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The Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association Announces New Collaborative Agreement with *SuperEval* to Advance PSEL-Aligned Leadership Evaluation in New York

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The Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association (ESSAA), is pleased to announce a new collaborative agreement with SuperEval, a national leader in online leadership evaluations, to bring New York school districts a growth-oriented leadership evaluation framework built for the state's own standards. The ESSAA Leadership Evaluation Framework, now in statewide professional review by the field, will be published by the association as a professional resource available to districts, with SuperEval serving as the exclusive platform for its digital implementation.

The framework arrives at a consequential moment for New York. Under the state's transition to Standards-based Educator Evaluation and Professional Support, building principals must be evaluated against all ten Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), and districts hold substantial discretion over the instrument and the process they use. The ESSAA Leadership Evaluation Framework was developed to meet that responsibility with an instrument built by practicing New York school leaders rather than adapted from another purpose.

The framework is a complete evaluation system rather than a rubric alone. The evaluation process, implementation tools, and training resources were designed by Carol Conklin-Spillane, President of ESSAA, whose four decades of service in New York as a teacher, principal, superintendent, and policy advisor inform the work. The rubric framework was authored by Dr. Michael L. Horning, Jr., President and Chief Innovation Officer of SuperEval, and includes the descriptors of professional practice for each element within the ten PSEL standards, a four-level developmental continuum, a calibration framework, and examples of evidence throughout. The framework was developed with the ESSAA Professional Review Committee and is endorsed by the association, with role-specific versions for principals, assistant principals, and directors or supervisors.

"Our members need an evaluation instrument that this association can stand behind," said Michael A. Starvaggi, Esq., Executive Director of ESSAA. "This framework was built by New York school leaders and reviewed by them, it reflects practices our membership recognizes as sound

at various stages of their career, and it respects the reality that evaluation procedures are shaped through local collective bargaining. It offers districts and bargaining units a professionally credible foundation to work from rather than a mandate imposed upon them.”

The framework is organized around the ten PSEL standards, grouped into three logic clusters, with 83 elements of practice described across four levels of professional growth. Rather than functioning as an annual checklist, the process asks the evaluator and the school leader to set goals together, select the elements that will receive focused attention for the year, gather evidence from the authentic work of leading, and close the year with a self-assessment and a body of evidence that informs professional judgment; adjusting the process for probationary and tenured school leaders.

“Our members have asked for an evaluation process that develops leaders rather than one that simply rates them,” said Carol Conklin-Spillane, President of ESSAA. “This framework gives districts a common language for leadership and treats evaluation as a collaborative process rooted in reflection, evidence, and professional growth. Stronger school leaders lead to stronger schools and student outcomes. While the PSELs apply to all school leaders, to date, rubrics and evidence that help bring these to life have all been written for [principals](#). We know that assistant principals and school leaders at the building and district level who direct and supervise people and programs will benefit from an instrument that is more aligned with their roles and responsibilities.”

For SuperEval, the collaboration extends a conviction that has guided the platform since its founding in doctoral research on leadership evaluation. Evaluation is most valuable when the leader being evaluated leads the process, when goals derive from district priorities, and when the conversation is about growth rather than compliance.

“Compliance is the floor, not the purpose,” said Dr. Michael L. Horning, Jr., President and Chief Innovation Officer of SuperEval. “As a leader, you want to assert your leadership performance, not defend it. Working alongside ESSAA, we have built an instrument that gives New York’s principals, assistant principals, directors and supervisors that opportunity - and gives their evaluators a credible foundation for the conversation.”

ESSAA will publish the framework as a document available to all districts across New York, and SuperEval will be the only evaluation platform in which the framework is digitized. That distinction matters in practice. A published document gives a district the standards, the descriptors, and the recommended process to consider and negotiate locally. Within the platform, the same framework operates as one connected system, where goal setting, evidence collection, the leader’s self-assessment, professional judgment, and end-of-year reporting are joined rather than managed across separate documents and workflows. As instruments and

state requirements continue to evolve, the platform is being adapted so that districts can operate their STEPS plans within it while preserving the leader-led, reflective practices that place growth at the center of the process.

“New York’s school leaders deserve an evaluation experience that reflects the complexity of their work,” said Gretchen Restino, Strategic Partnership Executive at SuperEval. “I look forward to supporting districts across the state as they consider what this framework makes possible for their leadership teams.”

The statewide professional review is underway, and the framework is expected to be published for district use in the fall of 2026. Superintendents and district leaders interested in learning more may contact SuperEval directly.

For more information about this announcement, please contact:

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About the Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association (ESSAA)

The Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association (ESSAA) serves principals, supervisors, and school administrators throughout New York State through a personalized regional model spanning Long Island, the Greater Hudson Valley, Capital Region, Central New York, and Western New York. ESSAA provides expert legal services, advocacy, professional learning, and collegial support, guided by a straightforward commitment: supporting school leaders, every day. For more information, visit essaa.org

About SuperEval

SuperEval is an innovative, research-based digital platform designed to transform leadership evaluations into meaningful opportunities for reflection, professional growth, and organizational improvement. By aligning evaluations with leadership standards for excellence, SuperEval empowers superintendents, administrators, and school boards to foster continuous improvement and strengthen leadership practices throughout their districts.