to parents and establishes appropriate rapport.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4	Involves parents in problem solving.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5	Meets with parents and communicates with them as necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6	Effectively gathers information from parents and uses it appropriately.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.7	Effectively communicates parent's rights and responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.8	Assists parents with referrals to outside agencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.0 EXHIBITS PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN WORKING WITH TEACHERS AND STAFF:

2.1	Provides opportunities for comments from teachers and staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	Meets with teachers and staff and communicates with them as necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Effectively gathers information from teachers and staff and uses it appropriately.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST EVALUATION**

**PAGE 3**

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N	A	U	I	M		

3.0 PARTICIPATES AND COMMUNICATES EFFECTIVELY WITH TEACHERS AND STAFF DURING CST OR INFORMALLY:

3.1	Provides opportunities for comments from team members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2	Listens to, and considers divergent opinions when making decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Involves all personnel (teachers and related services personnel) necessary for problem solving.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4	Communicates well with staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.5	Effectively gathers information from staff and uses it appropriately.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.0 ADMINISTERS TESTS AND DETERMINES ELIGIBILITY FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN WITHIN LIMITS OF APPLICABLE FEDERAL, STATE, AND DISTRICT GUIDELINES:

4.1	Administers appropriate evaluation assessments and demonstrates ability to interpret results as evidenced by the psycho-educational reports and appropriate diagnosis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	Psycho-educational reports contain the necessary evaluation components for the suspected handicapping condition as required by state standards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3	Psycho-educational addendums are appropriate to placement of transfer students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4	Communicates results of evaluations in language which all can understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.0 Maintains and submits case records and required reports accurately and punctually:

5.1	Meet's district guidelines for record maintenance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Maintains a log of all referred students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	Meets all required timelines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST EVALUATION**

**PAGE 4**

<p><b>MEETS EXPECTATIONS</b> – Fully accomplished all basic position requirements; adequately fulfilled all assignments and responsibilities. General level of performance meets district standards.</p> <p><b>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</b> – Did not fully accomplish all basic position requirements. Potential for improvement evident, given reasonable effort. Written improvement recommendations will be included.</p> <p><b>UNSATISFACTORY</b> – Exhibits unacceptable performance, potential for improvement must be evident and demonstrated. Written improvement requirements will be provided.</p> <p><b>NOT APPLICABLE</b> - Defines an area that does not apply to the person being assessed.</p>	<p align="center"><b>RATING SCALE</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>U</td> <td>N</td> <td>M</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A</td> <td></td> <td>I</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	N	U	N	M	A		I	
N		U	N	M					
A		I							

6.0 MAKES APPROPRIATE RECOMMENDATIONS TO PARENTS AND/OR TEACHERS:

6.1	Recommends interventions to parents, students, and teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2	Recommends corrective procedures to parents, students, and teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7.0 PARTICIPATES AS A TEAM MEMBER MAKING PLACEMENT DECISIONS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSES:

7.1	Has knowledge pertaining to all special education classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2	Has knowledge of appropriate placement procedures in special education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3	Coordinates placements when more than one school is involved in the placement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.4	Coordinates personnel when related services are involved in the placement of a student.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8.0 ASSISTS AND/OR ORGANIZES IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL:

8.1	In-services teachers with respect to psychological services available.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.2	In-services school personnel formally and informally pertaining to changes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.3	In-services school personnel formally and informally pertaining to current trends and research in the field of special education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.4	Organizes in-services and presents them in an effective manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST EVALUATION**

**PAGE 5**

<p><b>MEETS EXPECTATIONS</b> – Fully accomplished all basic position requirements; adequately fulfilled all assignments and responsibilities. General level of performance meets district standards.</p> <p><b>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</b> – Did not fully accomplish all basic position requirements. Potential for improvement evident, given reasonable effort. Written Improvement recommendations will be included.</p> <p><b>UNSATISFACTORY</b> – Exhibits unacceptable performance, potential for improvement must be evident and demonstrated. Written Improvement requirements will be provided.</p> <p><b>NOT APPLICABLE</b> - Defines an area that does not apply to the person being assessed.</p>	<p align="center"><b>RATING SCALE</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>A</td> <td>U</td> <td>I</td> <td>M</td> </tr> </table>	N	A	U	I	M
N		A	U	I	M	

9.0 INTERACTS AS A TEAM MEMBER WITH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL IN THE PRINCIPAL'S ADMINISTRATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION:

9.1	Serves as a resource person to the school principal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.2	Assists school principal in developing special education programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.3	Keeps principal informed at all times.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.4	Reports to, and works at, all schools as scheduled.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.5	Informs personnel at assigned school of any variance in the work schedule.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10.0 MAINTAINS AND SUBMITS APPROPRIATE MATERIALS PRIOR TO STAFFING:

10.1	Gives prior notice to all staffing participants, including all related services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.2	Completes all paperwork prior to scheduling.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.3	Types evaluations and makes them accessible at all MDC's.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**OVERALL PERFORMANCE**

NARRATIVE EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS: (OPTIONAL)

MEETS:

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT:

UNSATISFACTORY:

Evaluator's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Psychologist's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby verify that this evaluation has been discussed with me. I understand that my signature does not necessarily indicate agreement and that I may respond to any and all issues contained in this document.

**COUNSELOR/SOCIAL WORKER  
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

NAME:  DATE:

SCHOOL(S):

APPRAISAL PERIOD FROM:  TO:

YEARS IN PRESENT POSITION

**OBJECTIVES TO BE EVALUATED**

	<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>U</b>
<b><u>PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS</u></b>			
1.1 Develops group or individual goals and objectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Follows the referral process when dealing with behavioral and academic concerns of administration and staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 Develops a plan of action aligned with School Improvement Plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4 Makes recommendations to solve problems and carries out intervention plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5 Assists students to adjust to transition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6 Provides counseling as defined by students needs or I.E.P.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.7 Knowledge of school policies and procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.8 Demonstrates knowledge of school and District's policies and procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.9 Develops and/or provides intervention plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>COLLABORATION</u></b>			
2.1 Attends meetings as needed (i.e., IEP, CST, TAT, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2 Interacts with team to develop ideas, answers questions, creates goals and a plan of action.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3 Collects resources necessary for conducting classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4 Works with administration, staff, outside resources and families to assist students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5 Works cooperatively with staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.6 Makes referrals to the appropriate outside agencies as needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**OBJECTIVES TO BE EVALUATED (continued)**

**M N U**

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT / EVALUATION**

- |     |  |                          |                          |                          |
|-----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3.1 | Conducts needs surveys.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.2 | Reviews data and basis program implementation on results.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.3 | Meets and evaluates students to assess the need for group or individual counseling in a timely manner. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.4 | Maintains confidentiality  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**COMMUNICATION**

- |     |   |                          |                          |                          |
|-----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4.1 | Communicates effectively with administration, parents and team members. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.2 | Provides information as required by administration.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.3 | Communicates effectively with school personnel and parents.             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.4 | Participates as positive liaison between home, school, and community.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.5 | Maintains and submits a log.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.6 | Develops and provides a schedule to administration.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.7 | Keeps administration informed at all times.                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**PROFESSIONALISM**

- |     |   |                          |                          |                          |
|-----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5.1 | Follows legal and ethical requirements as specified by district policy and state statutes.            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.2 | Is knowledgeable of community resources and maintains a working relationship with community agencies. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.3 | Maintains confidential records of counseling sessions.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.4 | Effective classroom instruction.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**OVERALL PERFORMANCE NARRATIVE EVALUATION**

**Commendations**

Recommendations

RATING SCALE

N = NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

M = MEETS REQUIREMENTS      U = UNSATISFACTORY

**MEETS REQUIREMENTS** – Fully accomplished all basic position requirements; adequately fulfilled all assignments and responsibilities – general level of performance meets district standards.

**NEEDS IMPROVEMENT<sup>\*</sup>** – Did not fully accomplish all basic position requirements. Potential for improvement is evident, given reasonable effort. Written improvement recommendations will be included.

**UNSATISFACTORY<sup>\*</sup>** – Exhibits unacceptable performance, potential for improvement must be evident and demonstrated. Written improvement requirements will be provided.

Check if plan for improvement is indicated.

<sup>\*</sup> An improvement plan with specific criteria is to be implemented and consistent with teacher policy.

I hereby verify that this evaluation has been discussed with me. I understand that my signature does not necessarily indicate agreement and that I may respond to any and all issues contained in this documentation within thirty (30) working days.

Evaluator's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor/Social Worker's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Rev 5/04



APPENDIX B

PROPOSED PERFORMANCE-BASED RUBRIC

**Performance Standard 1: Planning and Management**

The NICS plans, organizes, and manages the delivery of a comprehensive school program.

		<b>4 HIGHLY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>3 EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>2 DEVELOPING</b>	<b>1 INEFFECTIVE</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Element</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>					
1a. Plans, organizes, implements, and manages programs and services in an expert manner and provides leadership to others in meeting the diverse needs of all learners.	Consistently plans, organizes, implements, and manages programs and services in an expert manner and provides leadership to others in meeting the diverse needs of all learners.	Plans, organizes, implements, and manages programs and services to meet the diverse needs of all learners.	Plans, organizes, implements, and manages programs and services to meet the diverse needs of all learners.	Attempts in planning, organizing, implementing, managing programs and services to meet the diverse needs of all learners, but efforts are generally ineffective.	Rarely plans, organizes, implements, or manages programs and services to meet the needs of all learners.  Plan consists of a random collection of unrelated activities, lacking or an overall structure.	
1b. Demonstrates knowledge and skill in design and use of assessments or different methods to evaluate students.	Plans and uses a variety of appropriate assessments/methods to evaluate students, and the results are shared with staff (when appropriate).	Assessments/methods are clearly used to appropriately evaluate students.	Assessments/methods are used to evaluate students.	Assessments/methods are partially used to evaluate students.	Demonstrates little or no knowledge and skill in use of using assessments/different methods to evaluate students.  Assessments/methods are inappropriate.	

**Performance Standard 2: Communicate**

The NICS communicates effectively with students, families, staff, and other members of the learning community.

		4 HIGHLY EFFECTIVE	3 EFFECTIVE	2 DEVELOPING	1 INEFFECTIVE	0
<b>Element</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>					
2a. Communicates effectively, orally and in writing, with students and families and advocates for learners.	<p>Demonstrates initiative in enhancing effective communication to students, families, and the community that results in improved collaboration.</p> <p>Secures necessary permissions and communicates with families in a manner highly sensitive to cultural and linguistic traditions. Reaches out to families to enhance trust.</p> <p>Uses a variety of communication to inform, network, and respond to students, and other stakeholders in a highly effective manner.</p> <p>Consistently advocates for learners.</p>	<p>Communicates effectively with students and families.</p> <p>Communicates with families and secures necessary permission for evaluations and does so in a manner sensitive to cultural and linguistic traditions.</p>	<p>Attempts, but is generally ineffective in communicating with students and families.</p> <p>Communication with families is partially successful; permissions are obtained, but there are occasional insensitivities to cultural and linguistic traditions.</p>	<p>Rarely communicates effectively, or communicates inappropriately with students and families.</p> <p>Fails to communicate with families and secure necessary permission for evaluations, or communicates in an insensitive manner.</p>	<p>Consistently fails to communicate effectively with staff, stakeholders, or other members of the learning community.</p> <p>Rarely, if at all, advocate for learners.</p>	
2b. Communicates effectively with staff, stakeholders, other members of the learning community		<p>Communicates effectively with staff, stakeholders, and other members of the learning community, and advocates for learners.</p>	<p>Communicates effectively with staff, stakeholders, and other members of the learning community, and advocates for learners.</p>	<p>Often communicates ineffectively with staff, stakeholders or other members of the learning community.</p>		

**Performance Standard 3: Data and Technology**

The NCS gathers and uses data for informed decision making. Data will be used to measure student progress or progress of program. The NCS will demonstrate the ability to appropriately collect and interpret multiple sources of data, and will share the data with others as appropriate to enhance services provided to students. The NCS will also be able to utilize information sources and technology to gain knowledge for planning and evaluating services.

		4	3	2	1	0
		HIGHLY EFFECTIVE	EFFECTIVE	DEVELOPING	INEFFECTIVE	
<b>Element</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>					
3a. Gathers, analyzes and uses data to measure student or program progress, guide instruction, and provides timely feedback to students, families, and staff.	Consistently demonstrates a high level of performance and takes a leadership role in gathering, interpreting, and applying assessment data to guide instructional and program planning and provides timely feedback to students, families and staff.	Gathers, analyzes and uses data to measure student or program progress, guide instruction, and provides timely feedback to students, families and staff.	Attempts to use data to measure student progress, to guide instruction and plan programs for students, families, and staff, but is generally ineffective. Feedback to students, families, and staff is inconsistent and/or irrelevant.	Rarely uses data to measure student progress, implement program planning, guide instruction, and does not provide timely and relevant feedback to students, families and staff.		
3b. Applies appropriate methods to collect data and other information that assists in making decisions, planning services, and evaluating the outcomes of services.	Appropriately administers, scores, and interprets multiple instruments to obtain accurate data. Integrates data from multiple assessment instruments to make decisions about planning services and to evaluate the outcomes of services.	Appropriately uses and scores assessments to obtain data for use in decision making and planning services. Collects data using multiple methods of assessment to make decisions about planning services and determining their effectiveness.	Administers and scores assessments correctly. Collects data that assists in decision making and planning services.	Applies inappropriate methods of data collection. Administers or scores assessments incorrectly. Rarely collects data for decision making and planning services.		
3c. Applies knowledge of information sources and technology.	Applies knowledge of information sources and technology relevant to their program. Uses multiple modes of technology in multiple aspects of the job, such as technology used for assessment, scoring, data presentation, report writing, monitoring and tracking (student progress).	Applies knowledge of relevant information sources and technology. Uses multiple modes of technology throughout their program and services.	Applies basic knowledge of relevant information sources and technology. Uses technology in one or more of the aspects of the job.	Applies or shows limited application of knowledge of information sources and technology relevant to their program.		
3d. Uses student achievement data for planning and delivery of services.	Uses multiple sources of data to plan and inform the delivery of services, to monitor trends and progress of programs to close the achievement gap. Presents results to stakeholders.	Uses student achievement data to plan and inform the delivery of services, to identify trends, and to create programs to close the achievement gap.	Infrequently uses student achievement data. Uses student achievement data to plan and implement services.	Infrequently or inaccurately uses student achievement data. Plan and implementation of services is inappropriate, program is inadequate.		

**Performance Standard 4: Delivery of Services**

The NICS makes adjustments to the program when needed to ensure the effectiveness of the program. The NICS persists in seeking approaches to assist students who exhibit difficulties, and is able to develop and implement prevention strategies as well as evaluate student progress.

	4 HIGHLY EFFECTIVE	3 EFFECTIVE	2 DEVELOPING	1 INEFFECTIVE	0
<b>Element</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>				
4. Demonstrates responsiveness and flexibility	<p>Is continually seeking ways to improve program/behaviors and successfully makes adjustments as needed.</p> <p>Enhances the program through collaboration with others, and solicits additional resources.</p>	<p>When necessary, makes revisions in the program.</p> <p>Successfully adjusts program to improve services for students and stakeholders, and accepts responsibility for the program.</p>	<p>Attempts to adjust program when confronted with evidence of the need for change, but is partially successful or does not follow through to completion.</p>	<p>Adheres to the plan or program, in spite of evidence of its inadequacy.</p>	
4. Identifies behaviors that are related to academic, behavioral, and emotional difficulties and develops prevention/intervention strategies to implement and evaluate student success.	<p>Identifies variables related to academic, behavioral, and emotional difficulties.</p> <p>Effectively develops multiple approaches to prevention or intervention strategies used to implement and evaluate student progress.</p>	<p>Identifies behaviors that are related to academic, behavioral, and emotional difficulties.</p> <p>Develops prevention or intervention strategies used to implement and evaluate student progress.</p>	<p>Identifies some behaviors that are related to academic, behavioral, and emotional difficulties.</p> <p>Develops limited prevention or intervention strategies used to implement and evaluate student progress.</p>	<p>Has difficulty with identifying behaviors that are related to academic, behavioral, and emotional difficulties.</p> <p>Develops inappropriate prevention or intervention strategies to implement or evaluate student progress.</p>	
4. Uses prevention, counseling, and intervention skills to assist students and stakeholders.	<p>Appropriately assesses and uses a variety of skills to assist students and stakeholders.</p> <p>Is prepared for a crisis situation and can demonstrate and explain a crisis plan.</p>	<p>Assesses and uses a variety of appropriate prevention, counseling, and intervention skills to assist students and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Uses a limited or inappropriate variation of prevention, counseling, and intervention skills to assist students and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Struggles with providing prevention, counseling, and/or uses inappropriate intervention skills to assist students and stakeholders.</p>	

Performance Standard 5: Profession al Practice				
The NICS demonstrates behavior consistent with legal, ethical, and professional standards and engages in continuous professional growth.				
	4	3	2	1
	HIGHLY EFFECTIVE	EFFECTIVE	DEVELOPING	INEFFECTIVE
<b>Element</b>				
<b>5a. Maintains a professional demeanor, demonstrates an understanding of the program, participates in professional community and contributes to the profession.</b>	<p>A professional role model for others, engaging in a high level of personal professional growth and contributes to the development of others and to the profession.</p> <p>Makes a substantial contribution to school and district events and projects and assumes leadership with colleagues.</p>	<p>Maintains a professional demeanor, demonstrates an understanding of the program, and contributes to the profession.</p> <p>Participates actively in school and district events and projects and maintains positive and productive relationships with colleagues.</p>	<p>Inconsistently applies strategies and information from the program, and demonstrates professional judgment.</p> <p>Participates in school and district events and projects when specifically requested. Relationships with colleagues are cordial.</p>	<p>Demonstrates a reluctance to support others in the work of the school, and does not have an understanding of the program.</p> <p>Avoids being involved in school and district events and projects. Relationships with colleagues are negative or self-serving.</p>
<b>5b. Shows professionalism</b>	<p>Holds the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and confidentiality and to advocate for students, taking a leadership role with colleagues.</p>	<p>Displays high standards of honesty, integrity, and confidentiality in interactions with students and stakeholders when needed.</p>	<p>Is honest in interactions with students and stakeholders, and plays a moderate advocacy role for students, and does not violate confidentiality.</p>	<p>Displays dishonesty in interactions with students and stakeholders and violates principles of confidentiality.</p>
<b>5c. Demonstrates behavior consistent with legal, ethical, and professional standards.</b>	<p>Consistently adheres to the profession's legal, ethical, and professional standards.</p> <p>Follows standards in regard to confidentiality.</p>	<p>Demonstrates behavior consistent with the profession's legal, ethical, and professional standards.</p>	<p>Is inconsistent in following the profession's legal, ethical, and professional standards.</p>	<p>Fails to adhere to legal, ethical, or professional standards.</p>
<b>5d. Maintains accurate records</b>	<p>Records are accurate and legible, well organized, and stored in a secure location. They are written to be understandable to another qualified professional.</p>	<p>Records are accurate and legible, well organized, and stored in a secure location.</p>	<p>Records are inconsistently accurate and legible and may be stored in a secure location.</p>	<p>Records are in unorganized, they may be missing, illegible, or stored in an unsecured location.</p>
<b>5e. Possesses professional and responsible work habits.</b>	<p>Carries out responsibilities promptly and accurately in line with the established job description.</p>	<p>Regularly displays professional and responsible work habits in carrying out program responsibilities.</p>	<p>Is inconsistent in displaying professional and responsible work habits in carrying out program responsibilities.</p>	<p>Seldom displays professional and responsible work habits in carrying out program responsibilities.</p>

Performance Standard 5: Professional Practice (continued)						
The NICS demonstrates behavior consistent with legal, ethical, and professional standards and engages in continuous professional growth.						
		4	3	2	1	0
		HIGHLY EFFECTIVE		EFFECTIVE	DEVELOPING	INEFFECTIVE
Element	Descriptors	4	3	2	1	0
5c. Demonstrates positive interpersonal relations with students and stakeholders.	Has excellent interpersonal skills and uses them very effectively with students and stakeholders. Works to provide a climate of trust that facilitates communication and cooperation.	Demonstrates appropriate interpersonal relationships with students and stakeholders that opens the lines of communication. Always uses professionally appropriate interpersonal skills when interacting with others.	Demonstrates appropriate interpersonal relationships with students. Sometimes uses inappropriate interpersonal skills when interacting with others.	Has an inconsistent pattern of interpersonal relations with students. Sometimes uses inappropriate interpersonal skills when interacting with others.	Develops ineffective interpersonal relations with students or stakeholders. Uses inappropriate interpersonal skills when interacting with others, and does not work to provide a climate of trust.	
5d. Identifies and addresses the needs of the target learning community by demonstrating respect for individual differences, and understanding of cultures, backgrounds, and learning styles.	Consistently addresses the needs of the target learning community in a highly effective manner. Does not impose values on others, and demonstrates impartiality with regard to differences in cultures and backgrounds and promotes diversity.	Identifies and addresses the needs of the target learning community by demonstrating respect for individual differences, backgrounds, and learning styles.	Attempts to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the needs of the target learning community. Inconsistently demonstrates respect for individual differences, backgrounds and learning styles.	Consistently demonstrates a lack of awareness of the need of the target learning community or fails consistently to make appropriate accommodations to meet those needs. Demonstrates disrespect for individual differences, backgrounds and learning styles.		
5e. Demonstrates a commitment to ongoing professional growth.	Seeks out professional development and contributes to the development of others through such activities as offering workshops to colleagues. Professional development is aligned to district and building goals.	Seeks out opportunities for professional development based on an individual assessment of need. Consistently participates in professional growth activities.	Participation in professional development activities is limited to those that are convenient or are required.	Rarely participates in professional development activities, even when such activities are clearly needed for the ongoing development of skills.		

**Performance Standard 6: Consultation & Collaboration**

The NICS effectively collaborates with others and utilizes appropriate consultation models and methods to address issues and solve problems. The NICS encourages staff involvement in program and services and provides staff with appropriate materials, resources and training.

		4	3	2	1	0
		HIGHLY EFFECTIVE	EFFECTIVE	DEVELOPING	INEFFECTIVE	
<b>Descriptors</b>						
6a. Applies consultation and/or collaborative models and methods that can be utilized to address issues such as behavioral, mental health, crisis, or other situations.	Uses models of collaboration and consultation to address issues and situations. Effectively consults and collaborates with teachers, parents, and staff to solve problems.	Uses models of collaboration to consult with teachers, parents, and staff on critical issues.	Uses consultation models that show skill at the initial level in collaborating with teachers, parents, and/or staff but needs additional practice and mentoring to improve skills.	Rarely collaborates or uses ineffective consultation models with teachers, parents, or staff. Is unable to create trusting and effective collaborations with teachers, staff, or parents.		
6b. Collaborates effectively with others in planning and the decision-making processes at the individual, group, and system levels.	Collaborates/consults effectively and consistently with teachers, parents, or others in planning and the decision-making process at the individual, group, or systems level and receives positive comments on the collaborations.	Collaborates/consults or works regularly with teachers, parents, or others in the planning and decision-making process at the individual, group, and systems level.	Collaborates/consults with teachers, parents, or staff on referral issues but needs additional practice and skills.	Shows limited skills in consultation and collaboration on referral issues or interventions.		
6c. Encourages staff involvement to ensure the effective implementation of program and services.	Encourages staff involvement to ensure the effective implementation of program and services. Collaborates with teachers to develop and/or teach lessons effectively. Provides teachers with materials as well as provides ongoing in-service training for teachers on referral subject matter.	Collaborates with teachers to develop and/or teach lessons effectively. Provides teachers with appropriate materials as well as resources on referral subject matter.	Is inconsistent in collaboration with teachers in the development and teaching of interventions.	Rarely encourages staff to become involved in the teaching of interventions. Provides teachers with inappropriate or useless materials, resources or training on irrelevant subject matter.		
6d. Respond to referrals in a timely and appropriate manner, consulting with teachers and administrators.	Consults frequently with colleagues, contributing in helpful opinions, and ensures evaluation and assessment results answer referral questions.	Consults frequently with colleagues, results of evaluations or assessments answer referral questions.	Consults infrequently with colleagues, makes partially successful attempts to answer referral questions.	Rarely consults with colleagues, and evaluations or assessments, and inaccurately answers referral questions.		



**Performance Standard 7: Family-School Collaboration Services**

The NICS collaborates with parents and stakeholders to assist students with educational and career planning. The NICS is able to consult and communicate effectively with families, parents, administrators, teachers, and other school personnel.

		4 HIGHLY EFFECTIVE	3 EFFECTIVE	2 DEVELOPING	1 INEFFECTIVE	0
<b>Element</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>					
7a. In collaboration with parents helps students establish goals and develop educational plans.	<p>Teaches units/lessons effectively.</p> <p>Assists students in determining their abilities, achievements, interests, and goals.</p> <p>Actively encourages parents and stakeholders to participate in student educational and career planning.</p>	<p>Assists most students in determining their abilities, achievements, interests, and goals.</p> <p>Involves parents and stakeholders in student educational and career planning.</p>	<p>Assists some students in determining their abilities, achievements, interests, and goals.</p> <p>Involves parents or stakeholders in student educational and career planning.</p>	<p>Assists few students in determining their abilities, achievements, interests, and goals.</p>		
7b. Implements an effective referral process in collaboration with families and all stakeholders.	<p>Clearly and concisely explains the referral process to others and maintains a current list of referral sources.</p> <p>Appropriately makes referrals by assisting families and staff.</p>	<p>Consistently implements a referral process in collaboration with families and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Implements a limited referral process.</p> <p>Collaborates with families or stakeholders in referral process.</p>	<p>Implements an ineffective referral process.</p>		
7c. Communicates appropriately with families.	<p>Obtains necessary consent and communicates with families in a manner highly sensitive to differing diverse, cultural and linguistic factors.</p> <p>Encourages and promotes school-home communication.</p>	<p>Communicates with families and obtains necessary consent for evaluations, assessments, and counseling services.</p> <p>Demonstrates understanding, knowledge, and sensitivity to different cultural backgrounds.</p>	<p>Communication with families is partially successful; consents are obtained, but there are occasional inconsistencies to different cultural backgrounds.</p>	<p>Communicates inappropriately or infrequently with families; is unable to consistently obtain necessary consents or communicates in an insensitive manner.</p>		
7d. Promotes family involvement to improve student outcomes.	<p>Frequently promotes family involvement to improve student outcomes, and assists families with resources to support the child's needs or to improve the child's life.</p>	<p>Consistently promotes family involvement between home and school to improve student outcomes.</p> <p>Assists families with resources.</p>	<p>Occasionally promotes family involvement.</p>	<p>Rarely or inappropriately promotes family involvement to improve student outcomes.</p>		

**Performance Standard 7: Family-School Collaboration Services (continued)**

The NICS collaborates with parents and stakeholders to assist students with educational and career planning. The NICS is able to consult and communicate effectively with families, parents, administrators, teachers, and other school personnel.

	4 HIGHLY EFFECTIVE	3 EFFECTIVE	2 DEVELOPING	1 INEFFECTIVE	0
<b>Element</b>					
<b>Descriptors</b>					
7c. Demonstrates awareness of cultural issues that impact home-school collaboration.	Applies and applies strategies that acknowledge cultural issues that impact home-school collaboration.	Applies strategies that acknowledge cultural issues that impact home-school collaboration and demonstrates cultural sensitivity throughout the home-school relationship.	Acknowledges cultural issues that impact home-school collaboration.	Has difficulty identifying cultural issues that impact home-school collaboration.	
7d. Continuously demonstrates sensitivity and understanding of family cultural issues throughout the home-school relationship.	Continuously demonstrates a sensitivity and understanding of family cultural issues throughout the home-school relationship.				

**Performance Standard 8: Interventions, Mental Health Services, & Instructional Support**

The NICS conducts appropriate individual and small group counseling, develops and implements appropriate interventions and monitors and evaluates effectiveness of interventions. The NICS also serves as a consultant to the school community and locates resources to support the needs of the students.

	4 <b>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE</b>	3 <b>EFFECTIVE</b>	2 <b>DEVELOPING</b>	1 <b>INEFFECTIVE</b>	0
<b>Element</b>					
8a. Provides direct services, individual or group, to students with identified needs/concerns.	Ensures that all students, parents, teachers, and administrators are informed of the process to refer students for services.  Uses appropriate theories and techniques in working with students, establishes appropriate intervention plans, with the goal of addressing concerns.	Provides direct services to individual students/small groups using appropriate theories and techniques  Takes initiative in identifying students in need of services and informing families and stakeholders of the referral process.	Occasionally uses a limited number of techniques when providing direct services to individual students and small groups  Assists teacher in identifying students in need of services.	Uses inappropriate theories or techniques when providing direct services to individual students or small groups.  Rarely assists in the identification of students in need of services.	
8b. Identifies appropriate skills or strategies to enhance the development of children from diverse backgrounds.	Effectively identifies and implements multiple social and life skill strategies that enhance the development of children from diverse backgrounds and experiences.	Identifies and develops appropriate social and life skill strategies to enhance the development of children from diverse backgrounds and experiences.	Assesses social and life skills, but experiences with children from diverse backgrounds is limited.  Needs assistance with developing appropriate strategies.	Experiences difficulty assessing and evaluating social and life skills of children from diverse backgrounds and experiences.	
8c. Develops and implements appropriate interventions to facilitate student development and growth.	Effectively develops, implements, monitors, and evaluates the effectiveness of interventions to facilitate the development of students and maximize students' likelihood of success through evaluative progress monitoring and use of data that documents progress (i.e., graphs).	Develops, implements, and monitors the effectiveness of interventions to facilitate the development of students and maximize students' likelihood of success through reports or graphs.	Implements and monitors the effectiveness of interventions to facilitate the development of students and maximize students' likelihood of success.	Identifies inappropriate interventions or ineffectively monitors or evaluates interventions.	
8d. Examines different approaches to assist teachers and families in teaching pro-social behavior.	Applies a variety of methodologies and approaches to assist teachers and families in teaching pro-social behavior.  Assists teachers and families in the identification and teaching of multiple and effective pro-social interventions for students.	Applies different methodologies and approaches to assist teachers and families in teaching pro-social behavior.  Takes initiative in assisting families with teaching social behaviors.	Uses a limited variety of approaches to assist teachers and families in teaching pro-social behavior.  Assists families only upon request.	Uses inappropriate approaches to assist teachers and families in teaching pro-social behavior.	

**Performance Standard 9: Practices to Promote Learning**

The NICS implements services for students and the learning community that is consistent with established standards and goals, and work results in an acceptable level of student achievement. The NICS also establishes rapport with students, promotes learning and a positive school culture.

		4 <b>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE</b>		3 <b>EFFECTIVE</b>		2 <b>DEVELOPING</b>		1 <b>INEFFECTIVE</b>		0	
<b>Element</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>	9a. Work results in an acceptable and measurable student or program progress based on established standards, or on district, school, or personal growth goals. (P/GP)	Work results in a high level of student achievement for all subgroups and/or program progress.	Work results in acceptable and measurable student or program progress based on established standards, or on district, school, or personal growth goals.	Work results in an acceptable level of student achievement for some subgroups and/or program progress, but often does not meet established standards, district, school, or personal growth goals.	Work results in an unacceptable level of student achievement and/or program progress.					
9b. Uses knowledge of field to implement services for students and the learning community consistent with established standards and goals.	Consistently demonstrates a high level of performance and utilizes best practices in the delivery of services.	Uses knowledge of field to implement services for students and the learning community consistent with established standards.	Implements services to students and the community consistent with standards or goals.	Implements services to students and the community consistent with standards or goals.	Implements services to students and the community consistent with standards or goals.	Implements services to students and the community consistent with standards or goals.					
9c. Establishes rapport with students.	Students seek out the NICS, indicating a high degree of comfort and trust in the relationship.	NICS interactions with students are positive and respectful; students appear comfortable.	NICS interactions with students are a mix of positive and negative; the efforts of developing rapport are partially successful.	NICS interactions with students are negative or inappropriate; students appear uncomfortable.	NICS interactions with students are negative or inappropriate; students appear uncomfortable.	NICS interactions with students are negative or inappropriate; students appear uncomfortable.					
9d. Establishes a positive culture throughout the school.	Establishes and actively promotes a positive school culture among students and staff, and ensures it is maintained by students and staff.	Establishes and promotes a positive school culture throughout the school.	Promotes a positive school culture throughout the school, with some success.	Promotes a positive school culture throughout the school, with some success.	Promotes a positive school culture throughout the school, with some success.	Promotes a positive school culture throughout the school, with some success.					
9e. Establishes and maintains clear procedures for referrals.	Procedures for all aspects of referrals have been developed in consultation with teachers and administrators, and the entire school has been informed.	In collaboration with others, procedures for referrals have been established and the staff understands the process and details are clear.	The procedures for referrals have been established, but the details are unclear.	The procedures for referrals have been established, but the details are unclear.	The procedures for referrals have been established, but the details are unclear.	The procedures for referrals have been established, but the details are unclear.					
9f. Applies principles to promote learning and create a learning environment in both general and special education settings.	Effectively applies principles to promote productive learning and creates inclusive learning environment.	Applies principles to promote learning and creates inclusive learning environment.	Shows an adequate understanding of both the general and special education systems and policies.	Applies principles to promote learning. Has a limited understanding of both the general and special education systems.	Applies principles to promote learning. Has a limited understanding of both the general and special education systems.	Applies principles to promote learning. Has a limited understanding of both the general and special education systems.					

