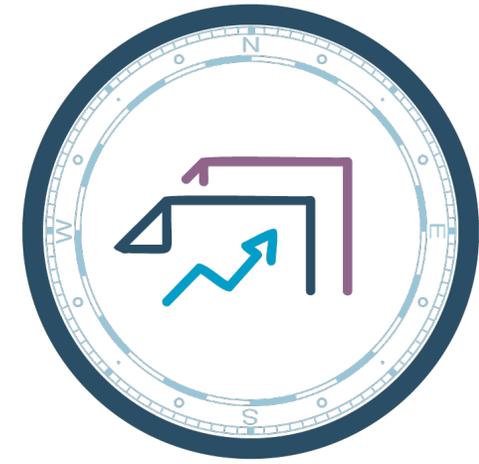


# **Defensible** Teacher Evaluations

with Justin Baeder, PhD

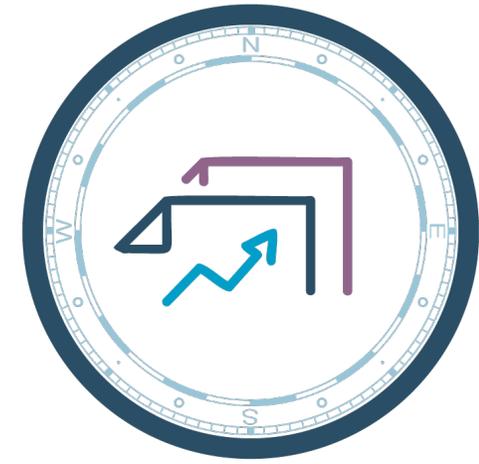
# What We'll Cover



In this webinar, you'll discover how to build a moat of goodwill and evidence to prevail in high-stakes teacher evaluations...

...without overextending your leadership capital or damaging your reputation with other teachers.

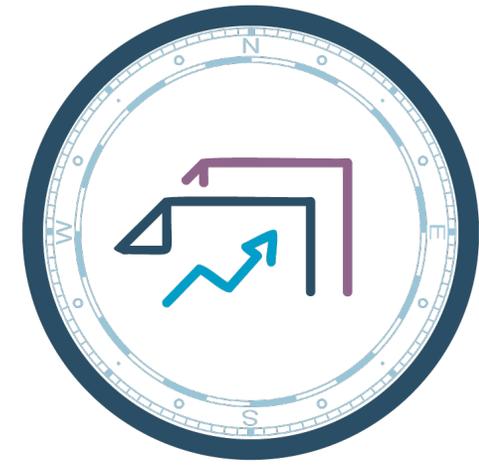
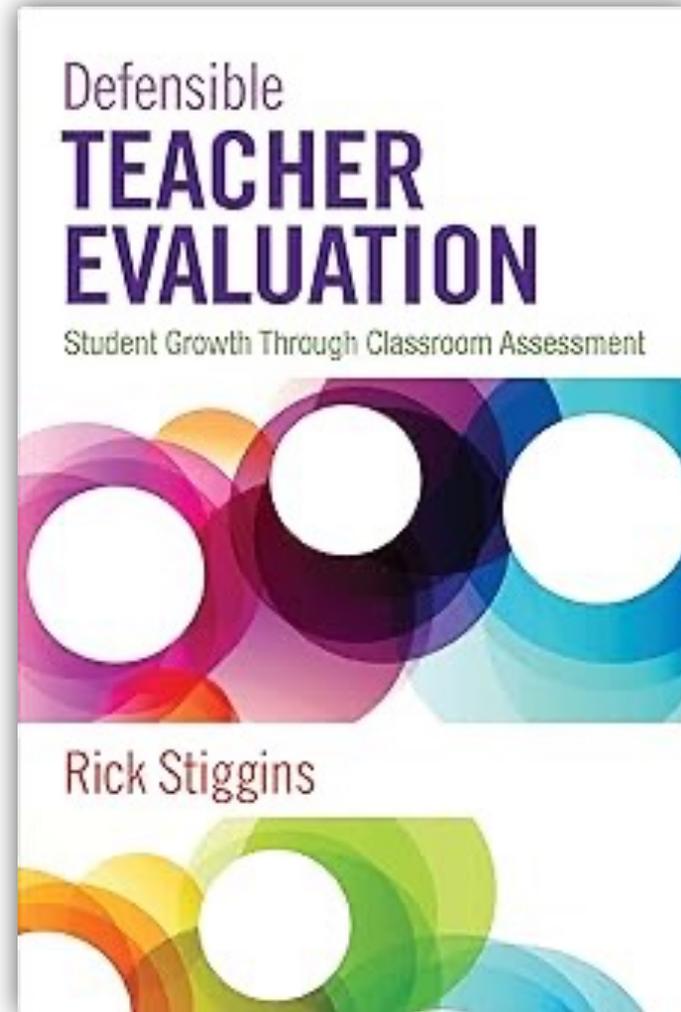
# What We'll Cover



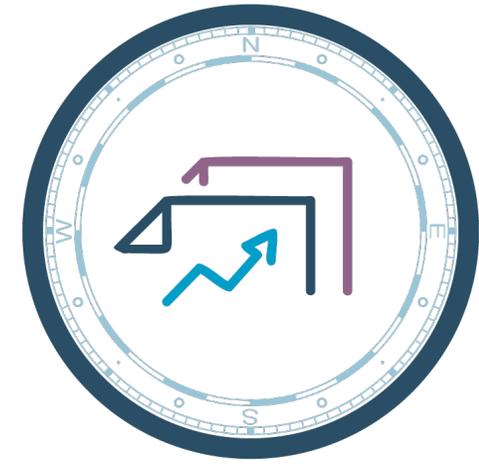
We'll explore:

- Why principals get overruled on teacher evaluations, even when they're right
- How copy-and-paste evaluations damage trust and destroy the credibility of the process
- What teachers should discover when they compare evaluations with one another—and how to guarantee they will
- The key decision that determines your success in a high-stakes evaluation
- How to write more detailed and accurate evaluations in 90% less time than the typical principal

# Not Related



# Why Leaders Lose

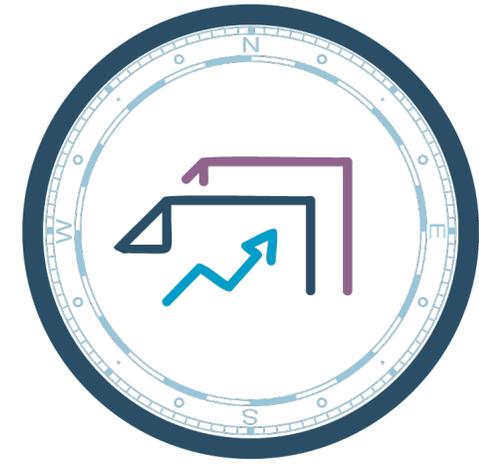


1. You can get **overruled** in high-stakes teacher evaluations and HR situations if you don't have a moat of quality evidence.
2. You can lose your staff if you haven't built a moat of goodwill.



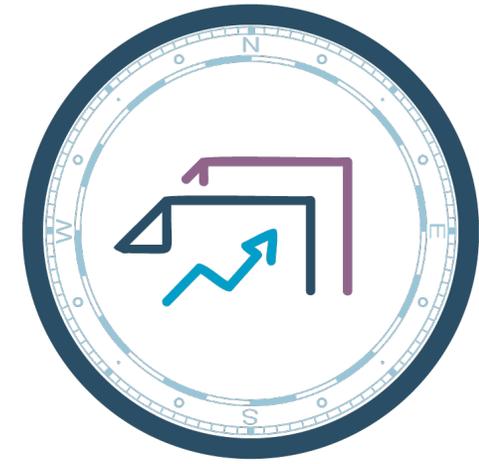
# The Goodwill Moat

# The Evaluator's Paradox



Teachers will expect you to both  
**address performance problems**  
*and*  
**never go after anyone.**

# What Feels Like Good Faith?



Discuss in chat:

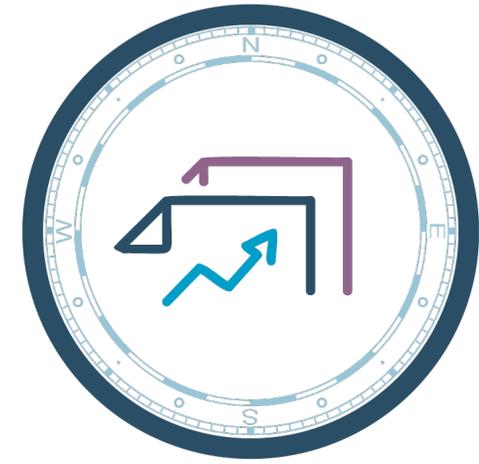
*What actions signal that your evaluator is acting in good faith toward you and others?*

# What Feels Like Good Faith?



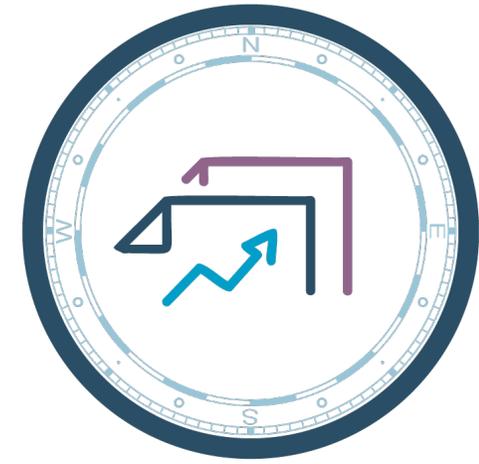
- Accurate documentation of practice
- Respectful feedback conversations
- Keeping appointments & meeting deadlines
- No “gotchas” or targeting
- Prioritization & proportion

# Prioritization



*Address the most egregious cases first.*

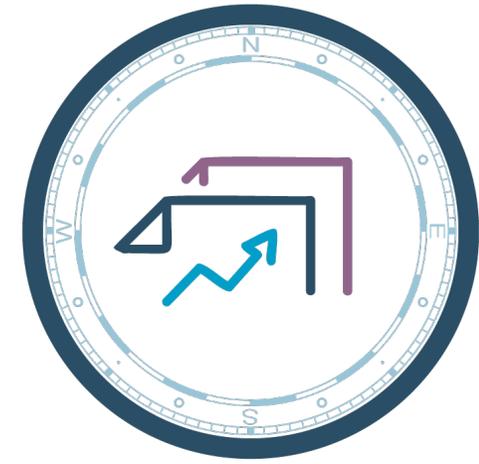
# Moral Outrage



- Investigate latent moral outrage
- Defend & celebrate teachers who are unfairly maligned
- Address teachers who are...fairly maligned

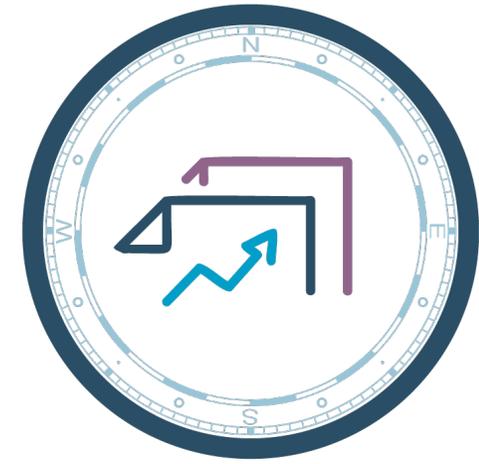
*Shared expectations align moral outrage*

# The Power of Professionalism



A strong professional culture will drive out unprofessional people and behaviors.

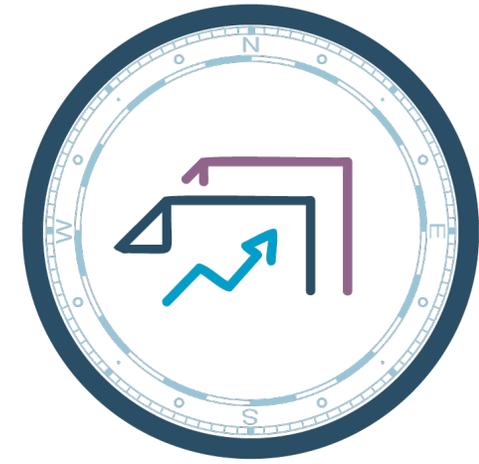
# Triage



In a school with numerous performance problems, triage is essential:

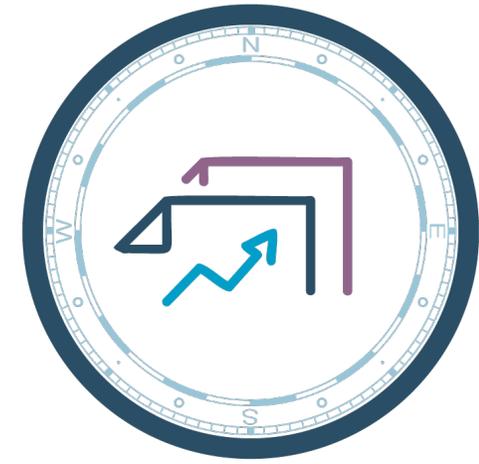
- Classroom management
- Instruction
- Avoid focusing on compliance
- Be mindful of favoritism perception

# The Information Gap



*Teachers have very little firsthand information on the effectiveness of their colleagues.*

# Proxies for Good Teaching

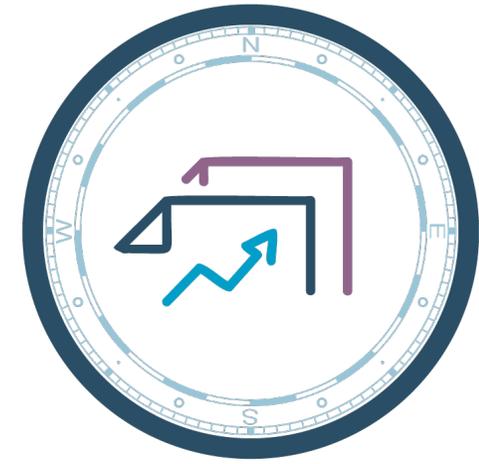


Discuss in chat:

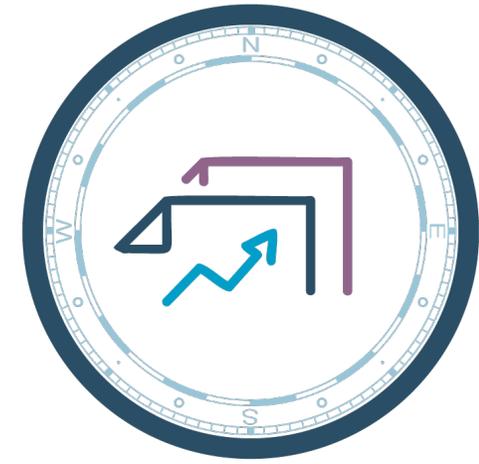
*What proxies do people use to judge their colleagues' performance when they never see each other teach?*

# Proxies for Good Teaching

- Collegiality
- Conscientiousness
- Extraversion
- Agreeableness



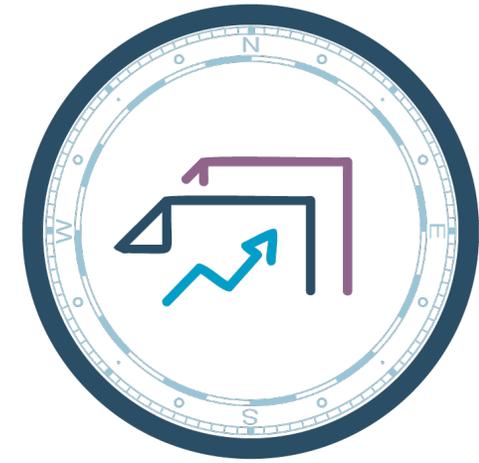
# False Proxies for Bad Teaching



Discuss in chat:

*What can give a good teacher a bad reputation?*

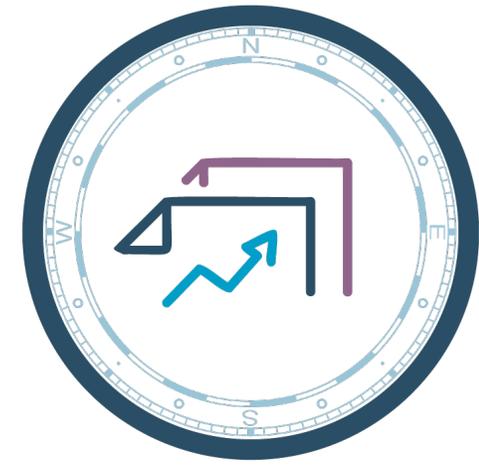
# Adverse Actions



You will be suspected of acting in bad faith if you take any adverse employment action against a teacher:

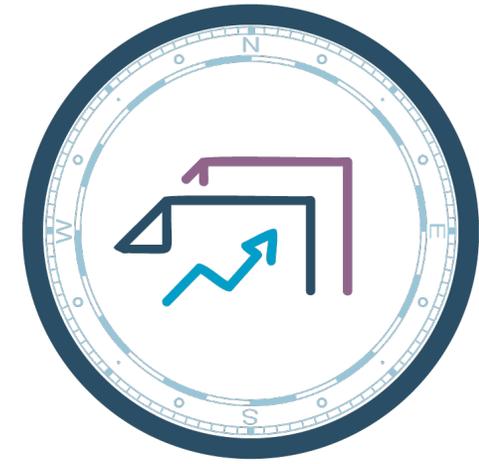
- Plan of Improvement
- Letter of Reprimand
- Probation
- Unsatisfactory Evaluation
- Non-Renewal/Termination

# Build Your Goodwill Moat



- Your defense against the presumption of bad faith is evidence—proof that you’re doing what must be done
- However, this evidence is confidential
- Your only public defense against the presumption of bad faith is the goodwill you build with other staff

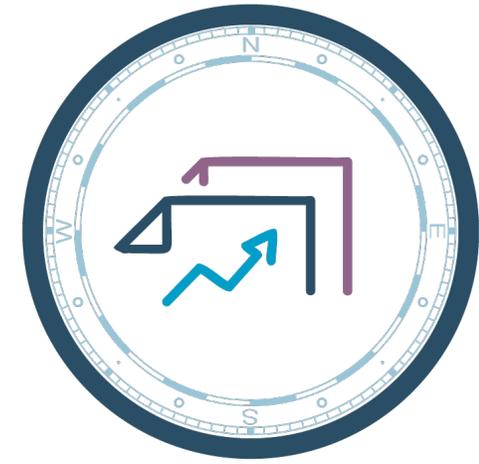
# What Feels Like Good Faith?



- Accurate documentation of practice
- Respectful feedback conversations
- Keeping appointments & meeting deadlines
- No “gotchas” or targeting
- Prioritization & proportion

# Gathering Evidence

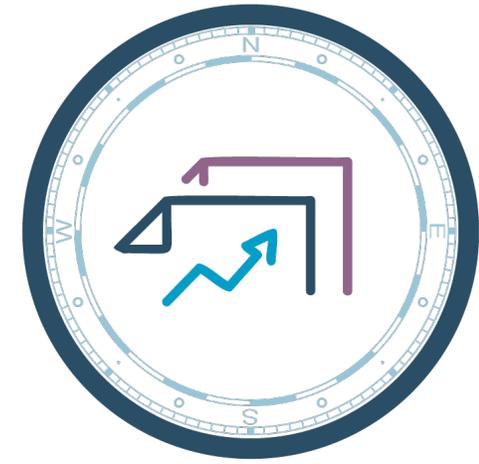
# Follow The Process



Gather evidence of practice through **formal observations**, and if possible:

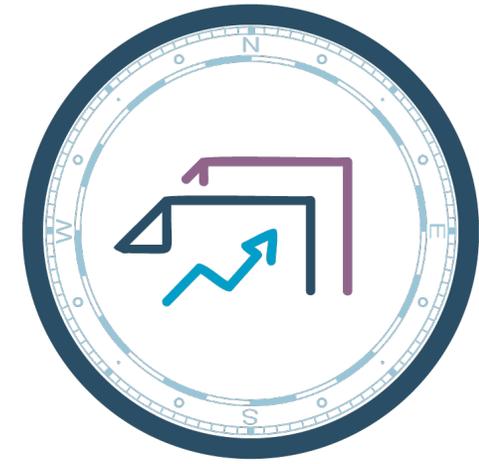
- Informal observations/walkthroughs, if admissible
- Documented interactions outside the classroom
- Other sources of data
- Teacher goal-setting & reflection

# Defer Judgment



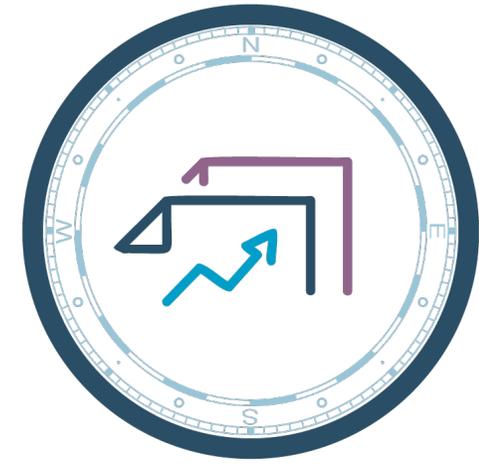
*An observation is not a final evaluation.*

# Defer Judgment, But Proceed



- Observe & take notes
- Share your notes with the teacher and discuss
- Conduct further observations as needed
- Construct & validate your argument
- Make your final judgment

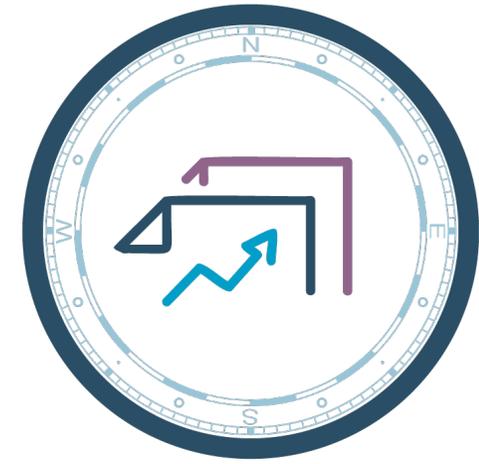
# What Do Teachers Get?



Discuss in chat:

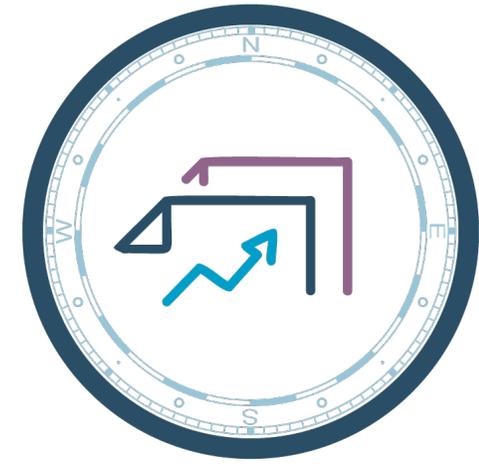
*What do teachers get in writing after a formal observation?*

# Typical Practice with Notes



- Take notes—handwritten or typed
- Write a summary/report later
- Meet for a postconference
- Give the teacher the summary/report
- Never share the raw notes

# Why Share Notes Right Away?



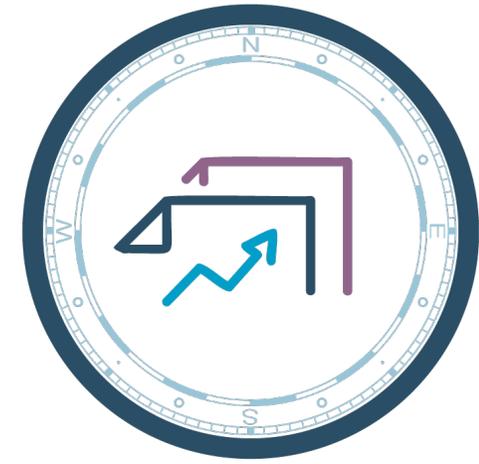
- Basis for feedback conversation
- Chance to correct any misunderstandings
- Maximize trust & minimize fear

# Unshareable Notes

- Not strictly “evidence”
- Questions and notes to self
- Critical commentary and judgment
- Second-guessing and personal opinions
- Illegible handwriting



# The #1 Job of Observation Notes



Your notes primarily serve as  
**evidence.**

# Contaminated Notes?

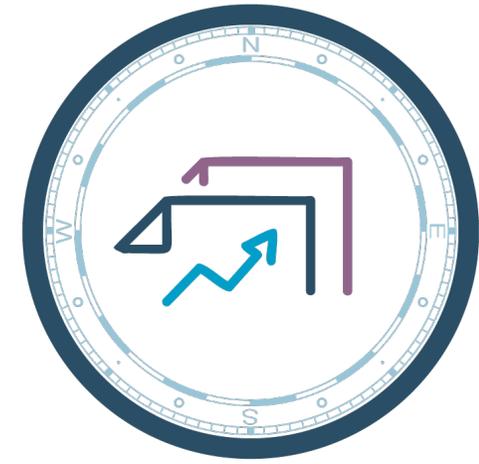


*Opinion* contaminates factual evidence.





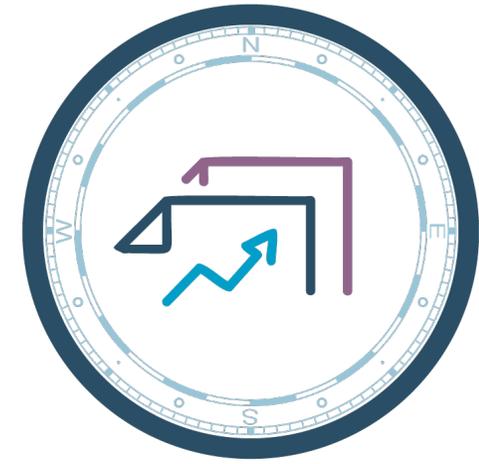
# Two Birds, One Stone



Notes you can share with the teacher  
are also  
notes that'll be admissible as evidence



# Professional Judgment



- *Use your judgment as you take notes*
- *Don't express judgment in your notes*



# Good Faith, Good Will



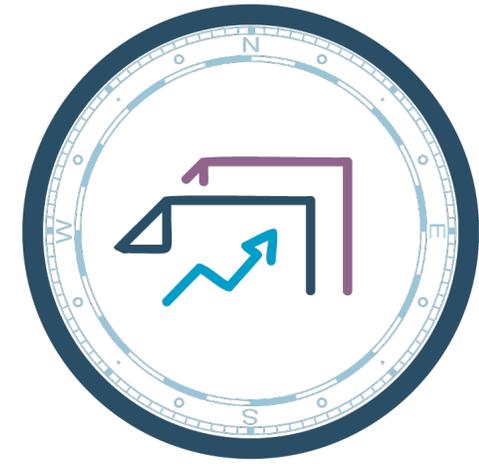
Sharing your notes immediately is also an expression of good will and an act of good faith, showing that you have nothing to hide

# Low-Inference Notes



- Describe the flow of the lesson
- Describe what the teacher and students are doing
- Keep description strictly factual
- Capture choice verbatim quotes
- Include timestamps
- Avoid “barbed facts”

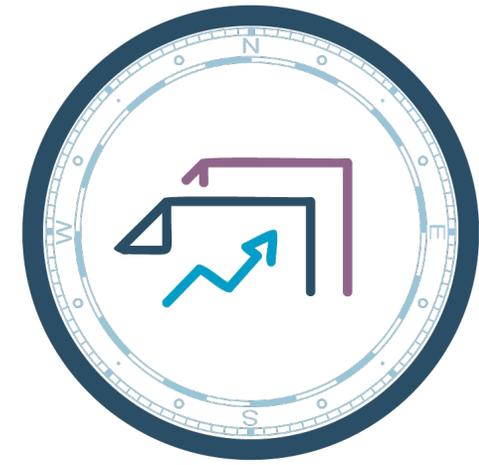
# “Barbed” Factual Notes



A “factual” note that clearly implies a problem, e.g.

- “14/29 students talking during instructions”
- “7 students out of their seats”
- “Students frowning; 2 say they are confused”

# Barbed Facts & Bad Faith

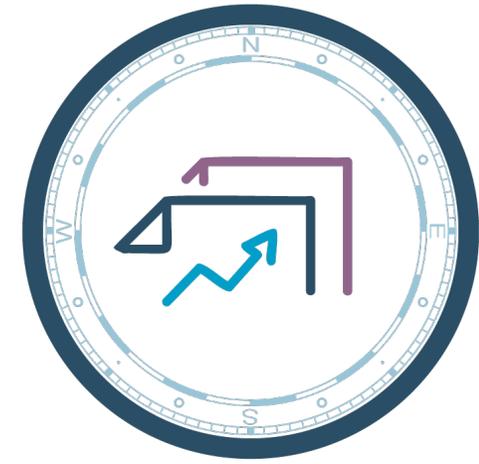


To document unpleasant realities in good faith:

- Document positive tallies as well
- Keep standard tallies in all observations
- Focus on what's happening, not what's *not* happening but could or should be
- Describe in rich detail

# The Recap Email

- “As I mentioned...”
- “Per our conversation...”
- “It was great to talk about how you...”
- “Thank you for sharing with me how...”
- “Let me know how it goes as you...”
- “Keep me posted on how...”

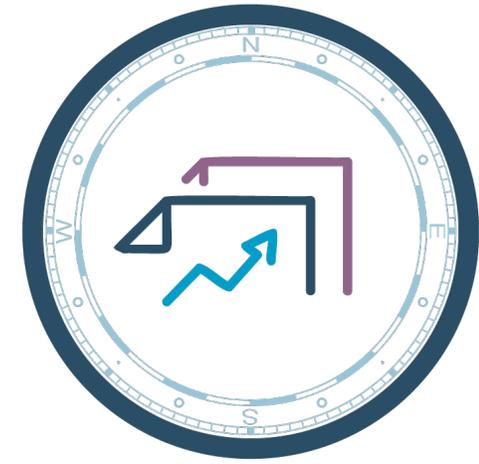


# Reinterpret Later



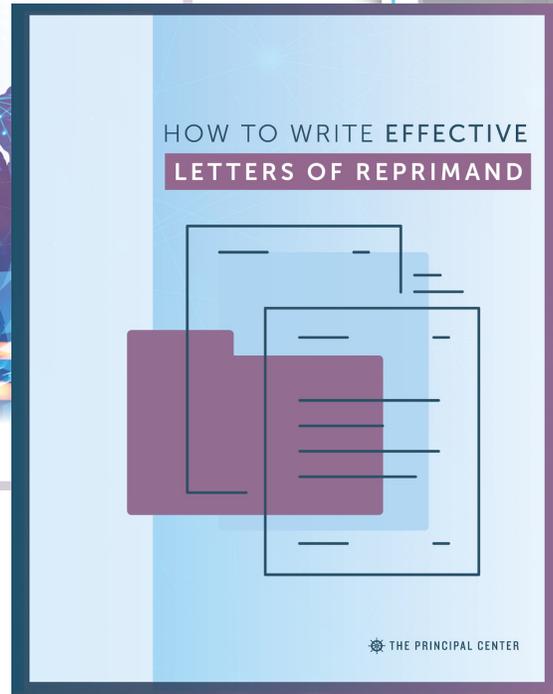
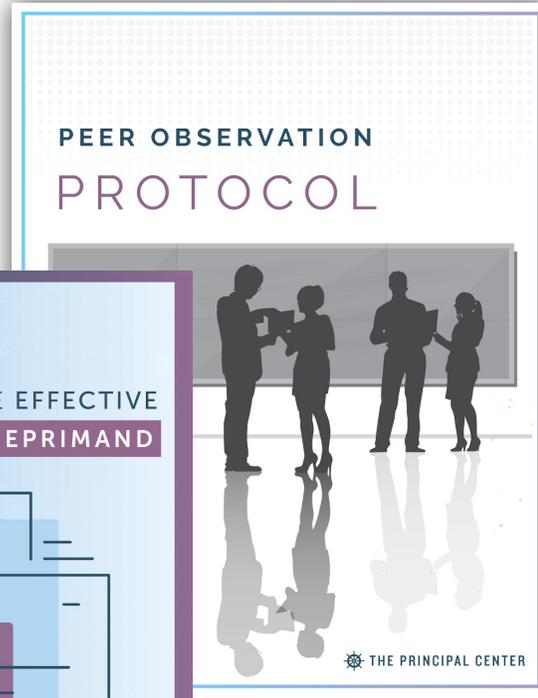
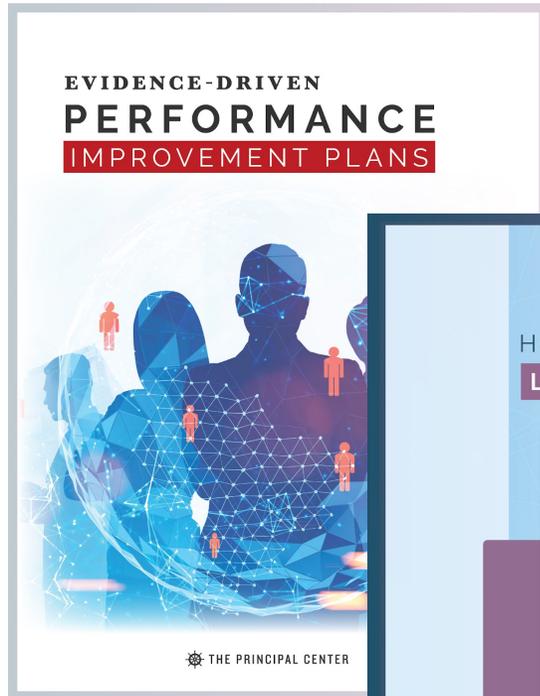
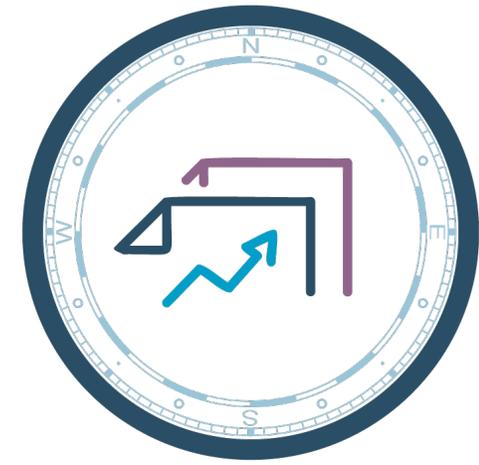
- If you have concerns in the future, you can review past notes for evidence supporting these concerns
- The raw evidence will not raise teacher suspicions
- Evidence already in the teacher's possession is rock solid

# Keep Your Options Open



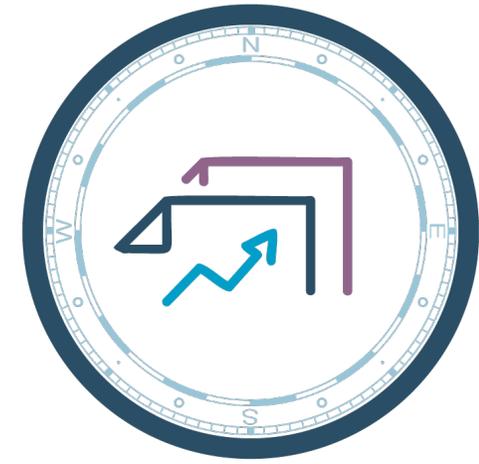
- Sufficient improvement may occur
- The teacher may depart
- The situation may worsen
- Other concerns may become your top priority

# Principal's HR Toolkit dashboard.PrincipalCenter.com/hr



# The Buffet Approach

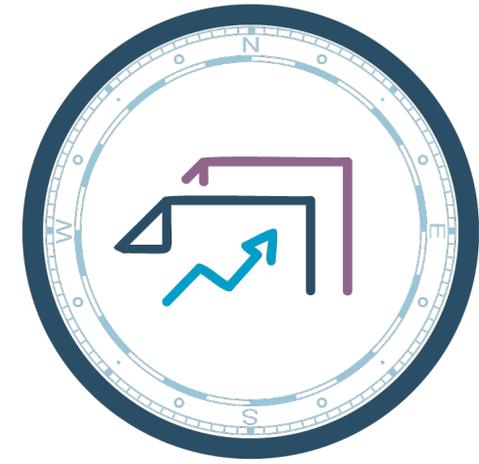
# When Teachers Compare



- Teachers will compare their final evaluations
- When they do, they should see a personalized evaluation that rings true
- Any similarities in written evaluations should reflect recognizable similarities in practice
- No two evaluations should be 100% identical

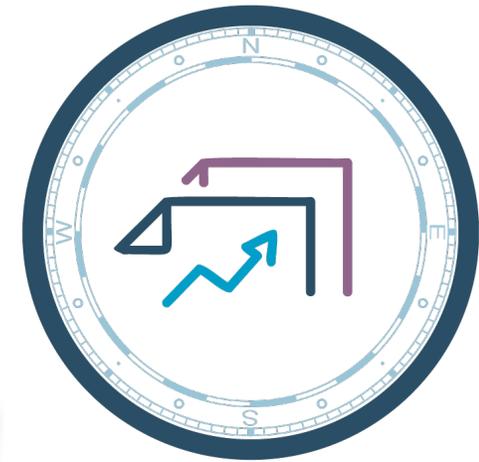


# Variety Within Categories



- Breads
- Salads
- Vegetables
- Proteins
- Starches
- Desserts
- Classroom management
- Formative assessment
- Planning & preparation
- Academic press
- Instructional agility
- Professional responsibility

# Evaluation Organizer: Buckets

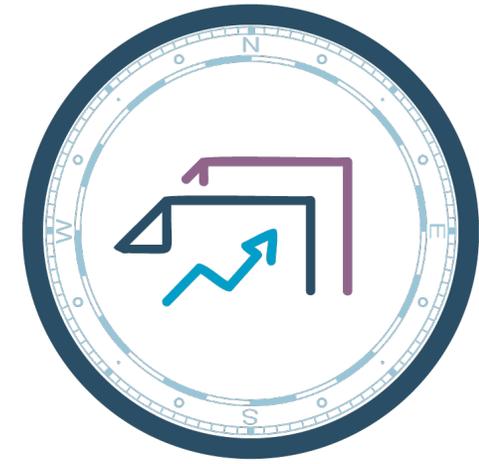


The image shows a laptop screen displaying a spreadsheet with columns for evaluation categories and rows for individual teachers. A printed document titled 'TEACHER EVALUATION ORGANIZER' is placed over the bottom right of the laptop screen. The document features a red graphic of a laptop and a bar chart. At the bottom of the document, it says 'THE PRINCIPAL CENTER'.

Teacher Name	Classroom Management	Planning & Preparation	Professionalism	Engagement	Results	Relationships	High Expectations	Content Knowledge	Teamwork	Family Engagement
1										
2 Mr. Jones	Warm Demander	Organized & Thorough	Leader	Data-Driven						9/
3 Mrs. Smith	Strict	Flexible & Responsive	Team Player	Creative & Engaging						9/
4 Ms. Richards	Loose	Collaborative & Resou	Dutiful	Data-Driven						9/
5 Mr. Gonzalez	Low-Key	Student-Centered	Unreliable	Questioning & Intellectual						9/
6 Ms. Wong	Type E	Type E	Type E	Type E						9/
7 Mr. Davis	(Specific Concerns)	(Specific Concerns)	(Specific Conce	(Specific Concerns)						9/
8 M										
9 M										
10 M										
11 M										
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38 M										

[PrincipalCenter.com/eval](http://PrincipalCenter.com/eval)

# Customize Your Buckets



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	<b>Area:</b>	<b>Not Specified</b>	<b>Bucket 2</b>	<b>Bucket 3</b>	<b>Bucket 4</b>	<b>Bucket 5</b>	<b>Bucket 6</b>	<b>Bucket 7</b>	<b>Bucket 8</b>
2									
3	<b>Classroom Management</b>		Warm Demander	Strict	Loose	Low-Key	Type E	Type F	(Specific Concerns)
4	<b>Planning &amp; Preparation</b>		Organized & Thorough	Flexible & Responsive	Collaborative & Resourceful	Student-Centered	Type E	Type F	(Specific Concerns)
5	<b>Professionalism</b>		Leader	Team Player	Dutiful	Unreliable	Type E	Type F	(Specific Concerns)
6	<b>Engagement</b>		Effective Monitoring	Creative & Engaging	Data-Driven	Questioning & Intellectual	Type E	Type F	(Specific Concerns)
7	<b>Results</b>		Standards-Driven	Student-Centered	Maximizes Growth	Type D	Type E	Type F	(Specific Concerns)
8	<b>Relationships</b>		Warm	Mentor	Friendly	Respect	Type E	Type F	(Specific Concerns)
9	<b>High Expectations</b>		Challenges All	Differentiates	Supportive	Collaborative	Type E	Type F	(Specific Concerns)
10	<b>Content Knowledge</b>		Expert	Connects	Interdisciplinary	Learning	Type E	Type F	(Specific Concerns)
11	<b>Teamwork</b>		Collaborator	Leader	Contributor	Learner	Type E	Type F	(Specific Concerns)
12	<b>Family Engagement</b>		Active Outreach	Proactive	Builds Relationships	Supports Families	Type E	Type F	(Specific Concerns)

# Assign Proficient Teachers To Specific Buckets (Provisional)



	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Teacher Name	Classroom Management	Planning & Preparation	Professionalism	Engagement	
2	Mr. Jones	Warm Demander	Organized & Thorough	Leader	Effective Monitoring	
3	Mrs. Smith	Strict	Flexible & Responsive	Team Player	Creative & Engaging	
4	Ms. Richards	Loose	Collaborative & Resou		Data-Driven	
5	Mr. Gonzalez	Low-Key	Student-Centered		Questioning & Intellectual	
6	Ms. Wong	Type E	Type E		Type E	
7	Mr. Davis	(Specific Concerns)	(Specific Concerns)		Specific Concerns)	
8	M					
9	M					



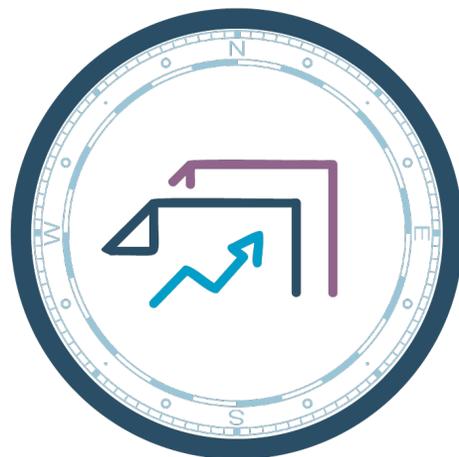
**GSIR** FINAL EVALUATION



BUILDER



# Our Spring 2025 Cohort



**EVIDENCE-DRIVEN**

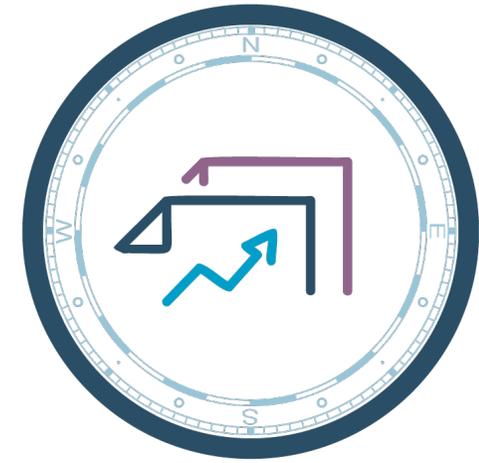
**TEACHER EVALUATION**



**CERTIFICATION**



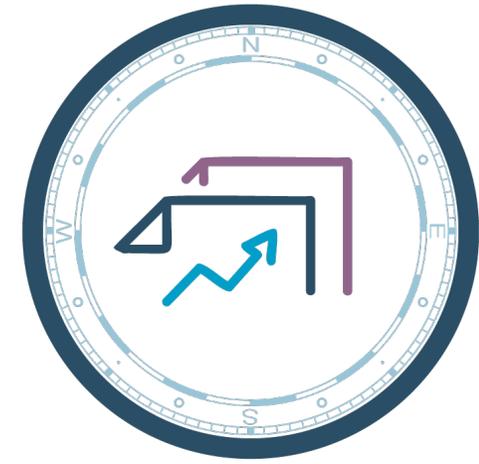
# What's Included



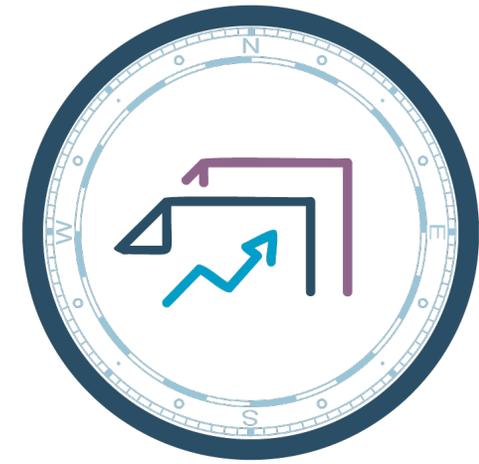
- 4 live sessions—every other Monday @ 4pm CDT starting March 14
- Consultations 1:1
- Risk Assessment
- EDTE Lifetime Access
- ILA Lifetime Membership
- Language Bank support
- Unlimited support with challenged/grieved/contested evals

# Live Sessions

- Monday, March 17
- Monday, March 31
- Monday, April 14
- Monday, April 28



# Learn More



# EVIDENCE-DRIVEN TEACHER EVALUATION CERTIFICATION

[PrincipalCenter.com/evaluation](https://PrincipalCenter.com/evaluation)

