
PAR

Peer Assistant and Review equals Improved Instruction

Niles Township High School District 219
Skokie, Illinois

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Teaching and Learning

What to expect

- An Understanding of Peer Assistance Review (PAR)
 - Structure of PAR at District 219
 - Positive Results of PAR
 - Challenges of Implementing PAR
 - An Opportunity to Ask Questions
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Introductions

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Demographic Breakdown of District 219

Race	District	North	West
White	46%	43%	48%
Asian	31%	34%	29%
Hispanic	12%	12%	13%
Black	7%	8%	6%
Other	4%	3%	4%

1. Research indicates that a 1% increase in teacher quality was associated with a 3% to 5% decline in the percentage of students failing the [state] exam. (Darling Hammond, 2010)
 2. According to a recent study, teachers who receive "little or no induction have the highest attrition with 21 % leaving after the first years" (Heitin, 2011). Those teachers who receive a comprehensive package of services, including a mentor, opportunities to collaborate and other resources, attrition goes down by 9%. (Darling Hammond, 2010)
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3. The American Federation of Teachers suggests that PAR programs have three goals:
- Allow union involvement in program implementation and evaluation.
 - Provide assistance to inexperienced teachers.
 - Recruit qualified teachers to provide peer assistance and peer review.
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4. *“Now, if we do all this and find that there are teachers who are still struggling and underperforming, we should provide them with individual help and support. And if they're still underperforming after that, we should find a quick and fair way to put another teacher in that classroom. Teacher associations and school boards in a number of cities have led the way by developing Peer Assistance and Review plans that do exactly this – setting professional standards that put children first. We owe our teachers that, and we owe our children that.”*

- Barack Obama, President of the United States
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Quality Matters

Quality matters and should be a major focus of efforts to upgrade the quality of schooling. Skilled teachers are the most critical of all school inputs (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Quality Matters

The quality of teachers in the classroom will do more for students who are most educationally at risk, those prone to fail, than reducing the class size or improving the capital stock by any reasonable margin which would be available to policy makers (Darling Hammond, 2010).

What is PAR?

Peer Assistance Review offers new teachers support, advice, and guidance provided by a peer (consulting teacher) who has been identified as an excellent teacher.

What is PAR?

An Evaluation system for new, nontenured teachers

Conducted by certified, tenured teachers

Intense, frequent formative evaluation

Greater growth of new teachers

Greater acclimation of teachers to district

Assists other administrators in evaluation of new teachers

Also serves as the Professional Growth Plan for tenured teachers receiving a Needs Improvement

How Did District 219 Begin Its PAR Experience?

- Albert Shanker Institute
 - Teacher Union Proposed Adopting PAR
 - Invited Dale Lawrence to Speak with Administration and Staff on a Weekend
 - The Union and the Administration Negotiated the Specifics of the PAR Program
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- Teachers who receive “little or no induction have the highest attrition, with 21% leaving after the first years (Heitin, 2011).
 - Those teachers who “receive a comprehensive package of services, including a mentor, opportunities to collaborate, and other resources, attrition goes down to 9%” (Heitin, 2011).
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- Peer review is probably the most powerful demonstration that teachers create and display a knowledge of practice. In the twenty or so school districts that have tried it, teachers have found that peer review **brings higher standards to teaching.** It significantly changes the conception of teaching work by recognizing the well as skill and technique. It recognizes a legitimate role for teachers in establishing and enforcing standards in their own occupation. For unions, it represents both a **radical departure from established industrial norms** and a rediscovery of traditional craft union and guild functions. (Kerchner, Koppich and Weeres, 1997)
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Par Panel

- Governing board of the PAR Program.
 - Made up of five union representatives and four administration representatives.
 - Chairmanship of this panel rotates annually between the president of the NTFT and the superintendent or designee.
 - Meets on an *as needed basis* during the year.
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Par Panel

- Meets in November to hear an evaluation of the interns work 1st and 3rd semester
 - Meets in February/March for an evaluation of the interns and CT's recommendation for future employment
 - Meets on *as needed basis* during the year.
 - Votes on recommendation about future employment
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Par Panel Duties

- Select and assign consulting teachers
 - Monitor and scrutinize work of each consulting teacher.
 - Accept or reject the consulting teachers' recommendations
 - Serve as an appeal panel.
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Selecting Consulting Teachers

- Application with references from two teachers and one administrator
 - A personal statement/cover letter indicating why they are interested in being consulting teacher
 - May include interviews and/or peer observations of the applicant's teaching
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Consulting Teachers

- Released from regular classroom duties
 - Serve for a maximum of 3 years after which they return to the classroom
 - Solely responsible for evaluation during intern's first and second years
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Consulting Teachers

- Evaluate interns and referred tenured teachers between seven and twelve times during the school year (50% announced and 50% unannounced observations)
 - Present an evaluation of the intern's performance in November
 - Present an evaluation of the intern's performance in February/March with a with a **recommendation** for future employment
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Interns

- Any full time teacher new to the district
 - Interns are in the PAR program for a period of two years
 - May be assigned a *non-content specific consulting teacher*
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Tenured Teachers in PAR

- A teacher receiving an overall rating of Needs Improvement on a summative evaluation
 - A teacher who violated either Board policy, the School Code or other applicable rules or regulations, and the Superintendent or designee and Union President or designee mutually determine that such referral would serve as an effective remedy
 - Self-referral
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Consulting Teachers' Presentation

- November: One-day session to hear initial reports for teachers demonstrating serious performance issue(s)
 - February/March: All day session(s) to hear final evaluations and vote on consultant recommendations for each of their new teachers.
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Resources that D219 PAR Requires

- 4.0 FTE in the form of consulting teachers
 - Office space for the consulting teachers
 - Cellular phones for the consulting teachers
 - Administrative support in the form of biweekly meetings with the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum
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Improved Instruction!

I have learned a lot from my PAR teacher and feel that I have grown more in my 7 months here than I have in 2 years at my previous school!

Improved Instruction!

I have been waiting 5 years for this level of assistance with my teaching and professional growth. I think everyone should go through PAR every 5 years so that all teachers can continue to improve at a more rapid rate.

Improved Instruction!

The PAR program has really helped me improve my instruction; I have finally felt this way for the first time in my three year teaching career.

In Summary

Peer review is probably the most powerful demonstration that teachers create and display a knowledge of practice. In the twenty or so school districts that have tried it, teachers have found that peer review **brings higher standards to teaching**. It significantly changes the conception of teaching work by recognizing the well as skill and technique. It recognizes a legitimate role for teachers in establishing and enforcing standards in their own occupation. For unions, it represents both a **radical departure from established industrial norms** and a rediscovery of traditional craft union and guild functions. (Kerchner, Koppich and Weeres, 1997)

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