

NJEA urges members to follow the general guidelines listed below for effective rebuttal writing.

1. Seek advice from your local association and/or UniServ office if you are having difficulty in drafting a rebuttal statement.
2. Before writing any rebuttal, review the contract provisions and/or board policies governing teacher evaluation. In some cases, it may not be advantageous to write a rebuttal. Other avenues may be followed.
3. Utilize the facts as they occurred to develop a statement which is in your best interest. Rebuttals should not be sarcastic or accusative.
4. Require specifics rather than generalities from administrators in evaluation reports.
5. View negative comments as related to:
 - a. an improper administrative act
 - b. failure of the district to provide the proper assistance and/or materials
 - c. circumstances beyond the control of the classroom teacher.
6. Always indicate when administrative assistance was requested but not provided.
7. The rebuttal should emphasize any contractual and/or legal violations in the procedures followed by the administration.

If you have any questions, contact the NJEA-NEA regional UniServ office.

Writing the rebuttal

Consider the following steps in writing a rebuttal:

1. *Analyze* the observation/evaluation.
 - a. Obtain an overview of the document as to its being negative, positive, slanted, self-serving for the evaluator, etc.
 - b. Document areas of negativism in observation/evaluation.
 - c. Attempt to gain sight of a pattern, form or context of items checked on the evaluation form and written in the narrative.

- d. Select those items which need correction by rebuttal.

2. *Neutralize* all items which appear negative.
 - a. Give reasons for performance in the items evaluated negatively.
 - b. Give rationale for the teaching staff member's activity performance, lesson plan, lesson content and other items which have been criticized. Refer to class size, referrals, available materials and/or district resources.
 - c. Answer in rebuttal any item mentioning the words or phrases "failure to do," "lack of," "in need of," "should/could have," "suggest," "noticed," "appeared."
 - d. Mention any failures on the part of the evaluator to appropriately and accurately relate performance details.

3. *Equalize* the results.

The rebuttal should be structured so as to strengthen performance and weaken the negative items on the observation/evaluation report. Some of the following might be considered.

- a. Stress preparation, motivation, and curriculum and lesson flow.
- b. Focus on objectives, procedures, and attainment.
- c. Be clear in directions, assignments, and closing of lessons.
- d. Connect all performance with curriculum and job description.
- e. Be critical of, but don't reject, recommendations.
- f. Review prior observations and evaluations and use the content of those reports to your advantage.

Decisions Affecting Evaluation

Criteria

Teaneck Board of Education and Teaneck Teachers Association, 161 N.J. Super. 75 (App. Div. 1978)