



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PO Box 500

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF
Commissioner

March 5, 2013

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons

FROM: Peter Shulman, Assistant Commissioner/Chief Talent Officer *PS*
Division of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness

SUBJECT: Educator Evaluation Update

IN THIS MEMO:

I. Requirements and Resources (p. 2-4)

- A. Regulations, Policy Decisions, and Communications about 2013-14 (p. 2)
- B. Deadlines and Reporting Requirements (p. 2-3)
- C. Educator Practice Evaluation Instruments (p.3)
- D. Data Updates (p. 3-4)
- E. TEACHNJ Information (p. 4)

II. 2012-13 Evaluation Pilots (p. 4-5)

- A. Teacher and Principal Evaluation Pilots (p. 4-5)
- B. Spotlights from the Field: Piscataway and New Brunswick (p. 5-6)
- C. Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC) Work (p. 6-7)

III. Office of Evaluation Information (p. 7)

IV. Appendix A: Regional Evaluation Presentations (p. 8)

The New Jersey Department of Education (“the Department”) continues to prepare for statewide implementation of improved educator evaluation systems. Please share the information in this update broadly with your school and local community. Specifically, please share the memo with principals and encourage them to provide relevant information directly to teachers.

I. REQUIREMENTS AND RESOURCES

A. Regulations, Policy Decisions, and Communications about 2013-14

As you know, tomorrow (March 6, 2013) the Department plans to propose regulations to the State Board of Education providing rules for educator evaluation as outlined in the [TEACHNJ Act](#). These regulations are scheduled to become effective at the beginning of SY13-14 and will be posted at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/proposed>.

Immediately following the State Board presentation, the Department will launch an outreach initiative to share details about proposed evaluation policies for SY13-14. After several years of research and development – from the Educator Effectiveness Task Force (2010-11) through two years of pilots and consideration of research and the experiences of other states – we are excited to turn our attention to statewide implementation of improved evaluations. Highlighting our core belief that student achievement is at the center of this work, we have named the new state evaluation system **AchieveNJ**.

- Our primary goal is to help all New Jersey students achieve to their highest potential.
- Teacher and principal effectiveness is directly linked to student success; investing in educators is the key to driving student achievement.
- The new system provides educators the tools they need to achieve – multiple measures of effectiveness, several sources of input into their own evaluations, and direct connections to meaningful professional development.

We are hopeful that our proposed policies will drive achievement for all and we look forward to discussing them with you. As a reminder, we recently announced a series of regional presentations to provide an opportunity for educators to learn more about AchieveNJ and to provide feedback to the Department. [Appendix A](#) includes more information about these presentations, as well as directions and registration links.

Later this week, you will receive additional information about AchieveNJ and our outreach plans. We ask in advance that you prepare to share these materials as widely as possible with principals, vice/assistant principals, and teachers.

B. Deadlines and Reporting Requirements

After forming District Evaluation Advisory Committees, selecting evaluation instruments, and creating School Improvement Panels, districts should now be testing and refining evaluation rubrics in preparation for next year. Some sample activities might include:

- Piloting the new evaluation instruments in selected schools;
- Testing out new observation protocols in a subset of schools or classrooms;
- Thinking about connections between observation results and professional development opportunities; and/or
- Troubleshooting the language and vocabulary of evaluation instruments and building a common language among educators.

In response to our first data collection survey about district progress toward meeting evaluation requirements, approximately 95 percent of districts submitted information as of Friday, March 1, 2013. We are pleased to report that 100 percent of those respondents have formed District Evaluation Advisory Committees (DEACs).

In the coming weeks, we will post on our website a list of all districts that have responded to the reporting survey and the evaluation instruments selected by each. The Office of Evaluation continues to review survey data to identify districts who have fallen behind in building capacity for SY13-14 implementation. Evaluation staff will contact those districts to offer assistance.

C. Educator Practice Instruments

Last year, we conducted several rounds of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process to allow providers and districts the opportunity to submit instruments and required evidence and assurances for state review. By now, all districts should have selected teacher and principal practice evaluation instruments for use in SY13-14 from [state-approved lists](#). Moving forward, we recognize that new and modified instruments will continue to emerge and that districts may wish to change their selected instruments in coming school years. Therefore, we will conduct additional rounds of the RFQ process as needed, and districts will be able to report any changes in selected instruments as part of their yearly submission of evaluation rubrics for state approval.

The next round of the RFQ process will occur as follows:

- April 9: Updated RFQ application available on AchieveNJ website
- April 9 – May 7: Providers and districts submit instruments and information
- May 8 – 29: Department reviews submissions
- June 1: Approved districts and providers notified; updated lists posted on our website

Please note that **districts that have selected and reported their instruments for SY13-14 are not expected to change these decisions for the coming school year**; future RFQ rounds are intended to allow for expanded options in the future.

D. Data Updates

On February 26, you received a [memo](#) from Assistant Commissioner Bari Erlichson detailing the distribution of Course Roster Summary reports. As we have detailed in previous memos, course roster data will be used to assign growth scores to teachers as one measure in annual evaluations, and *the accuracy of student growth scores assigned to teachers depends entirely on the accuracy of course roster data*. The Department has created a project entitled “Course Roster Submission Report” on NJDOE’s Homeroom. The Homeroom coordinator for each district (including charters) should assign this project to the appropriate staff member.

As stated before, the Department *will not use* SY11-12 course roster data for evaluation purposes. However, in future years, roster data will be used to link teachers to student growth scores as appropriate. Please see the recent [Educator Evaluation Update](#) (Section I.D.), for more information about calculating and assigning growth scores as well as evaluation data collection and distribution.

Guidance for the upcoming practice window (April 15 – June 28) and official submission window (July 5 – August 2) for SY12-13 Course Roster Data will be sent directly to districts in the coming weeks. We strongly encourage districts to participate in the practice window as an invaluable means to prepare for accurate roster submissions, and thus accurate growth scores, in the future.

E. TEACHNJ Act Information

In response to many frequently asked questions about the new tenure law and its implications for educators across the state, the Department released a TEACHNJ Guide which can be accessed at <http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/learn/TeachNJGuide.pdf>. This document provides a broad overview of the law, including the various employees it applies to and the essential elements it outlines. We hope this guide will be helpful to administrators and teachers and we encourage you to share it widely.

II. EDUCATOR EVALUATION PILOTS

A. Teacher and Principal Evaluation Pilots

The Department continues to support and collect data from our current pilot districts in order to share promising practices with educators throughout the state.

As part of the **teacher evaluation pilot**,

- Districts that have included a cohort of teachers in the evaluator training on their evaluation instrument have reported increased buy-in and less apprehension as the lessons learned from that training are communicated throughout the staff. Teachers get a crystallized picture of the expectations.
- Districts are building in time during faculty, department, and professional learning community (PLC) meetings in order to focus on instruction, goal-setting, and monitoring student progress on common assessments.
- Members of the Department's Office of Professional Development have conducted focus groups with several districts to gather feedback for revised guidance on professional development planning. In addition to explaining revised PD regulations slated for adoption in May, one purpose for the planned guidance is to assist educators in using the data from new evaluation systems to inform the planning and implementation of professional learning opportunities.
 - Department staff have engaged small groups of teachers and administrators from Pemberton, Secaucus, West Deptford, and Elizabeth to understand their successes and challenges in interpreting and using evaluation data to inform PD planning at the individual, school, and district levels.
 - Groups have discussed the utility of data management systems, the value of collaborative learning teams in supporting student learning, and the process of goal-setting. They have also identified resources that would be helpful to these efforts.

As part of the **principal evaluation pilot**,

- Leadership teams are incorporating a common language of leadership to sharpen the focus on student achievement goals, collaboration, and initiatives.
- Districts are promoting instruction as the core focus of a school's mission and aligning their practice to meet concise standards and expectations. This involves allocating more time for post-conferences with teachers and collaborative efforts to create targeted professional development opportunities for staff.

Across **teacher and principal evaluation pilots**,

- Districts are making efforts to clearly communicate the culture change that new evaluations entail. While focusing on technical aspects of evaluation – such as observation trainings and procedures – is important, reinforcing the overarching value of the system is also key.
 - Some districts are engaging in administrative PLCs that regularly discuss articles from professional journals about culture change. In subsequent faculty meetings, administrators devote time to sharing not only the research behind evaluation protocols, but also ways in which every stakeholder has an important role in improving student achievement.
 - Districts are also encouraging teacher-led PLCs to focus on connecting the teacher practice instrument's professional practice domain to existing school culture initiatives (Anti-Bullying, Character Education initiatives etc.).
- Some districts suggested capitalizing on the common language of instruction and leadership in order to connect more broadly to other district initiatives (ie: Common Core, benchmarking, etc.).

B. Pilot Spotlights: Piscataway and North Brunswick

Providing quality assessments and feedback to students is a vital component of a teachers' responsibility. The **Piscataway Township School District** has integrated this practice into their pilot through a collaborative approach:

- The district has focused on the work of John Hattie (author of *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning*) and the finding that quality feedback is important to fostering higher levels of student growth. Through a collaborative process, the District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) developed a rubric for another measure of teacher practice in addition to the use of their evaluation instrument.
 - As part of initial brainstorming about the additional measure, the DEAC reinforced the importance of connecting to something district stakeholders valued, was part of their work, and would impact student achievement.
 - The DEAC selected Teacher-Made Assessments with Feedback to Students and formed a subcommittee to research and create a draft.
 - The full DEAC reviewed drafts, made revisions for improvement; and aligned rubric attributes to the district evaluation instrument.
 - The rubric was presented to district leadership and school faculties and additional revisions were made.

- As the school year continues, the district will collect assessments and feedback samples from teachers to support their practice and professional development.
- Assistant Superintendent Carolyn Keck remarked, “In making change, connecting to something that is valued and already being worked on is important. Rather than layering something new on top of other established priorities, we connected an additional measure of teacher practice to a district strategic priority: teacher-made assessment and feedback to students. This created an “aha moment” for the DEAC. With their leadership, we developed a simple but powerful draft rubric, with the right procedure and continued input from stakeholders.”

Fostering a culture of collaboration and professional leadership is paramount for improved evaluations. The **North Brunswick Township** School District is using their pilot to further their efforts to cultivate positive leadership practice and involvement with key stakeholders.

- The district reinforced their commitment to the Balanced Leadership approach and the work of [Michael Schmoker](#) (Results and Results Now) through targeted professional development. North Brunswick was already using quarterly assessments to make data-driven decisions, and now they have taken the next step to target instructional support and share best practices with new staff. The benchmark assessments also allow the district to more efficiently address student achievement findings.
- Instructional rounds were enhanced to highlight substantive conversations regarding instruction, leadership, and student achievement. These rounds include a cadre of administrators that examine classroom practices and gather a tremendous amount of data to support district initiatives such as professional development. The district also recognizes exemplary teachers and can engage in more frequent and meaningful conversations about instruction.
- Informal conversations about leadership are permeating the district; cultivating a culture of learning for new educators has helped veteran school leaders to hone their skills and make sure their focus remains on instruction.
- Vincent De Lucia, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development, said, “Our experience with the principal pilot has empowered us to refocus our practice on our core beliefs of *Equity and Excellence for all Students*. The evolution of going from walkthroughs to instructional rounds enabled us to promote rigor. By taking these steps and documenting the level of task to performance, we can recognize and reward good practice.”
- North Brunswick has also utilized their relationship with local media to assist in communication efforts. Formal press releases, instructional videos, and regular community meetings have allowed the district to keep all stakeholders informed and involved.

C. Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC)

As you know, the [EPAC Interim Report \(2011-12\)](#) was published last month and includes findings and lessons learned from the first pilot year. Our [February 5 memo](#) summarizes major findings and explains the steps we have taken to incorporate this and other vital feedback into our future plans.

In this expanded pilot year, the EPAC continues to meet regularly and provide guidance and feedback to the State. Most recently, appointees were asked to:

- Provide input on the proposed rubric for the principal leadership component of the principal evaluation rubric;
- Provide input on approaches to evaluating educational services staff, supervisors, and other school-based educators who are not classroom teachers;
- Begin planning for the final EPAC report; and
- Share best practices from their districts with each other and Department officials; the goal of these sessions was to gather the best ideas from the 22 pilot districts to share statewide during our outreach initiative.

III. OFFICE OF EVALUATION INFORMATION

Later this week, the Department will launch an updated evaluation website with new materials outlining AchieveNJ and will communicate this information to you directly through subsequent broadcasts. As always, we invite you to call our Evaluation Help Line at 609-777-3788 or email us at educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us with any questions or feedback.

PS/TM/JP/E:\Communications\Memos\030513 Educator Evaluation Update-Final.Doc

Members, State Board of Education
Christopher Cerf, Commissioner
Senior Staff
Diane Shoener
Marie Barry
Karen Campbell
Mamie Doyle
Jeff Hauger
Robert Higgins
Jessani Gordon
Mary Jane Kurabinski
Timothy Matheney
Peggy McDonald
Cathy Pine
Megan Snow

Ellen Wolock
Amy Ruck
Nancy Besant
William Firestone
Todd Kent
Joel Zarrow
CCCS Staff
Executive County Superintendents
Executive Directors of Regional Achievement
Centers
Executive County School Business
Administrators
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group

Appendix A: Evaluation Presentation Information

The Department of Education recently announced a series of regional presentations to provide an opportunity for educators to learn more about evaluation policies for SY13-14 and to provide feedback to the Department. We have established a variety of times* and locations in order to accommodate as many interested parties as possible. Attendance is free for all guests, and space at each location is limited. Please register by following links provided below. Directions to each location are also linked within the chart.

Date	Time	Location/Directions	Registration
March 13	3:30 to 5:30	Toms River High School North	http://education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=19325
March 15	1:00 to 4:00	Morris County Fire Fighters and Police Academy	http://education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=19265
March 19	9:00 to 3:00	Rutgers Camden	http://education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=19365
March 21 (2 Sessions)	1:00 to 3:00 & 4:00 to 6:00	New Jersey Principals & Supervisors Association	http://education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=19286 http://education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=19285
April 10	9:30 to 11:30	Ocean City High School	http://education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=19345
April 11 (2 Sessions)	1:00 to 3:00 & 4:00 to 6:00	Teaneck High School	http://education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=19490 http://education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=19491

*All presentations regarding Educator Evaluation are based around a two-hour window that the Department has deemed necessary to effectively communicate the details of the new initiative. Where times are longer than two hours, it is to accommodate extended question and answer sessions or additional agenda items requested by a local partner. For example, the event on March 19, 2013 at Rutgers University is a full day because it is being co-sponsored. The Department will be doing an overview presentation in the morning and Rutgers University will be leading the meeting in the afternoon. See registration page above for more details.