

End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent



Superintendent:

Philip Conrad

June 15, 2021

Evaluator:

Dan Brosgol

June 15, 2021

Name

Signature

Date

Step 1: Assess Progress Toward Goals (Reference performance goals; check one for each set of goal[s].)

Professional Practice Goal(s)	☐ Did Not Meet	☐ Some Progress	☐ Significant Progress	☐ X Met	☐ Exceeded
Student Learning Goal(s)	☐ Did Not Meet	☐ Some Progress	☐ Significant Progress	☐ X Met	☐ Exceeded
District Improvement Goal(s)	☐ Did Not Meet	☐ Some Progress	☐ Significant Progress	☐ X Met	☐ Exceeded

Step 2: Assess Performance on Standards (Reference Performance Ratings per Standard; check one box for each Standard.)

Unsatisfactory = Performance on a standard or overall has not significantly improved following a rating of *Needs Improvement*, or performance is consistently below the requirements of a standard or overall and is considered inadequate, or both.

Needs Improvement/Developing = Performance on a standard or overall is below the requirements of a standard or overall but is not considered to be Unsatisfactory at the time. Improvement is necessary and expected.

Proficient = **Proficient practice is understood to be fully satisfactory. This is the rigorous expected level of performance.**

Exemplary = A rating of *Exemplary* indicates that practice significantly exceeds *Proficient* and could serve as a model of practice regionally or statewide.

	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
Standard I: Instructional Leadership	☐	☐	☒	☐
Standard II: Management and Operations	☐	☐	☒	☐
Standard III: Family and Community Engagement	☐	☐	☒	☐
Standard IV: Professional Culture	☐	☐	☒	☐

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Step 3: Rate Overall Summative Performance (Based on Step 1 and Step 2 ratings; check one.)

☐ Unsatisfactory

☐ Needs Improvement

☒ Proficient

☐ Exemplary

Step 4: Add Evaluator Comments

Comments and analysis are recommended for any rating but are required for an overall summative rating of Exemplary, Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory.

Comments:

The School Committee is pleased to provide this end-of-cycle summative evaluation for Phil Conrad. Mr. Conrad stepped into his first superintendency under incredibly challenging circumstances and led the district through the pandemic year with enthusiasm, clarity, credibility, and positivity. His ability to work with his leadership team, the BEA, the School Committee, the Finance Committee, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Town Manager's office, was a critical component in helping Bedford launch a hybrid learning and remote learning model in the fall, and to transition back into full-time, 5-day in-person learning in the spring. Bedford did this year what many other districts could not, and without Mr. Conrad and his leadership team, it would not have happened. When we consider that work, in addition to the complexity of negotiating several labor contracts and constantly monitoring the changing budgetary landscape, Mr. Conrad in fact did an exceptional job leading us through the year.

We rate Mr. Conrad as proficient not just because that is the usual practice in Bedford, but because this year it is hard to measure success in the indicator areas given the lack of continuity in our schools and learning models. We are looking forward to seeing an updated district-wide improvement plan and school improvement plans in late summer and fall that will show how his vision will be integrated into our ongoing district-wide work. And we do note that in the focus indicators of III-D, Family Concerns and IV-F, Managing Conflict, Mr. Conrad's performance should be considered exemplary.

We have been impressed with Mr. Conrad's calm and easy demeanor in a year when he has been besieged by various stakeholders. Phil's unflappable affect is remarkable and so far, it seems like there is no problem he cannot solve.

This Committee is also committed to providing ongoing and honest feedback to our superintendent to inform his goals and those of the district. We feel no hesitation in sharing these in the public evaluation and they are offered with a full appreciation of the hard work that both Mr. Conrad and his leadership team do on a daily basis. None of this work is easy, yet all of it is appreciated, and we

look forward to supporting the 2700 children in our schools and advocating for all of the resources necessary to achieve our desired outcomes for them.

1. It seems like there could be greater alignment of best practices in reading and writing across the district. This committee has thrown a huge amount of resources at literacy and reading and the jury is still out on its effectiveness. While we do not expect instant results, we would like to see data that supports (or does not support) our strategies and approaches. We also remain interested in the interplay between reading and writing as the foundations of literacy and would like to see writing remain an equal part of the literacy conversation.
2. Now that Phil has been here for a year, we hope he has gotten the lay of the land and will be able to make some assertive moves to improve areas of need in the district with particular emphasis on Bedford High School academics for both identified subgroups and our higher-performing students, building transitions, and supporting the growing social-emotional learning needs for all our students, pre-K through 12th grade.
3. An area for improvement will remain increasing the diversity of our faculty and staff. We acknowledge that Bedford is not alone in striving for improvement in this area and that every comparable district is also working on this, but we will continue to support this work as much as we can.
4. We are looking forward to the evolution of the evaluation system in Bedford and the introduction of artifacts into the process.

Upon reflection, given the excellent performance under duress, the School Committee is proud to affirm our strong support for Mr. Conrad, and take pride in the fact that we made a wonderful choice last year at the end of our superintendent search process. It could be, and should be said, that he exceeded our expectations.

We look forward to working with Mr. Conrad again next year, under what will certainly be less-stressful circumstances.

Dan Brosgol
Chair, Bedford School Committee

Superintendent's Performance Goals



Superintendents must identify at least one student learning goal, one professional practice goal, and two to four district improvement goals. Goals should be SMART and aligned to at least one focus Indicator from the Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership.

Goals	Focus Indicator(s)	Description					Met	Exceeded
Student Learning Goal	I-D, I-F	Support effective instructional practices by engaging in regularly scheduled school visits, observing classrooms with and without the building principal so that the district can support and better align the evaluation process to help ensure teachers have the tools and resources to provide students with the highest quality of instruction.	☐	☐	☐	☐	X	☐
Professional Practice Goal	II (all)	Participate in the first year of the three-year New Superintendent Induction Program (NSIP) launched in 2010 by the DESE and Massachusetts Association School Superintendents (MASS) in collaboration with Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC).	☐	☐	☐	☐	X	☐
District Improvement Goal 1	I-A, I-B, I-D	Support the implementation of the district's literacy plan including the five (5) stated goals of Vision/Leadership and Communication, Assessment, Intervention Processes, Core Curriculum and Instruction, and Professional Development/Coaching	☐	☐	☐	☐	X	☐
District Improvement Goal 2	IV-B	Continue the district's goal of recognizing and supporting students and families in our three diverse communities (Bedford, Boston, and Hanscom) so that our schools and classrooms become more culturally responsive.	☐	☐	☐	☐	X	☐

Superintendents should identify 1-2 focus indicators per Standard aligned to their goals.			
I. Instructional Leadership	II. Management & Operations	III. Family & Community Engagement	IV. Professional Culture
I-A. Curriculum	II-A. Environment	III-A. Engagement	IV-A. Commitment to High Standards
I-B. Instruction	II-B. HR Management and Development	III-B. Sharing Responsibility	IV-B. Cultural Proficiency
I-C. Assessment	II-C. Scheduling & Management Information Systems	III-C. Communication	IV-C. Communication
I-D. Evaluation	II-D. Law, Ethics and Policies	III-D. Family Concerns	IV-D. Continuous Learning
I-E. Data-Informed Decision-making	II-E. Fiscal Systems		IV-E. Shared Vision
I-F. Student Learning			IV-F. Managing Conflict



Superintendent's Performance Rating for Standard I: Instructional Leadership

Rate each focus indicator and indicate the overall Standard rating below. (*Focus Indicators are those aligned to superintendent goal(s).)

	U	NI	P	E
I-A. Curriculum: Ensures that all instructional staff design effective and rigorous standards-based units of instruction consisting of well-structured lessons with measurable outcomes. X Focus Indicator (check if yes)	☐	☐	☒	☐
I-B. Instruction: Ensures that practices in all settings reflect high expectations regarding content and quality of effort and work, engage all students, and are personalized to accommodate diverse learning styles, needs, interests, and levels of readiness. X Focus Indicator (check if yes)	☐	☐	☒	☐
I-C. Assessment: Ensures that all principals and administrators facilitate practices that propel personnel to use a variety of formal and informal methods and assessments to measure student learning, growth, and understanding and make necessary adjustments to their practice when students are not learning. ☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)	☐	☐	☒	☐
I-D. Evaluation: Ensures effective and timely supervision and evaluation of all staff in alignment with state regulations and contract provisions. X Focus Indicator (check if yes)	☐	☐	☒	☐
I-E. Data-Informed Decision Making: Uses multiple sources of evidence related to student learning—including state, district, and school assessment results and growth data—to inform school and district goals and improve organizational performance, educator effectiveness, and student learning. ☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)	☐	☐	☒	☐
I-F. Student Learning: Demonstrates expected impact on student learning based on multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement, including student progress on common assessments and statewide student growth measures where available. X Focus Indicator (check if yes)	The Student Learning Indicator does not have corresponding descriptions of practice. Evidence of impact on student learning based on multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement must be taken into account when determining a performance rating for this Standard.			
OVERALL Rating for Standard I: Instructional Leadership The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes powerful teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.	☐	☐	☒	☐

Comments and analysis (recommended for any overall rating; required for overall rating of **Exemplary**, **Needs Improvement** or **Unsatisfactory**):

Given the challenges of the pandemic, it is difficult to evaluate adequately Mr. Conrad's leadership in every area listed above. It is our belief that he provided strong leadership to staff during a very trying time. It was challenging to measure outcomes when students were in hybrid and remote models of learning, yet Mr. Conrad did a very good job tracking student performance and taking steps to help struggling students. One of his goals is and was to lay the groundwork with the District Leadership Team on the evaluation system and we are glad this is a priority.

One additional area of strength was supporting the district's literacy plan. Mr. Conrad did not lose sight of this district improvement goal and continued to focus on it throughout the year by supporting the work of Dr. Clifford and providing for it in the budget.

The tours of the buildings in the fall and winter for the committee were incredibly helpful to visualize how all the COVID protocols were being implemented, what pandemic instruction looked like, and the general feeling in the buildings. Mr. Conrad was quick to allow and coordinate such visits and was happy to welcome us into the buildings.



Superintendent's Performance Rating for Standard II: Management & Operations

Rate each focus indicator and indicate the overall Standard rating below. (*Focus Indicators are those aligned to superintendent goal(s).)		U	NI	P	E
II-A. Environment: Develops and executes effective plans, procedures, routines, and operational systems to address a full range of safety, health, emotional, and social needs. ☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)		☐	☐	X	☐
II-B. Human Resources Management and Development: Implements a cohesive approach to recruiting, hiring, induction, development, and career growth that promotes high-quality and effective practice. ☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)		☐	☐	X	☐
II-C. Scheduling and Management Information Systems: Uses systems to ensure optimal use of data and time for teaching, learning, and collaboration, minimizing disruptions and distractions for school-level staff. ☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)		☐	☐	X	☐
II-D. Law, Ethics, and Policies: Understands and complies with state and federal laws and mandates, school committee policies, collective bargaining agreements, and ethical guidelines. ☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)		☐	☐	X	☐
II-E. Fiscal Systems: Develops a budget that supports the district's vision, mission, and goals; allocates and manages expenditures consistent with district- and school-level goals and available resources. ☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)		☐	☐	X	☐
OVERALL Rating for Standard II: Management & Operations		☐	☐	X	☐

Comments and analysis (recommended for any overall rating; required for overall rating of *Exemplary*, *Needs Improvement* or *Unsatisfactory*):

Mr. Conrad did an excellent job working with the Director of Finance to keep all stakeholders up-to-date with a constantly-changing budget this year. He regularly communicated with the School Committee and Finance Committee to make sure that student needs were being met, and successfully created a series of budgets that reflected district priorities as guidance and policy seemingly changed on a weekly basis. One of Bedford's real assets is the warm relationship between the Schools and the Town, with the Finance Committee a key constituency in this, and Mr. Conrad and the Committee has worked hard to maintain that collaborative relationship cultivated by his predecessors.

When fiscal decisions with long-term consequences had to be made in real time, Mr. Conrad demonstrated an ability to work closely with stakeholders, elected and appointed officials, and Town staff in to ensure that the schools had what was needed to operate effectively. There were a lot of moving parts, including new sources of state and federal funding, and Mr. Conrad and the Director of Finance made sure the funding was managed properly. The entire community benefited from his leadership.

Independent of the budget process, the Committee was very impressed with how quickly Mr. Conrad adjusted to his new role as superintendent and moved to address concerns about Covid-19 in Bedford. He worked well with public health and Town officials to share information with parents about health, teaching, and budget issues. He kept parents and school committee members updated, worked closely with other districts, and pushed DESE for guidance on a host of Covid-19 related-issues.

In his first weeks as superintendent, Mr. Conrad quickly learned the layout of Bedford and took the necessary steps to ensure the district was implementing necessary protocols to keep students, staff, and faculty safe. This included working closely with Facilities, the Director of Health and Human Services, and the Town Manager. He was a strong advocate for the adoption of pool testing, ensuring installation of air filters throughout the buildings, supporting vaccine clinics, arranging for local Covid-19 testing options, providing space for food pantry, making sure counseling services were available to students who were struggling, and doing what he could to support students in the hybrid and remote models. It would have been easy for Mr. Conrad to say to students who opted for remote learning that they would not have access to Bedford teachers, but based on community and School Committee feedback, he committed resources to make it possible for remote students to learn in a Bedford-for-Bedford remote option and participate in modified athletic seasons.

In a year when Bedford needed to hire additional teachers and aides to support students in the buildings and learning remotely. Mr. Conrad made sure that quality staff were hired. Moreover, he provided support to staff as Covid-19 spread in the community and took efforts to make staff feel safe.

New legal issues came up in many settings this year. When more guidance was needed, Mr. Conrad did not hesitate to reach out to counsel to ensure that the decisions we made as a district were supported by Massachusetts law. Examples include a local real estate dispute, the dissolution of the EDCO Collaborative, contract concerns with the union, and meeting the needs of students who were not successful with remote learning.

Superintendent's Performance Rating for Standard III: Family and Community Engagement



Rate each focus indicator and indicate the overall Standard rating below. (*Focus Indicators are those aligned to superintendent goal(s).)

	U	NI	P	E
III-A. Engagement: Actively ensures that all families are welcome members of the classroom and school community and can contribute to the effectiveness of the classroom, school, district, and community. ☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)	☐	☐	X	☐
III-B. Sharing Responsibility: Continuously collaborates with families and community stakeholders to support student learning and development at home, school, and in the community. ☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)	☐	☐	X	☐
III-C. Communication: Engages in regular, two-way, culturally proficient communication with families and community stakeholders about student learning and performance. ☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)	☐	☐	X	☐
III-D. Family Concerns: Addresses family and community concerns in an equitable, effective, and efficient manner. ☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)	☐	☐	☐	X
OVERALL Rating for Standard III: Family & Community Engagement The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the district and its schools.	☐	☐	X	☐

Comments and analysis (recommended for any overall rating of Exemplary, Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory):

Mr. Conrad came into the district in the midst of a pandemic; there was no honeymoon. Even before classes began, he was in touch with families letting them know what to expect when no one knew what school would look like. Once school began, Mr. Conrad kept in close contact with families, teachers, staff and members of the school committee and provided comprehensive weekly updates to keep everyone informed. His weekly memos gave parents important information about resources and next steps including pool testing, vaccine information, Covid-19 resources, and positivity rates. He also ensured that staff were in regular contact with students and followed up in situations where students had unexplained absences from hybrid and remote learning.

Within the constraints of a public health crisis which necessitated limited in-person contact, Mr. Conrad made efforts to reach out to the

many constituencies in Bedford Public Schools. We look forward to seeing his progress as public health restrictions loosen, particularly engagement with families of students from Hanscom and METCO, and to the families of SEPAC so that BPS can ensure it meets the needs of all students. It will also be a nice change to be able to have Mr. Conrad attend Town events and meet people face-to-face after a year of engaging with them virtually. In fact, this will be a good thing for all of us.

Throughout the year, Phil was bombarded with emails and we feel like he did his best to respond to most of them in a timely fashion. He always maintained a calm and measured demeanor in response to hostile emails and comments, which is commendable. In a consistently positive and collaborative manner and despite rising tensions, Mr. Conrad addressed the competing interests of vocal parent constituencies and reached out to the less-vocal constituencies to seek their input about pandemic learning via surveys. Mr. Conrad made parents feel welcomed and heard during the public comment period of School Committee meetings and listened to their concerns and opinions about how the schools should operate during a pandemic, even if he did not agree with them.

With his leadership team and staff, Mr. Conrad crafted a series of plans to address these concerns in an equitable fashion beginning with those students identified at greatest risk. He took the time to thoughtfully plan a return to school that met most families' educational and health concerns. He did so under heavy pressure and questioning from the parent community and the School Committee on a weekly basis, and the "can do" attitude he fostered amongst his leadership team and the staff is particularly noteworthy.

We note here that a trusting and honest relationship between Superintendent and School Committee is essential for Bedford and as Mr. Conrad knows, in other districts it can be a hostile or adversarial relationship. As a new superintendent, Mr. Conrad perhaps relied on guidance and the experience of other superintendents and mentors with that kind of perspective and was more hesitant to share certain things with the School Committee. While we value and appreciate Mr. Conrad's induction into the position and his collaboration and mentorship by others, lessons learned elsewhere or taught by those with less collaborative experience might not always translate to successful strategies for Bedford. We also note that as the year went on, Mr. Conrad showed increasing comfort with the environment and allowed his personality to come through in public settings, in addition to being more comfortable partnering with the School Committee in more challenging areas.

Our district is unique in that we draw students from Bedford, Hanscom Air Force Base, and Boston. Our students bring different perspectives and experiences into the classroom. There remains work to be done around inclusion, diversity, and acceptance but the conversation has not stopped, and Mr. Conrad appears to be genuinely committed to making our schools and classrooms more culturally responsive. He represents well to the community the district's values, accomplishments, priorities, and needs.

Superintendent's Performance Rating for Standard IV: Professional Culture

Rate each focus indicator and indicate the overall Standard rating below. (*Focus Indicators are those aligned to superintendent goal(s).)

U	NI	P	E
☐	☐	X	☐
☐	☐	X	☐
☐	☐	X	☐
☐	☐	X	☐
☐	☐	X	☐
☐	☐	X	☐
☐	☐	☐	X
☐	☐	X	☐

IV-A. Commitment to High Standards: Fosters a shared commitment to high standards of service, teaching, and learning with high expectations for achievement for all.
☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)

IV-B. Cultural Proficiency: Ensures that policies and practices enable staff members and students to interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment in which students' backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges are respected.
X Focus Indicator (check if yes)

IV-C. Communication: Demonstrates strong interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills.
☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)

IV-D. Continuous Learning: Develops and nurtures a culture in which staff members are reflective about their practice and use student data, current research, best practices, and theory to continuously adapt practice and achieve improved results. Models these behaviors in his or her own practice.
☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)

IV-E. Shared Vision: Successfully and continuously engages all stakeholders in the creation of a shared educational vision in which every student is prepared to succeed in postsecondary education and become a responsible citizen and global contributor.
☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)

IV-F. Managing Conflict: Employs strategies for responding to disagreement and dissent, constructively resolving conflict and building consensus throughout a district or school community.
☐ Focus Indicator (check if yes)

OVERALL Rating for Standard IV: Professional Culture

The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by nurturing and sustaining a districtwide culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

Comments and analysis (recommended for any overall rating; required for overall rating of Exemplary, Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory):

In a consistently positive and collaborative manner, Mr. Conrad addressed the competing interests of often-vocal parent constituencies with different viewpoints on in-person schooling, the Bedford Educational Association, and the Town about what education should look like in a pandemic. The final plan appeared to minimize pandemic-related disruptions to in-person education seen in some other districts through the school year. And in a year when the faculty, staff and administration were asked to do without cost of living

increases and teach under challenging conditions, and other districts experienced strained labor relations, Mr. Conrad maintained good relations with the BPS employees.

Mr. Conrad communicates well, and succinctly. There were a few missteps this year (“Privilege pods”, “Board of Health”), but he is always reflective and takes responsibility publicly for them. When it comes to Focus Indicator IV-A: Commitment to High Standards, we hope to see him strike a balance between the messages of Challenge Success and those that foster high achievement, as our high-performing learners appear to have stagnated in recent years. This issue was brought to Mr. Conrad’s attention during his interview process and we are still concerned about it.

Mr. Conrad has leveraged Dr. Clifford’s expertise to lead efforts to improve continuous learning and align education across the district using student data, current research, and best practices. He is modeling the need for ongoing professional development himself through his active engagement in the New Superintendent Induction Program as well as his work orienting himself to METCO.

It is worth noting that Phil inherited a “Portrait of a Graduate” that was received coolly by the Committee and the community. We are interested to see how Phil creates a new conversation on a vision for BPS with his personal imprint.

