



# PEER ASSISTANCE AND REVIEW HANDBOOK

PEER ASSISTANCE AND REVIEW (PAR) PANEL MEMBERS

Kristin Finney, TOSA.....TRUE Co Chair Appointee  
Olivia Wilkins, Teacher.....TRUE Appointee  
Rebecca LeDoux, Teacher..... TRUE Appointee  
Crystal Grooms, Teacher.....TRUE Appointee  
Betty VonWerlhof, Director.....Superintendent Appointee  
Ellen Giffin, Principal.....Superintendent Appointee  
Diedre Barlow, Principal.....Superintendent Appointee

\* Co-Chair of the PAR Panel

PAR DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Andrew Withers\* ..... Director, Curriculum & PD  
Kristin Finney\* ..... TOSA  
Crystal Grooms.....Classroom Teacher  
Jeanette Providence.....Classroom Teacher  
Linda Powell ..... TOSA  
Jim McLaughlin ..... Principal  
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Betty VonWerlhof ..... Director, Human Resources

PAR Mission Statement:

To provide teachers with high quality support that empowers them to grow into effective educators who guide students to unparalleled academic achievement.



## OVERVIEW OF THE PAR PROGRAM

The purpose of the joint Twin Rivers United Educators (TRUE)/Twin Rivers Unified School District (TRUSD) Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program is to assist all teachers to meet standards for effective teaching. Because the teacher's union and the administration jointly developed PAR, this program represents a qualitative shift in how our system supports and evaluates teachers. The design of the PAR program is a result of educational best practices from districts across the state and nation and the collaborative work between TRUE and TRUSD.

Based on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP), with performance criteria for how the standards are to be met and descriptive examples of observable teacher behaviors, the essential elements of the system are as follows:

The single most powerful outcome of PAR may be its impact on teacher professionalism. As teachers and their unions begin to participate structurally, *officially*, in matters of teacher quality, they may alter the ways the teaching profession is conceived and regulated. [The Peer Assistance and Review Reader](#)

- *Peer Assistance and Review (PAR)* program that has MTs who provide classroom management and instructional support to teachers not performing to standard. The PAR program is a joint venture with an oversight panel composed of teachers appointed by the union and administrators appointed by the Superintendent who share responsibility for quality control and improvement.

## COMPONENTS OF THE PAR PROGRAM

### THE PAR PANEL

The PAR Panel consists of seven (7) members appointed by their respective entities:

- Four (4) teachers appointed by TRUE including the president and three teachers. Representation is as follows: one (1) Elementary teacher, one (1) Middle/Jr. High teacher, and one (1) High school teacher.
- Three (3) administrators appointed by the Superintendent including a designee of the Superintendent and two (2) site administrators representing elementary and secondary.

Members of the PAR Panel will serve a five-year term, excluding the TRUE President and Superintendent Designee who will not have a

term limit. Terms will be staggered so appointees' terms expire on a rotating basis.

To ensure a full voting contingency at each PAR Panel meeting, there will be appointed alternate panel members who will be trained along with full panel members but will only attend PAR Panel meetings when required by an absence by a full Panel member. Alternates do not have term limits.

- Two (2) TRUE alternative members, one (1) representing elementary and one (1) representing secondary.
- Two (2) district alternative members, one (1) representing elementary and one (1) representing secondary.

The PAR Panel will send its recommendations directly to the Superintendent, who will review and make all final decisions on matters related

to an individual teacher's continuation of contract, or dismissal.

The PAR Panel will meet in:

- August (for calibration training and review of assignment of MTs to PTs)
- October
- December
- February (held at least 90 days before the May appeal meeting)
- April
- May (held at least 5 days before the last day of instruction)

The duties of the PAR Panel include the following:

- Recruit, interview and select MTs.
- Assign, reassign, review, evaluate, and renew or release MTs and provide support to the MTs.
- Coordinate the professional development of the MTs.
- Determine the policies, and procedures that govern PAR.
- Co-Chairs will meet with the Superintendent in October, January,

Teaching is a difficult profession and I am encouraged by the supports a well thought out PAR Program can offer a struggling teacher. This program offers a fair and unbiased way to work with a teacher who may just need the extra attention to become the teacher they set out to be.

*Kristin Finney – Twin Rivers United Educators*

and April to communicate information and concerns about the program.

- Conduct hearings on inclusion into the PAR program or non-inclusion and referral back to the site for additional support. The PAR Panel notifies the teacher and site administrator of their decision.
- Review all interim and final reports, including MT reports and evaluations, Principal's formal evaluation, and other supporting evidence in order to make employment recommendations to Superintendent of:
  - Meeting Standard on all CSTPs 1-5
    - return to normal evaluation cycle (with or without support plan)
  - Does Not Meet Standard on one or more CSTPs 1-5
    - 30-day notice of dismissal
  - An additional period of support.
- Address and resolve concerns of PTs or Principals regarding PAR program or support.
- PAR Coordinator/Co-Chairs communicate with site principals as directed by the PAR panel.
- District Co-Chair signs all evaluation reports completed by MTs.

### PAR COORDINATOR/CO-CHAIR

The duties of the PAR Coordinator/Co-Chair include the following:

- Provide feedback about the MTs duties, workload, evaluation, and other relevant information to the PAR Panel.
- Communicate with site principals as directed by the PAR panel.

### MENTOR TEACHER (MT)

A MT is a fulltime-release teacher who provides assistance to a teacher assigned to the PAR Program. MTs are experienced teaching professionals who are selected through a rigorous process, which included input from the PAR Panel. A rigorous selection process ensures that they are outstanding teachers that are able to communicate their knowledge and strategies about best practices to adult learners.

The MT will provide support on a full-time release basis for the purpose of observing PAR Teachers (PT) and meeting with them to plan and provide support and assistance. In addition, the PAR Panel may authorize additional support appropriate to meet the needs of the participating teacher.

The term of a MT shall be one (1) year with an extension of three (3) years for a total of four (4) years; full time release. Upon completion of the fourth year, the MT must return to the classroom for at least two (2) year before reapplying to be a MT.

The parties do not see participation in the PAR Program as part of a career ladder to becoming a District Administrator. Therefore, applicants must agree to not be appointed to an administrative position during their term or be appointed to such a position for one (1) school year following their term.

At the conclusion of their service, MT's shall have return rights to a position for which they are qualified as their school of origin, If there is no open position, a position will be created by an involuntary transfer of the least senior teacher at that site.

The following are the minimum qualifications for a MT:

- A credentialed teacher with permanent status in Twin Rivers.
- Five (5) years of recent experience in classroom instruction; three of which must have been as a classroom teacher in Twin Rivers.
- Must have Teacher Evaluation at "Meets" or above on all TRUSD evaluations.

### DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS, EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE:

- Master's degree preferred.
- Experience in modeling teaching behavior to adult learners in a variety of settings (e.g., workshops, seminars, courses, etc.)

PAR assigns a significant portion of the responsibility for teacher quality to teachers. Teachers who have demonstrated excellence in their fields are given the opportunity to share their knowledge, try something new, and reflect on good practice full-time.

The Peer Assistance and Review Reader

- Demonstrated understanding and ability to implement the California Common Core Standards and imbedded instructional strategies of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity.
- Evidence of instructional leadership (e.g. team leader, resource teacher, interdisciplinary resource teacher, department chair, system wide committees, Instructional Leadership Team, etc.)
- Ability to demonstrate best practices in a variety of teaching methods and to model a repertoire of teaching skills.
- Knowledge of best practices in instructional strategies, including high quality first instruction, for the improvement of classroom instruction.
- Demonstrated ability to analyze student results and achievement data and to implement appropriate strategies to meet student needs.
- Excellent communication, interpersonal and leadership skills.
- Ability to coach and mentor adults in need of professional assistance.

The caseload of a MT shall be based on a 12-point system. A new teacher (induction) counts as one (1) point while a PAR Teacher will count as three (3) points. A MT will not be assigned more than three (3) PAR Teachers without their written consent. The caseload can be reduced at the PAR Panels discretion.

A primary duty of the MT is to write and monitor a growth plan (*Goal Setting form*) for each PT included in the PAR program. The purpose of a growth plan may not address all

areas of need; observation feedback should include areas addressed in the growth plan, but should also continue to address any other aspects of teaching and learning that the observer deems significant.

The MT will seek input from the Principal and from the PT while drafting the growth plan.

#### TEACHERS SERVED BY THE PAR PROGRAM

The following categories of teachers will be referred to the PAR program for possible inclusion:

- Permanent, non-probationary classroom teachers who have received three (3) or more “Does Not Meet” on CSPT 1-5 identified key sub-standards on formal evaluation; or
- Permanent, non-probationary classroom teacher who received two (2) “Does Not Meet” on CSTP 1-5 identified key sub-standards for two (2) consecutive years.
- Permanent, non-probationary classroom teacher who voluntarily seeks to improve their teaching performance

#### THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN THE PAR PROGRAM

Principals or immediate supervisors have an important role in the multiyear professional growth cycle of TRUSD teachers. However, for teachers assigned to the PAR Program, the evaluation process becomes the responsibility of the PAR Program, which includes the written evaluation, completed by the MT. The site Principal or designee is required to complete four (4) reflections on CSTP Standard 6 using provided forms for review during each PAR Panel Meeting.

The Principal or immediate supervisor is required to attend each PAR Panel meeting to provide the PAR Panel with information related to CSTP Standard 6, additional information may be presented as he or she feels it necessary during Panel meetings. Additionally, the Principal or designee and MT will conduct two (2) joint walk throughs, one during Round 2 and one during Round 3 of the PAR process. These observations will be used to calibrate MT and site administrations observation practices and are not part of the administrators evaluative evidence provided to the panel.

The MT will share the Formal Observation (Round 3), and Final Observation (Round 4) with the PT and Principal.

The Principal will help to coordinate support by school-based staff as requested by the MT or the PAR Panel, while preserving appropriate levels of confidentiality regarding the teacher's inclusion in PAR. When the PAR Panel identifies site-based impediments to possible success, the PAR Panel will request specific remedies be completed by the Principal.

While the PT is in the PAR program, the Principal continues to supervise the teacher. He or she coordinates school support, responds to

parent concerns, and deals with other professional conduct based issues; and should continue to conduct informal walk-through observations and provide feedback to the PT and MT as monitored by the PAR Coordinator/Co-Chairs.

Communication and coordination among the MT, the Principal, and other members of the school instructional leadership team are essential but must be done with the highest level of confidentiality. Such collaboration will ensure that the PAR Teacher receives complementary, consistent messages about expectations and instructional improvements from all who are providing support.

When the Principal or immediate supervisor disagrees with the Final Evaluation of the MT, he or she may appear before the PAR Panel and provide further information with documentation. When this occurs, the teacher will also be invited to appear before the PAR Panel to provide additional information.

## MANDATORY PAR

### TRIGGER FOR INCLUSION INTO THE PAR PROGRAM

When a teacher, who is not currently in the PAR Program, receives three (3) or more "Does Not Meet" on CSTP 1-5 on an evaluation, or who receives two (2) "Does Not Meet" on CSTP 1-5 for two (2) consecutive years, the site administrator or immediate supervisor notifies the Human Resources Department no later than March 15th.

The Principal will provide evidence to support a "does not meet" and evidence of previous supports offered to the PAR Coordinator/Co-Chairs. The PAR Coordinator/Co-Chairs will assign a PAR Mentor to conduct a review of the teacher's classroom practices.

Maria Cianca, Principal and Rochester PAR Governance Panel Member....

*Principals benefit because they engage their best teachers in leadership roles.... students benefit when teachers develop their best practices and become not only skilled but aware of the skills they demonstrate.... PAR works because it is a professionally developed program that is monitored in a collegial, collaborative manner....*

The MT will:

- complete a minimum of two formal observations (one announced and one unannounced); and
- make a written recommendation to the PAR Panel.
- If the MT finds there is not adequate evidence of deficiencies the evaluation will be returned to PAR Coordinator/Co-Chairs who will –
  - Work with the Director of Professional Development to provide training to the evaluator on Evaluation Processes including, but not limited to, observation strategies, evidence documentation.
  - The teacher will be placed on a one-year Work-Plan and will be evaluated as part of the Work-Plan.

The PAR Panel will

- hear the report from the MT,
- hear from the site administrator, if he or she should decide to make an oral presentation to the Panel.

The PAR Panel will

- decide on inclusion and notifies the teacher and administrator of the decision; or
- decide on non-inclusion in the program; and
  - the PAR Coordinator/Co-Chairs return the evaluation and Reviewer's report to the Director of Professional

Development to provide training to the evaluator on Evaluation Processes including, but not limited to, observation strategies, evidence documentation.

- notifies the teacher and administrator of the decision.

When the PAR Panel's final recommendation is in disagreement with the final evaluation of the Principal:

- The PAR evaluation, the Principals Evaluation, along with the PAR Panels Review will become part of the employee's cumulative performance folder.

#### PAR PROGRAM SUPPORT

The normal period of support will be from August to April, unless the PAR Panel recommends a longer or shorter period of PAR support. These decisions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### PAR PROCESS EXPECTATIONS BY ROUNDS

Requirements and expectations for each round can be found in the **"PAR Process Expectations by Rounds"** (Table 1) below.

During the PAR Panel Round-3 meeting, if the Panel determines that:

- based on provided evidence, the teacher has not met an acceptable level of proficiency on CSTP 1-5 to reasonably determine that the teacher would be able to provide a safe and engaging learning environment for students. The Panel will instruct the Human Resources Department to issue a 90-day intent to release notification, as required by California Education Code.



- If sufficient progress is demonstrated during the Round-4 Par Panel meeting the 90-day notification will be rescinded.

During the PAR Panel Round-4 meeting, the Panel will determine that:

- based on provided evidence, the teacher has met an acceptable level of proficiency on the identified standards to reasonably determine that the teacher will be minimally effective in the areas of classroom management and appropriate use of instructional strategies to ensure a safe and engaging learning environment for students; or
- based on provided evidence, the teacher has not met an acceptable level of proficiency on CSTP 1-5 to reasonably determine that the teacher would be able to provide a safe and engaging learning environment for students.
  - The Panel will instruct the Human Resources Department to issue a 30-day intent to release notification, as required by California Education Code.
- In specific instances the PAR Panel may decide that, based on provided evidence, the teacher is likely to meet an acceptable level of proficiency on the identified standards to reasonably determine that the teacher will be at least minimally effective in the areas of classroom management and appropriate use of instructional strategies to ensure a safe and engaging learning environment for

students with additional support. The amount and time of support must be identified by the Panel but may not exceed one year of support.

Appeals to the process will be heard at the May meeting.

#### PAR PANEL DECISION – MEETS STANDARDS

The PAR Panel determines that based on provided evidence, the teacher has met an acceptable level of proficiency on CSTP 1-5 to reasonably determine that the teacher will be minimally effective in the areas of classroom management and appropriate use of instructional strategies to ensure a safe and engaging learning environment for students

- Teacher is released from PAR and returned to the normal evaluation cycle. The Panel may determine that additional site support is necessary or recommended.

The PAR Panel will notify the PT and Principal in writing of the PAR Panel's recommendation. The letter will include the information on the process to appeal the tentative recommendation, including a date by which the appeal must be filed.

**NOTE** – if the PT is recommended to the PAR Program again within a three-year period, and the PAR Panel concurs that the needs of the teacher warrant the support of the program, the PAR Panel will recommend to the Superintendent that the teacher be moved to dismissal by the district in accordance with due process as provided by California Education Code.

If after a three-year period a PAR Teacher is referred back to PAR, that teacher will have the opportunity to repeat the program one time.

#### PAR PANEL DECISION – BELOW STANDARDS

The PAR Panel determines that based on provided evidence, the teacher has not met an

acceptable level of proficiency on the CSTPs 1-5 to reasonably determine that the teacher would be able to provide a safe and engaging learning environment for students.

- The teacher is released from PAR and a recommendation is filed with the Superintendent to dismiss the teacher in accordance with due process as provided by California Education Code.

The PAR Panel will notify the PT and Principal in writing of the PAR Panel's recommendation. The letter will include the information on the process to appeal the tentative recommendation, including a date by which the appeal must be filed.

#### SECOND YEAR IN PAR PROGRAMS

The Panel determines, in specific instances, that based on provided evidence, the teacher is likely, with additional support, to meet an acceptable level of proficiency on the identified standards to reasonably determine that the teacher will be at least minimally effective in the areas of classroom management and appropriate use of instructional strategies to ensure a safe and engaging learning environment for students.

The following criteria may be used when considering an extended period of time in the PAR program:

- The PT demonstrated growth towards meeting the standards for effective teaching.
- The PT was assigned to teach outside of their credential area or assigned to teach in an unfamiliar setting (i.e. middle school core; education options setting).
- The MT reports that site support was limited or requested resources were not provided in a timely manner.

- There are circumstances that may have had an effect on the performance of the PT not within the Teacher's control.

The amount and time of support must be identified by the Panel but may not exceed one year of support.

**NOTE:** Failing to meet standard six (6) will not be cause for remaining in PAR for additional support.

#### THE APPEAL PROCESS

In any instance in which the PT or Principal wishes to appeal the tentative recommendation of the PAR Panel, both the PT and the Principal involved will be invited to make a presentation before the PAR Panel.

##### *Principal Appeal Presentation*

The Principal may appeal the tentative recommendation of the PAR Panel at the May Panel Meeting. The presentation will be scheduled for 30 minutes, with the first half of the allotted time for presenting evidence to support the Principal's appeal. The second half of the allotted time is used to entertain questions from PAR Panel members. The Principal must provide written documentation based on the standards, to support their appeal. Copies must be presented to panel in advance of the presentation.

##### *Participating Teacher Appeal Presentation*

The PT may appeal a tentative recommendation of dismissal but may not appeal a tentative recommendation of additional time in the PAR program. The presentation will be scheduled for 30 minutes, with the first half of the allotted time for presenting evidence to support the PT's appeal. The second half of the allotted time is used to entertain questions from PAR Panel members. The PT may bring written documentation based

on the standards to support their point of view. Copies must be presented to panel in advance of the presentation.

The PT may bring a TRUE representative or other guest with them when addressing the PAR Panel.

#### FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The PAR Panel discusses the case following appeal presentations and considers its tentative recommendation without the presence of either the PT or the Principal; the MT will be present should clarification in regards to submitted information or reports be needed. The PAR Panel notifies the PT and Principal in writing of the PAR Panel's final recommendation to the Superintendent.

If neither the PT nor Principal appeal the PAR Panel's tentative recommendation, then that recommendation becomes the final recommendation.

#### EMERGENCY LEAVE WHILE IN THE PAR PROGRAM

If the PT goes on paid or unpaid leave while in the PAR program, the process will be completed upon return. The PAR Panel will decide on any adjustments to the process on a case-by-case basis.

#### RESIGNATION WHILE IN THE PAR PROGRAM

If a teacher in the PAR program tenders his or her resignation or gives notification of intent to retire at the end of the school year, it will not affect the data gathering or support provided by the MT, nor will it be taken into consideration by the PAR Panel when rendering a final recommendation.

## VOLUNTEER PAR

The goal of the voluntary PAR Program is to improve the teacher's classroom practices to ensure the environment and instructional practices that have been demonstrated as being effective to student learning are developed and practices to become an integral part of their daily instructional practices.

Teacher eligible to participate in the volunteer PAR program based on availability:

- Permanent, non-probationary classroom teacher who voluntarily seeks to improve their teaching performance

The normal period of support will be from September to April; extension of support will not be allowed, nor can a teacher voluntarily participate more than once.

All communication and documentation between MT and Self-Referred Teacher are confidential and, without the written consent of the Self-Referred Teacher, shall not be shared with others including the site Principal or PAR Panel.

All documentation produced while the teacher is participating in the program is the property of the Self-Referred Teacher and will not be placed in their personnel file.

# PAR PROCESS EXPECTATIONS BY ROUNDS

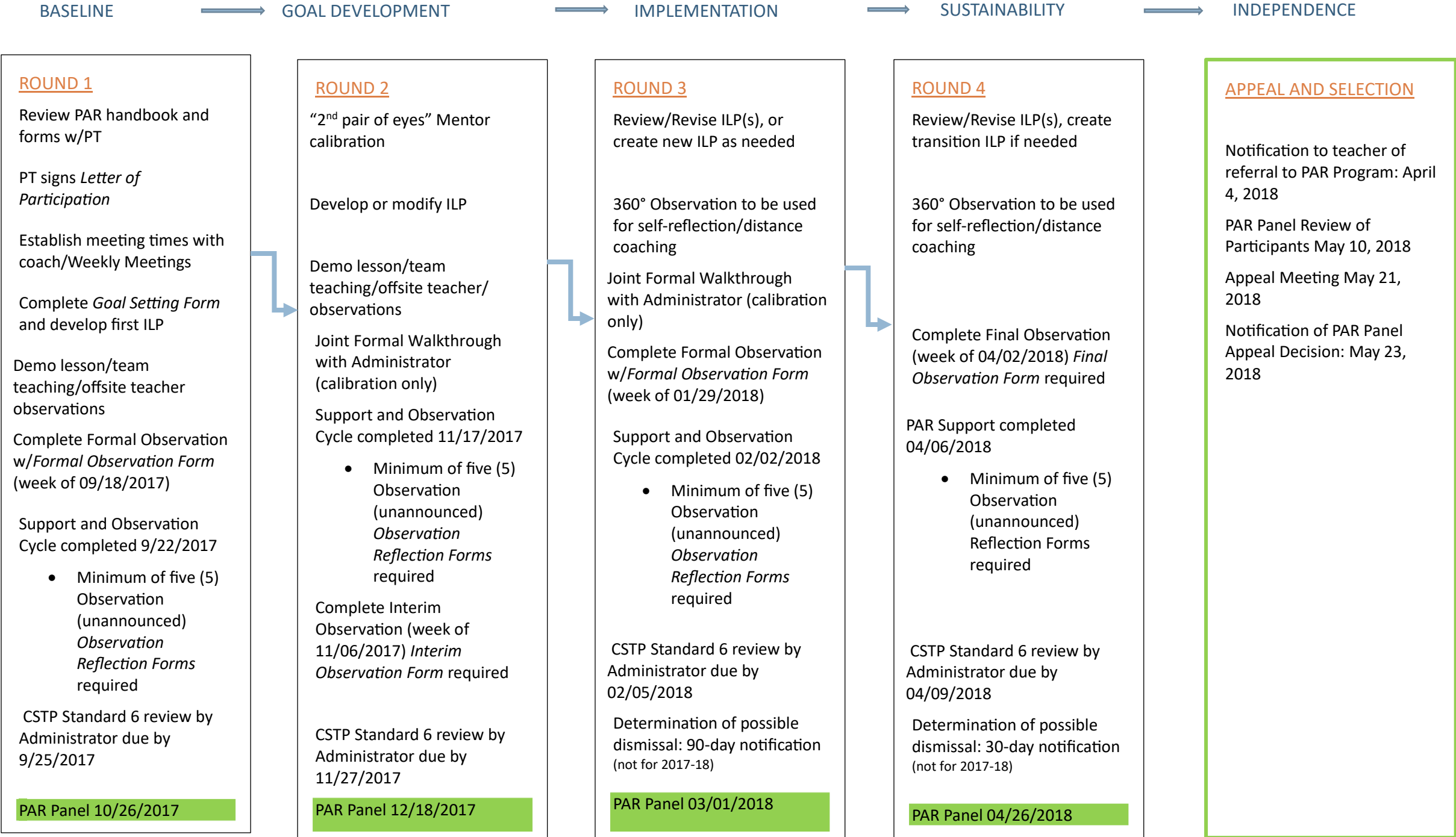


Table 1



## Peer Assistance and Review Program

### DEFINITION OF TERMS

#### MENTOR TEACHER (MT)

An exemplary teacher meeting the requirements of this agreement and selected by the PAR Panel to provide assistance to a Participating Teacher. Assignment includes working with Induction Teachers.

#### PARTICIPATING TEACHER (PT)

Any teacher with permanent status who receives three (3) or more "Does Not Meet" (in COST 1-5) on an evaluation or who received two (2) "Does Not Meet" for two (2) consecutive years, following the "Work Plan" year who are assigned to participate in the PAR Program.

#### SELF-REFERRED TEACHER

Any teacher with permanent status who volunteers to participate in PAR.

#### EVALUATION

The process of reviewing a Participating Teacher's skills, activities, and conduct through Formal Observations, Visitations, and supervisory activities, and using information obtained by the Mentor Teacher to assist in the improvement of Participating Teacher's performance and to assess competence in areas identified as needing improvement.

#### FORMAL OBSERVATION

An announced activity for the purpose of improvement of instruction and/or performance, consisting of a direct, in-classroom, formal witnessing of a Participating Teachers classroom activity by the Mentor Teacher or Principal of no less than thirty minutes' duration.

#### INDUCTION TEACHERS\*

A teacher who holds a California Preliminary Credential who is participating in an Induction Program to earn a California Professional Clear Credential.

#### PAR COORDINATOR

District level administrator, who, in collaboration with the PAR Panel, oversees general operations of the PAR program and the evaluation of the Mentor Teachers.

#### PAR PANEL

A committee comprised of teachers and administrators whose responsibility is to direct the PAR program.

#### PAR PROGRAM

Allows exemplary teachers to assist their teachers in the areas of subject matter knowledge, teaching strategies, classroom management and/or teaching methods and instruction.



#### Peer Assistance and Review Program

##### UNANNOUNCED OBSERVATION

An unannounced activity for the purpose of improvement of instruction and/or performance, consisting of a direct, in-classroom, formal witnessing of a Participating Teachers classroom activity by the Mentor Teacher or Principal of no less than thirty minutes' duration.

##### VISITATION

A visit to a Participating Teacher's classroom by a Mentor Teacher. Visitations may be unscheduled and conducted with or without notice.

##### PAR REVIEWER

The person who conducts the PAR Review for inclusion into the PAR Program. When possible the Reviewer will be a current MT or trained Induction Mentor as assigned by PAR Coordinator/Co-Chairs.

\* Formally referred to as Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) Program.