

# The Bridge

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



## In this Issue

Meet the new but familiar Acting Commissioner of Education David Hespe. He is familiar because he has served as education commissioner from 1999 to 2001 and was recently chief of staff for former Commissioner Chris Cerf in 2011-12 before becoming President of Burlington County College.

Does your school district have innovative best practices that you would be willing to share with other districts? There is now a Department site called *innovateNJ* where districts can feature their innovative programs by submitting a video to the Department's Office of Innovation. Guidelines are on the site at [www.state.nj.us/education/innovateNJ/](http://www.state.nj.us/education/innovateNJ/).

Overwhelmed by the sea of materials and vendors that claim to be able to help you incorporate the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) into your lesson plans? The NJ Department of Education is highlighting a service offered by Achieve, an independent, bipartisan national non-profit organization that has developed a tool for school districts to sort out how well commercial products are aligned with the CCSS. Learn about EQUiP in the article on the uses for this versatile tool.

Readiness for PARCC testing will be a hot topic this year and next. To help districts, the NJDOE offers several ways that districts can receive assistance from the Department as they prepare to roll out online testing next spring. Read about the digital learning portal [www.njdigitallearning.org](http://www.njdigitallearning.org) in the article "Preparing for PARCC."

With all of these ideas on how to share your best practices, you can also become a resource leader through a registration process at: <http://njcore.org/>.

Find out what's new from the state for educators in evaluation, preparation, professional development, and recognition. The update is in "What's New for Educators?"

In the new professional development regulations there are some changes to definitions and standards. In order to clarify some of the new requirements, the Department of Education has developed guidance which is now available on the updated professional development website at [www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/](http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/).

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## David Hespe Returns to Department of Education as Acting Commissioner



David Hespe was appointed Acting Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Education on March 20, returning for what is now his fourth time working at the Department.

His prior service at the Department included working as the Education Commissioner from 1999 through 2001; Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Executive Services from 1997 to 1998; and Chief of Staff during the first term of the Christie Administration.

"I'm incredibly excited to be back at the New Jersey Department of Education and to play a role in supporting the great schools and teachers across the state," Acting Commissioner Hespe said. "I came back for my fourth stint at the Department because I believe we all share a very simple goal – to help the nearly 1.4 million students in our schools grow and excel. The overarching vision of the Department will remain the same as it has during the past four years."

Acting Commissioner Hespe said the Department will remain focused on five main goals:

- Preparing all students for success in college and career;
- Supporting the high-quality implementation of the Common Core State Standards to help students think critically about the world around them;
- Advancing the implementation of the new educator evaluation system that is mandated this year as part of the *TEACHNJ* Act and that will help all teachers as part of a process of continual improvement;
- Improving state tests and providing more meaningful and timely data to educators than ever before; and
- Building a community of educators committed to innovation and creating 21st century school models.

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## The New Jersey Department of Education's Office of Innovation Announces its New *InnovateNJ* Initiative and Website

The New Jersey Department of Education's Office of School Innovation has recently introduced its new *innovateNJ* initiative and website. The site was designed to create a statewide framework for schools and districts interested in innovative instructional practices and solutions. New Jersey educators will now have an online space to obtain and share information around next-generation instructional models. In addition, *innovateNJ* will bring communities of innovative educators together to participate in live sessions to share and learn about innovative practices statewide. The *innovateNJ* main website page offers news highlights, links to the *innovateNJ* Community application, up-and-coming conferences, future Requests for Qualified Partners and an introduction to the Community, Clearinghouse, and Initiatives sections. Access to the website can be obtained here [www.nj.gov/education/innovateNJ/](http://www.nj.gov/education/innovateNJ/).

The Community section provides a spotlight to allow schools and districts the opportunity to illustrate ways in which they have implemented innovative instructional practices. Districts are spotlighted via their five-minute video submissions. Guidelines for submitting a video are listed on the site and they can be sent to [innovation@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:innovation@doe.state.nj.us). The Department invites districts to apply to become members of our *innovateNJ* Community. To do so, go to [www.nj.gov/education/innovateNJ/](http://www.nj.gov/education/innovateNJ/).

The Clearinghouse section offers valuable insight on programs, products, and partnerships used to achieve innovative goals across New Jersey and elsewhere. Here, you will also find local and international events organized around innovation, a list of Qualified Innovation Partners, and information on national and state policies and programs developed to make innovation a standard practice.

The Initiatives section features piloted programs and other innovative projects that are being done through Title I, *IDEA*, or the Early Childhood Race to the Top Grant, for example, with the support and/or funding by the NJ Department of Education.

There are many ways that this new website can be used by New Jersey educators which include the following:

- Becoming a part of the *innovateNJ* Community to share and collaborate with community members who have similar interests;
- Helping to lead the charge to implement innovative practices in schools across the state;

- Helping to synergize instructional best practices with innovative tools designed to move New Jersey students toward college and career readiness;
- Learning of opportunities to participate in sessions designed to explore possibilities around innovation implementation;
- Learning of district contributions to innovative practices and solutions for their schools and districts;
- Learning about future results of NJDOE Requests for Qualification;
- Inviting the Office of School Innovation to your school district for consideration of having your innovative programming or practices spotlighted; and
- Learning about national innovative policies and programs that may impact idea development within your school or district.

Please forward all inquiries via email to the Office of School Innovation: [innovation@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:innovation@doe.state.nj.us).

## NJCore.org – Register and Become a Resource Leader!

The New Jersey Educator Resource Exchange wants you to become a resource leader by registering and contributing to the resource pool of over 2,000 instructional, assessment, and professional development materials already part of the exchange community. This website is powered by educators for educators. The more people contribute the more valuable the resource exchange becomes to all. All educators can be part of this statewide collaborative effort.

The NJDOE invites educators to visit [NJCore.org](http://NJCore.org) to search for, download, collect, and share materials that can help enhance lesson plans, assess students, and/or provide ideas for future planning. All materials are searchable by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS), as well as the New Jersey Model Curriculum (NJMC) in all other subjects.

Please click on the link to see how you can become a certified resource leader: [Resource Leader Chart \(http://njcore.org/resource/become-resource-leader-today\)](http://njcore.org/resource/become-resource-leader-today).

Register here: <http://njcore.org/user/register>

Check out our video tutorial here to see how to easily contribute your resources: <http://njcore.org/help-videos>.

## EQuIP: Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products

Just a quick search on the Internet for “Common Core” materials or lessons will reveal millions of hits. While this wealth of information can be valuable, how can an educator judge the quality of the materials found? This is where EQuIP becomes critically important. EQuIP (Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products) is an initiative of Achieve designed to identify high-quality materials aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in both ELA/Literacy and Mathematics. The objectives of EQuIP are two-fold:

- Build the capacity of educators to evaluate and improve the quality of instructional materials for use in their classrooms and schools.
- Increase the supply of high-quality lessons and units aligned to the CCSS that are available to elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

EQuIP is a rubric, constructed of four dimensions, that can be used to determine the degree to which lesson plans or units of study are aligned to the intent of the CCSS. The four dimensions of the EQuIP rubric include:

1. Alignment to the depth of the CCSS;
2. Key shifts in the CCSS;
3. Instructional supports; and
4. Assessment.

Details about each of these categories can be found at Achieve’s website: <http://www.achieve.org/EQuIP>.

In addition to being a rubric, EQuIP is also a collegial process. Whether evaluating existing lessons or units or creating new materials, EQuIP encourages educators to work together, asking questions such as, “How can we make this assessment better?” or “What instructional strategy do you think is best?” Through dialogue that encourages professionalism, the EQuIP process cultivates collaboration.

Not just a rubric and a collegial process, EQuIP is a means through which the New Jersey Department of Education encourages teachers to create a repertoire of materials aligned to the CCSS. Through the Office of Academic Standards, numerous professional development sessions have been and are being offered to train educators in the EQuIP process. Please check the NJDOE calendar of events (<http://education.state.nj.us/events/>) to see the next training session. At these professional development events, the Office of Academic Standards encourages educators to post instructional materials to the New Jersey Educator Resource Exchange (<http://njcore.org/>). Educators may also submit original lessons and units to the Office of Academic Standards, where a team of professionals trained in the use of the EQuIP rubric will evaluate the lesson or unit and provide helpful feedback.

Through EQuIP, the New Jersey Department of Education hopes to create instructional materials aligned fully to the CCSS and to promote a community of professional educators dedicated to learning.

## Preparing for PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers)

In order to help schools across the state prepare for PARCC online testing, the NJDOE Office of Educational Technology is implementing the New Jersey Digital Readiness for Learning and Assessment Project (DRLAP). The multi-year goal of the project is to assist school districts in preparing their technology infrastructure and instructional practices for PARCC online assessments and digital learning.

As part of the New Jersey Digital Readiness for Learning and Assessment Project, the NJDOE has contracted to develop a digital learning portal, [www.njdigitallearning.org](http://www.njdigitallearning.org). The portal is intended to be a one-stop-shop for districts and schools to provide and receive information about their technical readiness for assessment and digital learning. Districts and schools can enter information regarding their technology infrastructure (devices, bandwidth, network info) into the NJTRAx interactive technology database, analysis and reporting system, and receive information about their technology readiness and any identified technology gaps.

The portal is also home to an expanding library of resources designed to support New Jersey school districts’ digital readiness for learning and assessment. NJDOE greatly appreciates the participation of districts that populated the database with their information, and the Department is committed to assisting districts in ameliorating any potential infrastructure and device gaps that might have been identified.

To meet this commitment, the NJDOE has also hired technology readiness consultants to work with districts in order to identify those with any shortfalls in their current Internet bandwidth and those that feel that they do not have enough devices for students to use for the online assessments. The office has already worked with most of the districts identified with possible network bandwidth gaps and is now contacting those with potential device gaps or other concerns.

The NJDOE has also hired a team of telecommunications procurement experts to work on the Broadband Component of DRLAP. This component is designed to help districts acquire faster service through the use of regional purchasing consortia. Regional information sessions were held throughout March and early April. For more information about this initiative, please review the March 5 memo at <http://education.state.nj.us/broadcasts/2014/MAR/05/10963/PARCC%20Memo%20Consortia.pdf> or contact John Matthews of Dellicker Strategies ([jmatthews@dellicker.com](mailto:jmatthews@dellicker.com)).

Additional digital learning resources will be available soon. If there are any questions about digital learning, the NJ DRLAP initiative or PARCC Technology Readiness, please email [PARCCTRT@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:PARCCTRT@doe.state.nj.us).

# What's New for NJ Educators?

## Expanded Participation in Teacher of the Year Program

Through educator recognition programs, the New Jersey Department of Education works with districts to give well-deserved public attention to the contributions of our state's outstanding teachers. The Teacher of the Year program is one of the best known recognition opportunities in the state. We distributed information about participation late last year and are pleased to report that 34 new districts have signed on to recognize teachers this year. We offer our sincere appreciation to all participating districts. For more detailed information on all the Department's recognition programs, please visit:

[www.state.nj.us/education/educators/rpr/recognition](http://www.state.nj.us/education/educators/rpr/recognition).

## Professional Development Resources

The Department has recently updated the [Professional Development Webpage](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/) (<http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/>) with new resources and a more user-friendly structure. We invite you to visit the site and send comments or suggestions to [teachpd@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:teachpd@doe.state.nj.us). Please see in particular the following new materials:

- [Optional Principal/Supervisor Professional Development Plan \(PDP\) Template and Sample](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ipdp/OptionalPrincipalPDPTemplateandSample.doc) ([www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ipdp/OptionalPrincipalPDPTemplateandSample.doc](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ipdp/OptionalPrincipalPDPTemplateandSample.doc))
- [Optional Chief School Administrator PDP Template and Sample](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ipdp/OptionalCSAPDPTemplateandSample.doc) ([www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ipdp/OptionalCSAPDPTemplateandSample.doc](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ipdp/OptionalCSAPDPTemplateandSample.doc))
- [Optional School PDP Template and Sample](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/sdpdp/OptionalSchoolPDPTemplateandSample.doc) ([www.nj.gov/education/profdev/sdpdp/OptionalSchoolPDPTemplateandSample.doc](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/sdpdp/OptionalSchoolPDPTemplateandSample.doc))
- [Optional District PDP Template and Sample](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/sdpdp/OptionalDistrictPDPTemplateandSample.doc) ([www.nj.gov/education/profdev/sdpdp/OptionalDistrictPDPTemplateandSample.doc](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/sdpdp/OptionalDistrictPDPTemplateandSample.doc))

## AchieveNJ Updates

The Department just released another [AchieveNJ Update](#)

[broadcast memo](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/040814Update.pdf) ([www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/040814Update.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/040814Update.pdf)). We encourage you to read the full content of the memo and draw your attention in particular to the following resources:

- [2013-14: Lessons From Educators](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/implementation/2013-14LessonsFromEducators.pdf) ([www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/implementation/2013-14LessonsFromEducators.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/implementation/2013-14LessonsFromEducators.pdf)): This guide shares examples of district planning, training, and communications work in implementing AchieveNJ, as well as approaches to data management and Student Growth Objectives (SGOs).
- [Course Roster Verification Guidance](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/CourseRosterVerificationandSubmission.pdf) ([www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/CourseRosterVerificationandSubmission.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/CourseRosterVerificationandSubmission.pdf)): This document outlines recommended practices to ensure districts have quality control procedures in place for course roster accuracy, which can only be verified by teachers and school leaders at the local level.
- [District Evaluation Advisory Committee \(DEAC\) Resources](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/deac/) ([www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/deac/](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/deac/)): Potential agenda items that DEACs might use in upcoming meetings are posted under "Top Resources" on the [DEAC Corner](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/deac/) ([www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/deac/](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/deac/)) webpage. These items include planning for distribution of non-evaluative 2012-13 mSGP reports to teachers, ensuring processes are in place to successfully complete the first year of AchieveNJ, and analyzing aggregated observation and SGO data to identify district-wide professional development needs.
- [Evaluation Policy Considerations for 2014-15](#): In order to allow districts the opportunity to continue building on the hard work taking place this year, **the Department will not change any components or weights of educator evaluation for 2014-15**. Please see Sections IIIA and IIIB (p. 3-4) of the [April 8 memo](#) ([www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/040814Update.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/040814Update.pdf)) referenced above for more information about proposed minor changes to evaluation policy for next school year.

## David Hespe returns to DOE

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Acting Commissioner Hespe is an accomplished leader with decades of public service in New Jersey.

In addition to his experience at the Department of Education, Acting Commissioner Hespe most recently served as President and Chief Executive Officer of Burlington County College, overseeing an enrollment of more than 10,000 students across four campuses. He also served as an Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at Rowan University's College of Education, where he was Department Chair for five years. As the former Assistant Superintendent and later Interim Superintendent of Schools for the Willingboro School District, Acting Commissioner Hespe oversaw the administration of all activities of the district and the development and implementation of goals and programs.

Acting Commissioner Hespe also developed and

implemented STEM-based educational programs, activities and content for Liberty Science Center during his tenure there as Co-Executive Director and Vice President of STEM Education. His invaluable knowledge and experience in STEM-based programs and activities helped to increase interest and awareness of the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics curricula and programs – all of which are crucial components to ensuring that New Jersey's students are ready to compete in a global economy.

Acting Commissioner Hespe holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Rutgers University and a Law Degree from the University of Rutgers-Newark. He began his career as a law clerk at the Mercer County Superior Court and then joined a private law firm before entering public service in 1989 as an Associate Counsel at the Office of Legislative Services. Mr. Hespe went on to serve as Assistant Counsel in Governor Whitman's Office and later served as First Assistant Attorney General.

He and his wife Cindy have a son in college.

# News, Upcoming Events & Professional Development Opportunities



Don't forget to check out the Department's calendar of events (<http://education.state.nj.us/events/>) to view upcoming events that may be of interest to you or your district.

## Developing Guidance Materials to Support Revised PD Regulations

Effective July 1, 2013, New Jersey adopted new regulations for professional development (PD), designed to provide districts and schools with more flexibility to plan PD and align it with the TEACHNJ legislation. The revised regulations include a new definition and Standards for Professional Learning that connect educator learning to student learning. They also provide the essential conditions and supports necessary for effective professional learning. All educators are encouraged to review the new definition and standards and use them to guide planning and implementing of PD in their schools.

The revised regulations also include the rules for PD for individuals, as well as schools and districts. Professional Development Plans (PDPs) must be created and/or reviewed annually and retained locally. The district PDP will no longer be submitted for review by county PD boards. Specifically, the requirements are:

- Districts, schools, teachers, principals/supervisors, and chief school administrators must create respective PD plans.
- Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) are required for all staff members rated ineffective or partially effective on their last annual summative evaluation.
- Each school must create a School Improvement Panel (ScIP) by August 31 each year. The ScIP, comprising the principal, vice/assistant principal, and at least one teacher, is charged with overseeing teacher evaluation, mentoring and professional learning. More staff members may be added to the ScIP, provided teachers represent at least one-third of the total membership.

The Department is providing guidance and optional templates that outline the requirements of each type of plan, with instructions for developing the plan and sample plans for illustrative purposes. Districts may choose to use these templates or may create their own templates that fulfill all requirements. Plan templates and samples are available on the professional development website under the following links:

- General overview, powerpoint & FAQs on the new requirements - [www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/regs/](http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/regs/)
- Overview of individual educator plans - [www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/ipdp/](http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/ipdp/)
- Overview of school and district plans - [www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/sdpdp/](http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/sdpdp/)
- Overview of the School Improvement Panel - [www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SchoolImprovementPanelandImprovingEvaluation.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SchoolImprovementPanelandImprovingEvaluation.pdf)

For more information on professional development, please visit [www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/](http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/)

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