

The Bridge

ISSUE
06
June
2013

A monthly newsletter for educators from the
New Jersey Department of Education



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In this Issue...

June is the time of transformation where many endings also signal the promise of new beginnings. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) offers its hearty congratulations to the graduating class of 2013, and wishes them the best of luck in their future endeavors. Whatever their chosen field, our graduates are in good company as they follow in the footsteps of other ground-breaking individuals who called New Jersey home, including astronaut Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin, musicians Count Basie and Sarah Vaughn, Supreme Court Justices William J. Brennan Jr. and Samuel Alito, entrepreneur Steve Forbes, poet William Carlos Williams, activist Alice Paul, journalist John T. Cunningham, President Grover Cleveland and countless other leaders in the arts, humanities, sciences and entertainment. Sir Isaac Newton once said “if I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants,” and today’s students will be blazing the trail of tomorrow as they take what they have learned and create new and innovative solutions for our society utilizing technology that did not exist when they first entered school.

Here at the NJDOE we will be working hard this summer to make sure that the beginning of the 2013-14 school year is a success. Next year, all schools will implement new evaluation systems and continue to integrate the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as we strive to ensure that all of our students are

college and career ready. There are already many resources for setting Student Growth Objectives on the AchieveNJ website, <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/objectives.shtml> and updates to the model curriculum are in the works <http://www.state.nj.us/education/modelcurriculum/>. You will find news about our most recent updates to AchieveNJ and the CCSS inside.

In order to prepare you for the fall, there is information on the importance of school climate and a free survey to help gauge where your school’s strengths and weaknesses lie. We also have an article on the importance of nutrition and the school breakfast program.

For those of you who can’t sit still for long, there are also some free, “unconference” professional development opportunities listed in our upcoming events that will only take you a few minutes to register. Finally, we have some fantastic insights from Lauren Marrocco, our 2013 NJ Teacher of the Year, as she recalls her trip of a lifetime to meet President Obama in April.

This is our last edition for the 2012-13 school year, and we certainly hope that you find these summer months restful. Take the time to relax, travel or just spend some time with family. See you in September!



New Jersey
Department of Education

Notes from the Road

With Teacher Appreciation week just ending, this month’s adventures could not have come at a better time. At the end of April, I was invited to spend the week in Washington D.C. to be honored for the contributions I, along with the other State Teachers of the Year, have made to education. It was an amazing week that included lunch with Dr. Jill Biden at her residence, meeting President Barack Obama with a special ceremony in the Rose Garden and collaborating with representatives at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Smart Technologies and the U.S. Department of Education.

As I stood inside the White House and walked into the Oval Office to meet the President, I realized once again how blessed I am to be recognized for doing something that I have always wanted to do. I consider my teaching efforts in the classroom to be typical of what most educators in New Jersey do every single day. We all take our profession seriously and practice our skills for the full benefit of our students and schools, and not with a view to achieve a particular reward or recognition. As I stood in the Rose Garden behind the President, listening to him speak about how important educators are, I was overcome with emotion. I looked into the crowd full of family members and all I could do was wish that the teachers that made a difference in my life or the colleagues that I had the fortune to work with and learn from at Edward J. Patten School and within Perth Amboy could have stood where I was standing. I wish they could have listened to President Obama talk about the importance of quality educators and quality leadership.

Attending that ceremony and meeting with representatives at the U.S. Department of Education has empowered me to continue to advocate for the needs of educators throughout the state, and to create teacher leadership opportunities. I believe that we are our best resource and we need to find avenues to share information and support one another. One overwhelming concern that educators have expressed is the lack of resources available to teach the Common Core State Standards. I am currently working with Kean University to create a Common Core workshop that will allow teachers time to “roll up their sleeves” and discuss with one another instructional strategies and resources they use to teach the CCSS. The workshop will be held on August 8, and will continue throughout the upcoming school year. If you would like to attend, please visit the website below and register. This workshop is given by teachers, for teachers: <https://sites.google.com/a/kean.edu/kicc/kicc-1>. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at lauren.marrocco@doe.state.nj.us.

Lauren Marrocco, State Teacher of the Year

Setting the Table in New Jersey for Breakfast in the Classroom

In December 2010, President Obama signed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, proof that the federal government values the importance of promoting school-based health. It authorizes funding for federal school meals, including breakfast, and increases access to healthy food for low-income children. Despite strong evidence of the benefits of school breakfast, New Jersey ranked 48th in a national ranking of state participation in school breakfast during 2010 and 2011. Although 85 percent of eligible students in New Jersey participated in the school lunch, only 28 percent of eligible children ate breakfast at school.

The NJDOE has actively participated in the partnership to promote and strengthen strategies to increase implementation of breakfast served in the classroom, after the bell. Between 2010 and 2012 New Jersey saw a 21% increase in the number of children from low-income families receiving breakfast in school. By 2012, nearly 29,000 additional students received breakfast every school day, which translates to 5 million more meals served over the course of the school year. We accomplished this by having more schools serving breakfast in the first few minutes of the school day after the bell, instead of the traditional method of serving breakfast before school when most children have not yet arrived.

A 2012 preliminary subcommittee survey of school districts serving breakfast after the bell suggests an increase in students' ability to concentrate in class, fewer student visits to the school nurse with hunger-related complaints, improved academic performance and a reduction in disruptive student behavior. In addition, there is a large body of compelling research that supports the link between school breakfast consumption and cognitive development, as well as favorable dietary, health, and educational outcomes among children and adolescents. Among the many resources available for school professionals interested in promoting the School Breakfast Program are:

www.acnj.org
www.breakfasteveryday.org/html/school_professionals.html
www.frac.org
www.schoolbreakfastnj.org
www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/fn/child_adult/school_breakfast.html

For more information about the School Breakfast Program contact Christene DeWitt-Parker at schoolhealthservices@doe.state.nj.us

Why Study School Climate?

School climate matters. After reviewing more than 200 studies and literature reviews, experts at the National School Climate Center and Fordham University concluded that, "sustained positive school climate is associated with positive child and youth development, effective risk-prevention and health-promotion efforts, student learning and academic achievement, increased student graduation rates, and teacher retention." A positive school climate can help boost student's self-esteem, decrease absenteeism and alleviate many of the risk factors that keep students from achieving success.

Reliable data is essential for identifying strengths and vulnerabilities in a school's climate and culture. The New Jersey Department of Education, in collaboration with the Bloustein Center for Survey Research at Rutgers, has developed the New Jersey School Climate Survey (NJSCS) and supportive materials to aid in this endeavor. The survey materials can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/sandp/climate/>.

Voluntary and Free Resource

Schools, particularly school safety teams established under the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, are encouraged, but not required, to use the NJSCS to improve student education and prevent at-risk student behavior. The NJSCS materials – which include student, staff and parent questionnaires, a survey guide, and data entry and display tools – are provided as free resources to

help school communities improve local conditions for learning. Note that there is no mechanism for reporting survey data to the state.

The survey, completed anonymously, can provide schools with an automatic report on six research-based domains of school climate to help school communities focus their efforts. They include:

- Physical Environment: scheduling, the use of the building, and attitudes toward the building
- Emotional Environment: attitudes toward physical safety, the social environment, and individual emotional safety
- Teaching and Learning: academic climate of the school, support for student development, levels of instructional challenge and relevance, and "ownership" by students of learning and teachers of teaching
- Relationships: the degree to which lines of interpersonal communication are open and honest and produce healthy, positive outcomes
- Community and Engagement: the degree to which parents and community members are incorporated into both the social and academic life of the school

The NJSCS presents a unique opportunity to engage local stakeholders, such as parent or student organizations, in the improvement of local conditions for learning. Their involvement with school staff can lead to improved school climates and cultures, which are significant elements of successful educational programs.

Bullying Prevention Activities Parents and Children Can Do Together

Summer is a great opportunity for parents to participate in activities with their children that can help them to develop empathy, respect for others and positive problem-solving skills, including the following:

- Perform community service – Participating in community service with your children can help them to better understand people of different backgrounds, abilities, ethnicities, ages, educations and income levels. Consider having your children volunteer with an organization that focuses on servicing certain groups that are commonly misunderstood or harassed by others.
- Watch films that discourage prejudice – Watching films with your children on the harmful effects of racism, homophobia, sexism and other forms of prejudice throughout history can help your children develop empathy and discourage them from bullying others. Watching these films may help children who have been bullied to identify with other groups that have been mistreated. Many films that address these issues can be found at the public library.
- Read books or other literature that discourage

prejudice – Similar to watching films that address the prejudice many groups have faced, reading books on this topic can help your children develop empathy and discourage them from bullying others. Books that deal with prejudice should be available at school and public libraries.

- Visit museums and attend educational events on social issues – Taking your children to museums or educational events with exhibits that focus on social issues, such as poverty, civil rights and prejudice, can help your children to better understand the lives and struggles of others. Many local community organizations, governments and public universities also regularly hold panels, workshops and other events on past and current social issues that are open to the public.

- Keep your family up-to-date on current events – Watching the news, reading the newspaper and engaging in other activities that help your children stay up-to-date on current events can have many benefits. Talking about the events and discussing the behavior seen can help to teach the behavior you want to see from your children.

AchieveNJ UPDATE



Throughout the months of March and April, Department staff conducted regional presentations and other meetings with over 5,000 educators in attendance and released over 25 [resources and guidance materials](#) explaining various components of AchieveNJ.

This initial outreach effort yielded some important feedback and lessons learned. These include the following key updates to the regulations, which respond to educator concerns:

- Change the weight of the Student Growth Percentile (SGP) from 35% to 30% for 4th-8th-grade Math and English Language Arts (ELA) teachers for 2013-14. This will increase the weight of the teacher practice component from 50% to 55% for those teachers; the weight of the Student Growth Objective (SGO) component will remain at 15%. In the future, component weights will be posted by April 15 for the following school year.

- Change the student enrollment requirement for attributing students to a teacher for an SGP score from 60% to 70% of the time between the start of the school year and the beginning of state testing.

- Prohibit the use of the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) for SGOs for teachers who will also receive SGP scores based on those tests, meaning the NJ ASK will never account for more than 30% of any teacher's evaluation.

The Department responded to over 90 public comments through the formal State Board Comment and Response process. The comments and responses can be found in pages 10-40 of the [updated proposed regulations](#).

In response to several requests for more support related to SGOs, we have issued [detailed guidance on developing](#)

SGOs. In particular, there are a few key points to consider in the short term:

1. The SGO process should be as collaborative as possible between teachers and their colleagues as well as teachers and their administrators.

2. As final assessments are given in the current school year, teachers and administrators should consider how such assessments might be used for SGOs next year.

3. Individual SGOs should be developed by teachers when they have access to specific learning data about their assigned students (September or October for most teachers).

The Department will conduct a series of SGO training sessions and will provide web-based SGO training modules this summer. SGO workshops offered by the Department will be interactive and include significant group work and discussion. Not only will participants leave the workshops with a clearer understanding of the SGO process, they will take away detailed strategies and materials to use back in their districts to train their staff effectively. Districts will be invited in groups of 3-5 educators including at least 1 teacher.

District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) members, directors of curriculum, supervisors and principals and others who will be involved closely with SGO training in the districts are encouraged to attend. Workshops will take place on the following dates, with more to be announced.

June 19 – Stockton College

June 24 – Rutgers, New Brunswick

July 1 – EIRC, Mullica Hill

July 9 – Neptune HS

July 11 – Hunterdon Central HS

To register: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/resources/events.shtml>

Positive Behavior Support in Schools

The New Jersey Office of Special Education Programs (NJOSEP) is implementing multiple initiatives to support the goals established by the Department in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Waiver, as well as the goals and activities of the State Performance Plan (SPP) – New Jersey's plan to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Both the ESEA Waiver and the SPP focus on building capacity at the district and school level to implement research-based, universal and intensive interventions for students to increase student achievement and reduce the achievement gap in reading and mathematics.

One such initiative is the Positive Behavior Support in Schools (PBSIS) which is a collaboration between the NJOSEP and The Boggs Center at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. The goal of the initiative is to build capacity within schools to support the social-behavioral needs of all students, including students with disabilities. Implemented well, PBSIS can reduce behavior incidents that interfere with learning and ultimately reduce the need for referral to special education.

As part of New Jersey's PBSIS initiative, schools make a two-year commitment to participate in training and technical assistance on current, research-validated practices to create environments that encourage and support pro-social student behavior at the school-wide, classroom, and individual

student levels. The PBSIS model utilizes a three-tiered support model which includes:

Tier 1: Universal Interventions that promote a positive school climate by teaching and reinforcing a consistent set of behavioral expectations for all students, staff, and settings school-wide;

Tier 2: Secondary Interventions that provide function-based interventions through small group and individually tailored strategies for students with repeated behavior problems; and

Tier 3: Tertiary Interventions that use a function-based problem solving process to conduct assessments and design individualized support plans for students with disabilities and the most intensive needs.

This year, PBSIS has been used in priority and focus schools to support the work of the Department of Education's Regional Achievement Centers (RACs). Research has demonstrated that schools with a positive school climate have fewer incidences of conduct problems and better student performance. The rate of referrals to the office for behavior; suspensions; climate data; placement and academic achievement data will be used in the priority and focus schools to measure the impact of the initiative. With a positive, proactive approach toward behavior, it is anticipated that schools will be better equipped to support students with disabilities in general education learning environments and foster positive post school outcomes.

Integrating Common Core State Standards into the Science Classroom

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) emphasize building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and practice with reading complex informational text. This requires literacy work in both ELA classes and science and social studies classes. Science teachers have a responsibility and opportunity to engage students with rich content texts that enhance literacy skills as well as give students the opportunity to learn science content through authentic texts.

The standards specific to science begin at grade 6; standards for K–5 reading in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects are integrated into the K–5 Reading standards. The Common Core Reading (CCR) anchor standards and high school standards in literacy work in tandem to define college and career readiness expectations—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity.

(<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RST/introduction>)

Student Achievement Partners, a “nonprofit organization that assembles educators and researchers to design actions based on evidence that substantially improve student achievement,” has compiled tools on their website to support educators in their implementation of the CCSS. You can view them here at: www.achievethecore.org.

In addition, teachers of science and technical subjects can access the standards themselves, a website of curricular materials, and sample lessons based on close readings of science and technical texts on the following page:

<http://www.achievethecore.org/ela-literacy-common-core/literacy-science-technical/>

Contact Us!

Upcoming Events

Would you like to be on our direct mailing list? Click on the link below to ensure that you are connected to "The Bridge" and other important updates every month.



Subscribe here

Do you have ideas, information, or pictures you would like to submit? For comments, concerns, questions or feedback, contact us at: thebridge@doe.state.nj.us



Summer Workshops and Opportunities

For Teachers

Below are some free professional development opportunities this summer in New Jersey. Click on the links and check them out. You can sign up online in a matter of seconds.

Edcamp STEAM - Wednesday, July 31 at Linwood Middle School in North Brunswick, NJ—Edcamps are "unconferences," FREE, participant-driven professional development events where the attendees set the schedule and lead the sessions, which are conversations - NOT presentations. S.T.E.A.M. stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Math (a variant of "STEM"). Edcamp S.T.E.A.M. is an unconference for K-12 educators exploring the intersection of Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Math. <http://edcampsteam.org/where/>

PadCamp - Thursday, August 8 at Galloway Township Middle School in Galloway, NJ—PadCamp is a FREE "unconference" devoted to exploring the use of tablets, e-readers & other handheld mobile devices in K-12 education. <http://www.padcamp.org/>

Edcamp Leadership - Monday, August 12 at Kean University—Edcamp Leadership is a FREE event that allows educational leaders to spread innovation through informal conversation and collaboration. http://www.edcampleadership.org/?page_id=8

TeachMeet NJ - Thursday, August 22 at Richard Stockton College - This free conference is sponsored by Stockton's Masters in Instructional Technology (MAIT) program. TeachMeetNJ is an "unconference," a participant-driven free conference, dedicated to sharing the latest apps, educational hardware, and the hottest web 2.0 tools in fast paced 20 minute sessions. <http://www.teachmeetnj.com/>

For Students

STEM

Outdoor education program for K-12 students in North Jersey at the Center for Ecological Education and Cultural Immersion (CEECEI) @ Camp Louemma. The website is www.Ceeeci.net

Are there pressing questions about the NJDOE that you want to know? **Ask Ed!**

Dear Ed,

Q: Does the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (ABR) apply to summer school or other board of education-sponsored educational activities that take place during the summer?

A: Yes. The ABR applies to all board of education-sponsored activities on school property, at school-sponsored functions and on school buses without regard to the time period. The only exception is for the bi-annual reporting requirement, which is limited to all acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying that take place between the time periods of September 1 to January 1 and January 1 to June 30.



In the News....

Local, State and National Education News

Superintendent of Pilot District Reflects on Educator Evaluation Experiences – May 16, 2013

Laura Morano, superintendent of Red Bank Public Schools, says that it is vital to look beyond technical aspects of an educator evaluation system. <http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/13/05/15/op-ed-looking-back-and-forging-ahead-achievenj-through-the-lens-of-a-pilot-superintendent/>

Lakewood Making Changes in Instructional Staff to Accommodate Needs of Bilingual Students – May 17, 2013

The Lakewood Board of Education is replacing approximately 30 instructional staff with new staff that are bilingual. The 5,600 student district is changing its staffing to accommodate the growing number of English language learners attending public school. <http://www.app.com/article/20130515/NJNEWS15/305150118/Lakewood-district-shuffles-staff-bilingual-students>

'Cradle to Career' Aim of Camden Grant Project – May 28, 2013

Camden's Center for Family Services was one of 10 agencies that received a \$500,000 Promise Neighborhood Planning Grant. The funds will be used to improve educational outcomes for students by creating a path from cradle to college to career. <http://www.courierpostonline.com/article/20130529/NEWS01/305290021/Camden-education-initiative-focus-meeting>

AchieveNJ Guides New Teacher Evaluation System – June 3, 2013

A veteran teacher discusses her experience in how the state's teacher evaluation system has been developed and refined prior to its implementation this fall. <http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/13/06/02/achieve-nj-teacher-evaluation-with-multiple-measures/>