

Competency 10: Staff Personnel

- **10.3 Related Task:** Ability to supervise classified staff.
- **10.14.1 Specific Task:**
 - o Supervise maintenance personnel of a given school building. Describe the process.
- **Narrative Description of Task:**
 - o Design or modify an already existing evaluation instrument to document the work of custodians at Gaines Elementary. The work area of each custodian shall be reviewed and documented and then recorded and reported through an evaluation instrument designed to promote growth and improvement in the cleanliness and function of the school environment. An action plan should be developed and followed based on observation results. Feedback should be provided verbally as well as ongoing throughout the evaluation and monitoring progress.

Smart Goal: By April of 2016, in conjunction with Lauren Hunter and the custodial staff at Gaines Elementary, observe and evaluate the performance of the custodial staff in their ability to help maintain a highly efficient running school.

Specific:	Design or modify an already existing evaluation instrument to document and evaluate the work of the custodians at Gaines Elementary.
Measurable:	Observe and evaluate the custodial staff at Gaines using a personally designed or modified evaluation instrument.
Attainable:	Ongoing custodial improvement and self-reflection allows custodians to improve their work and allow for a more attractive and efficient facility.
Relevant:	Custodial evaluations offer opportunities for custodians to improve their work and make the facility more efficient and attractive to future families.
Timely:	By April 2016 I will modify or design an evaluation instrument and observe and evaluate the Gaines custodial staff.

Description and Rationale of Project:

Administrators not only are responsible for leading students, but they are also in charge of leading the adults in their building as well. This can be identified as the more difficult task between the two. This specific project dealt with handling the custodial staff to ensure the school maintains a proper and clean appearance and functions at its best potential. Since the Swartz Creek Community School District privatized its custodians, the level of work quality has diminished substantially at Gaines Elementary, specifically with its second shift custodians. Since privatizing the custodial staff 4 years ago, DM Burr is now the contracted company that employs the custodial staff to clean and maintain the buildings for minimal pay. That being said, Gaines has had 4 new second shift custodians in the last few years alone since privatizing. Every second shift custodian DM Burr employs seems to be worse than the last. Of course, many would blame minimal pay, lack of motivation, and unlikeable work for the high turnover rate and lack of quality in regards to their work. However, the students at Gaines Elementary

depend on a clean and efficiently run school. The second shift custodian plays a huge role in providing this so that maximum learning and safety can take place.

With the issues with the custodial quality of work, I developed a work review tool that could be used to observe, evaluate, and improve the custodial work habits. When creating the tool, it was important to review what the school district and building had used before that had a proven track record along with research other best practice custodial review processes. The first step was to obtain what Gaines Elementary had used before. I presented my project to the building secretary and head custodian, and they both kindly supplied me with previous evaluations we used to use before privatizing. After obtaining these evaluation tools, I then analyzed them to see how they were broken down and identified the strengths and weaknesses of the tool based on my questioning of the head custodian and what he thought of the entire process we used to use. He admitted that it was different back then because the pay was substantially more and they felt valued as an employee. He explained that even with less pay, this evaluation was another way to be recognized for the great work he was doing for the school. He felt important to the building's success. This old tool was broken down into subcategories. These subcategories gave the administrator the ability to observe and rate the custodian within their work habits as well as their personality traits as an employee of the building.

Once I analyzed the old tools, it was time to research other tools out there across the county, state and country to see what best practice was. Upon review of the tools out there, it became evident that the purpose of any custodial review is to develop a consistent handling of evaluating the working performance of custodians as well as encourage and support their overall performance and growth. We want our custodians to feel valued. The main finding from my research of other tools is that efficient institutions will have effective contributions of non-certified personnel as it is vital to the success of district educational programs. A tool that assures the continuing competency of these employees' performance is key. Therefore, it is important that an evaluation has the ability to recognize and reinforce areas that need improvement and areas that are of superior work performance. The tool should be used to set forth the remedial actions that are necessary to improve the work performance as the success of the academic environment depends on it. So upon review, the old tool highlighted the custodians work habits and personality, however, it lacked recognition of certain work areas. Some of the best evaluation tools I found broke down the custodial review into 3 categories; their work habits and skills, their work areas, and their personality as an employee in the building.

Through my findings, a new evaluation tool was created that could be used immediately. This evaluation tool utilized some of the characteristics of the old tool but added the third category of evaluating certain work areas in the building. For example, recently our second shift custodian has been doing a great job vacuuming classrooms but has forgotten to clean the student bathrooms. Thus, an evaluation tool that helps recognize areas of strengths and weaknesses in the custodians ability to clean certain parts of the school is necessary in promoting a cleaner, more efficient institution. I also made sure to incorporate a place on the evaluation tool for administrator feedback where the administrator can specifically point out what they like or what they think could be better in regards to the evaluation. This adds a

personal touch to the evaluation that sometimes is forgotten and becomes a chart of checks in certain boxes.

Once I created the evaluation tool, it was time to create a policy on how to use it. I made sure to research what we used to do as a school and district but also what other well-known districts did in regards to custodial review. Essentially, the policy I found to be best for this tool is one that functions like the teacher evaluations. I think it is imperative we observe custodians on more than one occasion. In fact, I think we get more from simple daily building walk-throughs and face-to-face conversations with the custodian than with a formal one time observation. Regardless of the employee being an official member to a third party employer, the custodians are still a part of the educational environment and need to be evaluated as such. With the policy I created, custodians would be met with at the beginning of the year and work areas would be reviewed. Expectations would be discussed as they would be made aware of the custodial review process. During the month of November, the administrator would then start the initial performance review which would then be completed by December. During the month of January, the custodians would meet with the administrator and discuss progress and performance which then would focus on areas of strengths and weaknesses noticed so far that school year. It would then be the administrator's duty to identify a plan to help strengthen the custodians work performance. By February, a second review should be started paying particularly close attention to previously identified weaknesses under the last review window. By the end of the school year, a second review and post-conference would be conducted and employment would be determined for the following school year based on the yearly progress and performance according to the review forms and prior discussions.

Ultimately, the next step after writing up the policy for using this tool properly was to pay particular close attention to the building needs and inefficiencies noticed through the second shift custodian's work. I interviewed staff members in person and asked them what their preferences were in regards to their rooms being cleaned. Based on the conversations, I created a second shift custodian responsibilities reference sheet. This sheet could be used by the second shift custodian as a reminder of their weekly duties that pertain to their job. Additionally, I then sat down with the second shift custodian to hear his concerns. His main concern is there is just sometimes too much to do and not enough time. Therefore, I created a room preference sheet that allowed teachers to prioritize the things they definitely would like done above all else. This gives the custodian the chance to focus on the classroom teacher's priorities and alleviates the stress of having to get everything done when some nights there may not be enough time.

This custodial review could be used by any district or any school, regardless of privatization or not, which will in return allow for custodial work improvements. These will make the school cleaner, run more efficiently, and make custodians feel valued as an educational member to the institution.

Project Outcomes:

With this evaluation tool, custodians will be given the chance to grow in their own work habits, feel valued as a contributing member to the educational team, and allow for a more efficiently operating school. It is through this tool I hope to form partnerships with custodians

and work with them in order to improve the school learning environment. An improved learning environment will allow for higher student achievement and better building performance.

Reflection:

This project was very helpful. I was given a lot of valuable information that cannot be learned in the classroom. The first thing I learned was that custodians, privatized or not, must have effective contributions to the school environment as it is vital to the building's success. Without effective custodians, the building will not thrive like it could under the current circumstances. It is the administrator's duty to be sure that all employees within the building are making effective contributions to the overall success of the building. An evaluation tool only helps to assure the continuing competency of the custodians' performance.

Next, I learned how crucial it is that all employees feel valued. When an employee no longer feels valued, their work performance diminishes. An evaluation tool and constant feedback from the building administrator will help provide encouragement and support of overall performance and growth. It is through constant feedback when guidance is provided informally and on a regular basis that will help to identify strengths and weaknesses, but allow the custodian to feel like they are a contributing member to the team.

Lastly, it is simple to identify things that are not going well. However, it is crucial to identify the next steps to help strengthening found weaknesses and providing remedial actions that are necessary to improve the custodian's work performance. Identifying weaknesses and not doing anything about it only allows for the poor performances to continue and disrupt the learning environment down the road if the conditions worsen. Remedial actions and development plans are vital as the success of the academic environment depends on it.

It is through this project that I will be sure to always value all staff members that are present inside my building, provide feedback to all, and promote growth in all.