

## Appraisal Questions and Answers

Questions in this document are derived from a survey of all ACPS employees during the week of March 24 - 28, 2014.

**Q: Why is the TPA different in every school for speech pathologists? Some of us are observed on a regular basis. Others have not had an administrator in their room in years.**

A: Principals should use the TPA guidelines for speech pathologists. There should not be variance from school to school, as the timeline at this link sets the expectation for observations and other activities:

<http://www2.k12albemarle.org/acps/staff/TPA/Pages/timeline.aspx>

**Q: How can you evaluate the school nurse's role without a proper appraisal form? A teacher's assistant is not the correct form to use as the jobs are not alike in any way.**

A: School nurses should be evaluated using the [Classified Employee Performance Evaluation Form](#), available through the HR Forms Center online. This form is built around eight competencies with specific benchmarks for each rating level. It is not job-specific and is used to evaluate numerous different employee groups so it is appropriate for school nurses, as well as Office Associates and other non-TA classified employees.

**Q: What can be done at the central office level to make sure that administrators fully understand TPA requirements? To ensure consistency in TPA conversations with teachers?**

A: The Albemarle County Public Schools Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) provides a systematic structure to build and ensure a culture of professional learners committed to meeting the educational needs of all students.

TPA requirements have been reviewed with all administrators. We expect that each year as part of the opening activities of school that each principal conduct a review with all staff to outline the TPA process for the year, to answer questions, and to begin the self-appraisal and goal setting process. During the year, we provide workshops for administrators on different TPA practices and topics.

We also track completion of learning walks in schools. Principals will complete a spreadsheet for their schools this spring that will contain TPA scores so that we may study this data for consistency. In addition, central staff will work with principals individually to discuss their questions about final evaluation during the month of April. While the TPA has undergone some changes, the concept and basic practices of performance appraisal for teachers are not new concepts for us as a school system. We believe our administrators stay abreast of these practices just as we believe our teaching staff stay current in using effective practices for student appraisal through curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

<http://www2.k12albemarle.org/acps/staff/TPA/Documents/Overview%20of%20the%20TPA.pdf>

**Q: Why not have one general goal as well as 3-5 specific goals.**

A: While the suggested number of goals is two, decisions about how many goals a teachers should set are made in consultation with the supervising administrator.

**Q: Were there any classroom teachers involved in the writing of the new TPA?**

A: Elementary, middle, and high school teachers were involved in the writing of the new TPA.

**Q: Are teachers expected to collect samples for documentation for each strand? If yes, is there an example of what an outstanding sample looks like? What types of things should teachers collect?**

**Q: Are teachers going to be expected to create and maintain a professional portfolio, for example as a Google site?**

A: Teachers will be required to create a digital portfolio which provides examples/evidence for each performance indicator of the TPA. Teachers may use their ACPS Google account to create the portfolio using sites.google.com, or may choose another web-based program that allows for the creation of a portfolio.

**Q: My understanding of the portfolio is that all untenured teachers and tenured teachers that fall between A-G need to have a portfolio. It must be digital in 2016. What are the guidelines for 2014?**

A. The portfolio will become a requirement for all tenured teachers in their evaluation year beginning in the 2015-2016 school year.

**Q: Guidelines for Professional Digital Portfolio (COMING SOON)...When will these be posted? Who needs to do them and when are they due?**

**Q: What are the guidelines for the Teacher Portfolio?**

A: Guidelines for the teacher portfolio portion of the TPA are currently being developed through work with a pilot group. Those guidelines will be available by January 1, 2015 and will be posted with the TPA information.

**Q: How much evidence is enough evidence? What constitutes good, quality evidence?**

A: The recommendation will be 3 pieces of evidence for each of the seven performance standards. Good quality evidence comes in a variety of forms and may vary from standard to standard and person to person. The critical consideration is, "If someone asks me to demonstrate my best work, what would that look like?" It is recommended that teachers collect a wide range of evidence throughout the year (or years from one formal appraisal to the next) and then choose from that body of evidence to determine what to include in the portfolio.

**Q: Are there any exemplar teacher portfolios?**

A: A group of teachers has been working on creating portfolios as part of a pilot group for this TPA requirement. Once we are at the point where we feel that their portfolios (or pieces of their portfolios) may be viewed as exemplars, they will be posted.

**Q: If a teacher has had one or two five minutes walk throughs, how will they be assessed?**

**Q: If we do not get regular feedback from the walk through, are we doing okay?**

**Q: When multiple administrators do walk-throughs, how do they communicate this with supervisor? Feedback each walk-thru?**

A: Please review the guidelines for learning walks here:

[http://www2.k12albemarle.org/acps/staff/TPA/Documents/Learning\\_Walks\\_Overview.pdf](http://www2.k12albemarle.org/acps/staff/TPA/Documents/Learning_Walks_Overview.pdf)

Each teacher, each year, should experience the number of learning walks provided in the timelines at this link: <http://www2.k12albemarle.org/acps/staff/TPA/Pages/timeline.aspx>. We estimate that for a principal to use learning walks data for continuous improvement, the school should have an average of 7 learning walks per teacher. This average will vary, depending on the ratio of tenured and non-tenured staff in a school.

Since learning walks are a standard part of our appraisal system, an insufficient number creates an appraisal with reduced validity.

**Q: How do teachers know which cycle they are in?**

A: School administrators were provided this information at the beginning of the school year and notified teachers. Please consult with your principal.

**Q: When is employee allowed to not sign final evaluation? Negative consequences?**

A: An employee who chooses not to sign an evaluation should contact human resources to discuss the matter and the reasons for not signing.

**Q: The rubrics are too wordy and the tasks listed are overwhelming to document. Is this going to be simplified?**

A: The TPA is not a static document. It has been pared down considerably since 2011, and will continue to be streamlined while providing enough detailed "curriculum" to support teacher growth.

**Q: If a teacher goes through the National Board Certification process (which, by the way, is an extremely rigorous process), can the entries/papers be used as replacement for the TPA?**

A: This is a very good idea to consider. Thank you.

**Q: About how much time should the final meeting between teacher and administrator take?**

A: The length of a final meeting will vary. Depending on the depth of the conversations, the final appraisal meeting will likely take about 30-45 minutes. Please realize that these are individualized meetings, so this is just an estimate of time.

**Q: Is the TPA different for part time teachers? Are part time teachers stuck in the nontenured cycle forever?**

**Q: I wish that part-time counted as a year as I work towards tenure. I am an industrious worker and an effective teacher, but will not be rewarded for my hard work with job security.**

A: While state code does not allow for a part-time teacher to become tenured, ACPS designates teachers who have three consecutive years of part-time service as "long-time / part-time." Based on this designation, the school principal has the discretion to treat the long-time part-time teacher the same as a tenured teacher for the TPA cycle.

**Q: If you are in the A-G group, does the evidence come strictly from walkthrough data or is the teacher responsible for bringing evidence/proving a score?**

A: Learning walks are one piece of evidence considered along with observations, work samples, survey analysis, and self-assessment. Please consider the guidelines provided at the link:

[http://www2.k12albemarle.org/acps/staff/TPA/Documents/Guidelines\\_for\\_Work\\_Sample\\_Elements.pdf](http://www2.k12albemarle.org/acps/staff/TPA/Documents/Guidelines_for_Work_Sample_Elements.pdf)

**Q: Are there any kind of examples on how we can show what we do as T.A.'s on a daily bases other than to be observed?**

A: TAs can do any of the following:

- Provide evidence of efforts to achieve their individual performance SMART goal
- Solicit written feedback from teachers they support
- Complete a self-evaluation using the TA Performance Evaluation form citing examples of things they have done during the year in the eight competency areas
- Provide work samples
- Additional info available [here](#).

**Q: Can you (an administrator) choose to move teachers to the full TPA cycle, if they are not in it?**

A: Any change such as this for an employee should be made in consultation with Human Resources staff.