MAPA MISCONCEPTIONS
BY
SUPTS, ASST SUPTS, PRINCIPALS, and ASST PRINCIPALS

1. **Misconception:** The MAPA require 26 ILPs – one for each objective.

   **Truth:** One component of the MAPA is the Individual Leadership Plan (ILP) that is designed to promote continuous learning and enhanced job competencies. Every administrator is expected to design and implement an ILP that is tailored to his or her individual needs for professional growth. The ILP must be designed to promote higher student achievement. The ILP should be a focused plan based on the administrator’s analysis of student achievement data and directed at improving some aspect of student achievement at their school. It is expected that an ILP will be focused on one of the objectives in the MAPA, not multiple objectives, and certainly not all 26 objectives. Based on an analysis of various data for your school, identify a need and focus your ILP on a specific data-driven plan for improvement that is related to MAPA and the Community Strategic Plan.

2. **Misconception:** The ILP should only be based on test data.

   **Truth:** The MAPA indicates that the ILP should be based on analyzed data that is relevant to an identified and specific need in the school. An administrator’s ILP may be based on student achievement and test data, such as the TerraNova, AP, SAT, DRA or even local assessments. The administrator may employ Using Data to Differentiate Instruction as a strategy for achieving the objective of an ILP. However, administrators may also use data from surveys of educators, parents, or other members of the learning community to identify needs and measure success. Anecdotal data is permitted if the administrator can substantiate the relevance and significance of the data. Student test data is just one of many sources of information that may be used to design a good ILP.

3. **Misconception:** “Exemplary” is too difficult to achieve, and “Proficient” is not an acceptable rating.

   **Truth:** The MAPA is a paradigm shift away from the notion of “once exemplary, always exemplary.” Each year’s performance will be rated on its own merit and not based on past performance. It is expected that an administrator may not be exemplary in every objective, and that ratings may fluctuate from year to year. Thus, the MAPA provides room for growth in future rating periods. Dr. Lutrey, the Area Superintendent for the Pacific, explained that, “Exemplary performance is visited by administrators but they do not live there.” A “Proficient” rating represents a level of performance that indicates the administrator displays a high degree of skill and accomplishment toward meeting a particular goal. This rating reflects that DoDEA’s high expectations for performance have been demonstrated by this administrator.
4. **Misconception:** Principals and Asst Principals in the same school should have the same ILP.

**Truth:** The intent of the ILP is to be an individual plan. It is not required and not envisioned that the principal and assistant principal at a school have the same ILP.

5. **Misconception:** The MAPA is too long; the MAPA is too burdensome.

**Truth:** The structure of this evaluation process recognizes the complexities of administrators’ roles and responsibilities and provides opportunities for continuous improvement through an Individual Leadership Plan (ILP). There are formative and summative components inherent in the new appraisal that include self-assessment and setting objectives in areas of instructional leadership, and the review and use of data to align school improvement goals in order to increase student achievement outcomes. The duties and responsibilities of school administrators are extensive and demanding. The length of the MAPA is a result of imbedding the rubric and providing a comprehensive document that encompasses the full range of an administrator’s job.

6. **Misconception:** The MAPA does not include some of the daily duties and responsibilities for administrators. There is not enough time to do everything in MAPA and the ILP and still perform all of the duties of a principal or assistant principal.

**Truth:** The MAPA instrument encompasses all of the critical duties and responsibilities that school administrators must perform to ensure high student achievement and be educational leaders. Many administrators have commented that time spent on student discipline or maintenance of the facility are not covered. The MAPA addresses student discipline issues under Goal 4, Objectives 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4. Facilities and safety are part of Goal 2, Objective 2.3. Extracurricular activities are covered by Goal 4, Objective 4.2. Special Education is part of Goal 1, Objective 1.3.

7. **Misconception:** There needs to be more guidance and information on MAPA.

**Truth:** There is a wealth of information on the MAPA on the DoDEA HR web page under the Resources and Employees tabs. The information includes samples of ILPs and guidance on writing performance assessments, as well as research material and procedural guidance.

8. **Misconception:** Performance on the ILP is a major part of the annual rating for administrators.

**Truth:** The ILP counts as one of the 26 objectives in the MAPA. It is a small part of the overall administrator annual rating.
9. **Misconception:** It takes significant time and effort to gather and prepare evidence and artifacts to support the MAPA rating.

**Truth:** While evidence to support a MAPA rating is strongly encouraged, the evidence should be directed towards quality, not quantity. Ideas for evidence may be found on the DoDEA website on the HR/Employees page, but these are intended as examples only and not checklists to be completed by all employees. Discussions with your supervisor should guide the amount and manner of documentation needed to substantiate performance.

10. **Misconception:** The administrator being rated is solely responsible for the information and documentation to support their annual rating.

**Truth:** Administrators are expected to provide their rating official with an accomplishment report with sufficient information to assist the rater in evaluating the administrator and executing a fair and comprehensive performance rating. However, rating officials retain the primary responsibility for rendering the annual performance evaluations for employees they supervise. Prior to MAPA, the performance management system for administrators did not include a requirement for self-evaluation or accomplishment reports. This change may cause administrators to perceive that their rating is based solely on their information and documentation, but it is a shared responsibility under MAPA.

11. **Misconception:** It’s a sign of weakness and questionable performance to ask for help and guidance on components of the MAPA.

**Truth:** All administrators should use conferences with rating officials and opportunities to network with contemporaries to discuss the MAPA and seek guidance and assistance. Formal conferences between supervisors and principals or assistant principals will occur annually, with a minimum of three meetings a year for all administrators. Additional conferences should be considered for new administrators and administrators assigned to new districts, different grade configurations, or unique school environments. These conferences should be considered an opportunity for both the rating official to provide feedback on performance expectations and for the employee to seek guidance and assistance.

12. **Misconception:** Principals and Assistant Principals cannot be given cash awards.

**Truth:** Districts may grant cash awards to principals and assistant principals in the same manner that these awards were granted prior to MAPA. Each District Office is provided a budget for cash awards and should consider deserving principals and assistant principals for cash awards based on their contributions to the mission.
13. **Misconception**: The list of evidences provided as examples should be used as a checklist to make sure that administrators provide all of the evidence.

**Truth**: The list of evidences of “Proficient” performance is provided as examples only and not intended to be all-inclusive or to be used as a checklist for evaluating principals and assistant principals.

14. **Misconception**: The ILP cannot be modified during the rating period.

**Truth**: The ILP can be modified during the rating period to address needed changes or enhancements that will improve the value and impact of the ILP. The duration of the plan is determined by a joint decision of the supervisor and administrator and may be limited to one school year or retained for a second school year.

15. **Misconception**: The ILP can be replaced during the school year.

**Truth**: An ILP should not be replaced with a different ILP during the school year. The ILP should be designed at the start of the rating period to focus on an objective for that employee and a need at the school that will be addressed over the course of the school year. As a rare exception, should an employee complete all of the planned actions on an ILP before the end of the school year, it may be appropriate to implement a new ILP during the school year.