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March 28, 2012

TO: Chief School Administrators
                 Charter School Lead Persons

FROM: Peter Shulman, Chief Talent Officer
                 Division of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness

SUBJECT: **Educator Evaluation System Implementation Update**

Over the past year, through collaboration with 11 pilot districts and 19 School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools, we have begun the process to reform and significantly improve our statewide teacher evaluation system. As each of you have long known, the quality of a teacher in front of the classroom is the most important in-school factor affecting student achievement. As we take the next step in improving educator evaluations, we need to keep a singular focus on developing a system that will provide meaningful feedback and actionable data to help all of our teachers, regardless of experience, continuously improve their practice.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) recently announced that we are moving towards full, statewide implementation of a new teacher evaluation system in the 2013-14 school year. Districts across the state are already beginning the challenging but important work to prepare for the new educator evaluation system and to plan and budget accordingly. NJDOE understands that many in the field are seeking more information about this initiative and plans for statewide roll-out. To that end, this is the first of a series of monthly memos that we will provide to share developments and to highlight the great work happening in the field. Please use this memo to share information broadly with administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders in your district.

1. **UPDATES AND RESOURCES**

Requirements for 2012-13

As NJDOE is still learning from our current evaluation pilot program, national research, and models in use across the country, we have designated 2012-13 as a planning and capacity-building year. During this time, districts must engage in one of two options: participate in a second cohort of our pilot program, or build capacity through a defined series of steps for implementing the new system in 2013-14.

New Pilot Grant Opportunity
Today, we released a Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO) for districts to apply for funding for a new teacher evaluation pilot (EE4NJ Cohort 2). Approximately 20 districts will be selected through this competitive grant process to help us refine evaluation system implementation before we roll it out state-wide. In addition, current pilot participants (EE4NJ Cohort 1) will receive a separate invitation at a

later date to extend their work into a second year. Therefore, a total of approximately 30 districts, including both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, will participate in the 2012-2013 teacher evaluation pilot program.

Based on lessons learned, we have made several important modifications to last year's original NGO:
- Unannounced observations are required;
- There is more flexibility on the duration and number of observations;
- The number of observations differ for teachers of core and non-core subjects; and
- New observation processes are required to ensure inter-rater agreement and accuracy, including the use of external observers and double-scoring of some sessions.

Due to federal funding restrictions, two separate NGOs are available for Cohort 2 districts: one for districts that are Title I LEAs with 100% of their schools receiving Title I funds and having schoolwide status and another for **all other districts except those participating in EE4NJ Cohort 1**. Both versions of the NGO contain the same specifications and requirements and can be found here: http://www.nj.gov/education/EE4NJ/ngo/. Grant awardees will be announced in **June, 2012**.

The DOE will host two separate technical assistance webinars. The first webinar will be on April 5, 2012 between 10 AM and 12 PM for Title I LEAs with 100 percent of their schools receiving Title I funds and having schoolwide status. All other districts, except those participating in EE4NJ Cohort 1, will have an option to participate in a webinar on April 5, 2012 between 2 PM and 4 PM or on April 12, 2012 between 10 AM and 12 PM. There will be archives of each webinar posted on the web following the webinar completion. You can access a registration link for these webinars at http://www.nj.gov/education/EE4NJ/ngo/. Please visit our Frequently Asked Questions at http://www.state.nj.us/education/EE4NJ/faq/ for more information about the application and selection process.

Capacity-Building Requirements
Districts not participating in the new pilot will need to meet the following key milestones for implementing components of the evaluation system:
- No later than **November 2012**, form a District Advisory Committee to ensure stakeholder engagement in evaluation reform (See Appendix A for a more detailed explanation of the specifications);
- By **January 2013**, adopt an evidence-supported teaching practice instrument and procedures for applying the instrument (see Appendix B for a more detailed explanation of the specifications);
- From **January 2013 through August 2013**, test and refine implementation of the observation instruments and rubrics (see Appendix C for teacher evaluation definitions) and prepare for full implementation in the 2013-14 school year; such testing and refinement may include, but is not limited to, learning from the following:
  - o Having principals, who have been familiarized with the instrument, utilize the rubric in informal observations and report their experiences,
  - o Soliciting feedback from teachers and other stakeholders on how the rubric can best inform professional growth, and
  - o Collaborating with neighboring districts and researching national practices around implementation and training.
- By **June 2013**, thoroughly train teachers on the teacher practice instruments;

- By **August 2013**, thoroughly train observers to ensure fair and consistent application of the instruments; and
- In **January and July 2013**, complete progress reports on these milestones.

Home-Grown and Modified Observation Instruments

The NJDOE is *not* requiring districts to adopt a framework from a list of approved instrument providers, nor is there one state-mandated model. Rather, we have laid out specifications in this memo that any selected instrument must meet. While districts not participating in the EE4NJ Cohort 2 pilot may use a "home-grown" instrument, we acknowledge that creating a new instrument or modifying an existing instrument intended to inform high-stakes decisions requires technical expertise and significant resources to develop an evidence base. Districts that adopt a home-grown or modified instrument must develop their evidence base over the course of the first year of implementation. The department is developing a reporting and auditing process to ensure districts' selected instruments meet all specifications, which we will share in our April memo.

Guidance and Upcoming Information

Potential Funding Sources

Several potential funding sources for evaluation work are available for the 2012-13 school year. They include:
- NGO referenced above (for those selected);
- General fund unreserved surplus in the original 2012-13 budget;
- Title IIA funds
  - See Appendix D for guidance;
- Race to the Top funds (for those participating and designating evaluation as an activity in their Scope of Work); and
- Title I
  - Title I, Part A funds may be used only for schools with school-wide Title I programs
    - Title I, Part A funds must supplement and not supplant state/local funds. If any components of the district's teacher evaluation system become a state and/or local requirement, the district may no longer use Title I funds to support the system.
  - School Improvement Funds (for those eligible)
    - SIA Part A
      - FY 2011 carryover funds used for this purpose must be encumbered prior to August 31, 2012.
    - School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds.

Note: The use of all Federal Funds must comply with the guidance set forth by the United States Department of Education.

Data Confidentiality

Given developments in New York City and Los Angeles where teacher names and ratings have been publicly released, NJDOE understands the concern about this happening in our state. Please note that we are opposed to the release of evaluation data linked to specific teachers as part of a larger evaluation. We are currently pursuing a number of avenues to ensure that teacher confidentiality is protected at the state level and will provide guidance to help protect teacher confidentiality at the district level. We will outline the requirements for data collection in an upcoming memo.

Principal Evaluation Pilot
In April, NJDOE will post a Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO) for districts to apply to participate in a principal evaluation pilot. Up to $500,000 will be made available for approximately 10 districts. More information will be provided in our April memo.

2. **WHAT WE ARE LEARNING FROM THE EE4NJ COHORT 1 PILOTS**

Based on mid-year implementation reports submitted by current pilot districts and observations from field visits, NJDOE has learned a lot about both the successes and challenges in implementing a new evaluation system. Most significantly, we have heard from pilot educators and administrators that they are having more meaningful and constructive conversations about their practice than ever before. We are seeing evidence that the conditions are in place to support teachers in the process of continuous improvement. In addition, we have noted a few other key takeaways:

- **Stakeholder engagement** is critical throughout implementation of a new evaluation system; this supports the need to convene a district advisory committee as soon as possible.
- **District Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (DEPAC)** meetings that are open to additional staff members help build a culture of trust, transparency, and two-way communication.
- Quality and in-depth **evaluator and teacher training** is critical to teacher understanding, administrator familiarity with technology, accuracy and reliability of ratings, and quality feedback.
- **Capacity challenges** exist for administrators in completing the increased number of observations; this requires shifting priorities and responsibilities.
- Identifying and developing assessments for **Non-Tested Grades and Subjects** pose a significant challenge and require that teachers to work through a process of identifying student learning objectives tied to the curriculum.

We are currently working with pilot districts and with the state-level Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC) to address these lessons learned and provide related guidance and support to the field in the future.

3. **SPOTLIGHT FROM THE FIELD: PEMBERTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS**

We are seeing progress throughout our pilot districts in a variety of ways, and will highlight one district in this memo each month.

In Pemberton, we are seeing many excellent implementation practices, including:
- An impressive focus on implementing quality controls around turnkey teacher facilitator training.
  - In addition to training a group of teachers to provide turnkey training, Pemberton formed an auxiliary committee of teachers, supervisors, and principals to manage the messaging and ensure consistent communications among the turnkey trainers. This has resulted in greater understanding of the teacher evaluation rubrics and much less confusion about procedures, and has helped to ensure consistency in presentations during roll-out.
  - The importance of teachers understanding the criteria and process by which they are evaluated cannot be overstated. Pemberton's approach to empowering and supporting

teacher leaders as turnkey trainers represents a practice that other districts may want to build from. Without assembling a committee that can support this training, the likelihood of inconsistent messaging could be very problematic. Turnkey trainers also should be included in comprehensive evaluator training and supported in training other members of the faculty.

- o Transparency was increased by indentifying two teachers per school for Pemberton's DEPAC; inviting two to four teachers from each school as Teacher-Facilitators; and including principals and supervisors from each school. This provided at least seven to ten staff members from each site that were very knowledgeable about the pilot's criteria and the district's implementation strategies.

- The use of Student Tripod Surveys
  - o Pemberton will employ Student Tripod Surveys as an additional measure of teaching practice. The surveys measure students' perception of the seven facets of the classroom environment: Care, Control, Clarify, Challenge, Captivate, Confer, and Consolidate. The surveys will be distributed to all students in grades 3-12 in early June.
- A focus on internal and external communications
  - o Pemberton provides information on the pilot during monthly principal meetings, includes updates and highlights about their work in their monthly newsletter, *The Insider*, and links to media coverage on their website: http://www.pemberton.k12.nj.us/departments/hr/EE4NJ.aspx. Three board of education members serve on the DEPAC along with two parent/community members.

For more information about Pemberton's work, visit their pilot website at http://www.pemberton.k12.nj.us/departments/hr/EE4NJ.aspx.

4. QUESTIONS

NJDOE is continuing to update the pilot program website, and we invite you to visit http://www.state.nj.us/education/EE4NJ/ and view new FAQs for additional information. If you have questions that are not addressed in our communications or the FAQs, please send them directly to our email inbox at EE4NJ@doe.state.nj.us.

PS/JG/JP/KW/ E:\Communications\EE4NJ Monthly Memo 3-28 9AM.Doc
Attachments
c: Members, State Board of Education
    Christopher Cerf, Acting Commissioner
    Senior Staff
    Diane Shoener
    Marie Barry
    Karen Campbell
    Jessani Gordon
    Jeff Hauger
    Robert Higgins
    Mary Jane Kurabinski
    Cathy Pine
    Megan Snow
    Ellen Wolock
    Amy Ruck
    CCCS Staff

Executive County Superintendents
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group

APPENDIX A: District Evaluation Advisory Committee Composition

No later than **November 2012**, form a District Advisory Committee to ensure stakeholder engagement in evaluation reform. We strongly advise these committees be formed as soon as possible, as this committee will oversee and guide the planning and implementation of the district's evaluation policies and procedures. Composition of this committee should include the following:

- Teachers from each school level in the district; central office administrators overseeing the teacher evaluation process; and administrators conducting evaluations. Members must also include the superintendent; a special education administrator; a parent; and a member of the district board of education.

- At the discretion of the superintendent, membership on the District Evaluation Advisory Committee may be extended to representatives of other groups.

APPENDIX B: Specifications for the Evidence-Supported Teaching Practice Instrument

As part of the capacity-building requirements for 2012-2013, districts must adopt a research-based or evidence-supported teaching practice instrument and procedures by January 2013. This instrument must have an evidence base documenting that it meets the following specifications and practices:

- Produces scores or classifications of practice that have been shown, in practice or in research studies, to differentiate a range of teaching performance;

- Has objective validity evidence on construct and concurrent validity;

- Aligns to the 2011 InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards and provides rubrics for assessing teaching practice in at least the following domains of professional practice: the learning environment; planning and preparation; instructional practice/classroom strategies and behaviors; and professional responsibilities and collegiality, including collaborative practice and ethical professional behavior;

- Provides scales or dimensions that capture multiple and varied aspects of teaching performance;

- Includes rubrics for assessing teaching practice that have a minimum of four levels of performance scores or classifications;

- Is implemented using classroom observations as a major component; and

- Has resources, which may be provided by an entity other than the instrument developer, that:
  - Provide applied examples of teaching performance across a wide range of skills and performance levels to be used for training teachers and observers and for observer certification or proof of mastery,
  - Provide at least one skills assessment sufficient to determine that an observer is scoring at acceptably high levels of accuracy and consistency as compared to expert judgment, to allow certification or proof of mastery for observers applying the instrument,
    - The certification or proof of mastery designation would be conferred on candidates who have successfully completed training and achieved a high level of accuracy as defined for that instrument and rubric,
  - Permit the calibration of observers' application of the instrument at least once per year,
  - Provide ongoing support to teachers and observers, such as exemplar videos of teaching practice measured by the instrument, and
  - Support the district in building observer capacity, such as train-the trainer modules and video banks of teaching practice exemplars.

Districts that choose to develop or select instruments without an existing evidence base must notify the Department of Education by January 31, 2013, and will be given until August 2014 to collect the necessary data and provide the required evidence to the Department of Education.

APPENDIX C: Teacher Evaluation Definitions

"Calibration" means a process to monitor the scoring of an observer who has been trained and who has demonstrated proof of mastery on a teaching practice evaluation instrument, to ensure that such observer continues to score accurately and consistently according to the standards and definitions of the instrument.

"Evidence-supported teaching practice evaluation instrument" is a teaching practice evaluation instrument that provides: (1) scales or dimensions that capture multiple and varied aspects of teaching performance which must be attested by knowledgeable practitioners or experts in the content prior to use in observation of a teacher's practice; (2) differentiation of a range of teaching performance as described by the score scales which must be shown in practice and/or research studies; (3) objective validation on the aspects of both concurrent and construct validity. Concurrent validity as applied to the instrument means that higher observed instructional quality as measured by the instrument is related to higher student learning achievement or gains. This relationship must be shown through provided data sets or study results. Construct validity as applied to the instrument must be attested by knowledgeable practitioners or experts in the content.

"Proof of mastery" is a level of performance on an assessment of scoring and observation skills given at the end of training on a teaching practice evaluation instrument sufficient to verify that an observer of teaching practice has learned to apply the teaching practice evaluation instrument to the requisite level of accuracy and consistency.

"Research-based teaching practice evaluation instrument" is a teaching practice evaluation instrument providing scores or categorizations which have been found to be valid for specified purposes through a research process whereby: (1) studies have been completed using the current form of the instrument that have demonstrated the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid results; and (2) these results have been published in a format where they have been subject to professional peer review (and preferably blind review).

"Rubric" is a scoring guide composed of criteria used to evaluate performance, a product, or a project. A rubric allows for standardized evaluation according to specified criteria, making scoring and ranking at several levels simpler and more transparent in a reliable, fair, and valid manner.

"Teaching practice evaluation instrument" consists of the rubrics and accompanying definitions and/or descriptions of the scales and score levels comprising an instrument used in evaluating teaching practice; it may also include more detailed representations such as indicators or examples.

"Validity" means the degree to which an interpretation of an evaluation score is supported by evidence. For a measure of teaching effectiveness to be valid, evidence must support the argument that the measure actually assesses the dimension of teaching effectiveness it claims to measure and not something else. It is also essential to have evidence that the scores or results from the measure are valid for the purpose for which they will be used. Instruments cannot be valid in and of themselves; an instrument or assessment must be validated for particular purposes.

APPENDIX D: *Title II, Part A*: Potential Funding for Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems

Allowable Use of *Title II, Part A* Funds

The U. S. Department of Education's ESEA flexibility program does not change the provisions on allowable use of *Title II, Part A* funds. An evaluation system is an allowable use of IIA funds, provided there are no local or state funds available to pay costs. If an LEA uses local or state funds to pay for some of the professional development related to a mandated program, but there are insufficient local and/or state funds to cover all of the necessary activities related to professional development, then *Title II, Part A* funds may be used to implement those activities.

- Training and materials for the teacher evaluation system for teachers and evaluators (e.g., principals) constitute an allowable use if the evaluation system will be used to improve teacher effectiveness.

- Training and materials for principals for the principal evaluation system constitute an allowable use if the evaluation system will be used to improve principal and teacher effectiveness.

- Training and materials for the principal evaluation system for administrators (e.g., superintendents) who evaluate principals constitute an allowable use.

- Professional development for principals and superintendents (e.g., academies) to enhance management and leadership skills is an allowable use.

- Training of teachers and principals in how to use new technology related to evaluation systems is an allowable use.

- Purchase of technology (e.g., handheld tablet devices, software) primarily for use by teachers to learn the evaluation system or by personnel to prepare as evaluators is an allowable use. Principals and other educators (e.g., mentors) are included if they will be evaluating teachers.

- Purchase of technology (e.g., handheld tablet devices) to facilitate video conferencing among teacher teams or capture video of classroom instruction for professional development of teachers and principals is an allowable use.

Non-Allowable Use of *Title II, Part A* Funds

The development or purchase of a performance management data system that collects and stores teacher and/or principal evaluation data (e.g., student achievement data, observation data, etc.) is **not** an allowable use.

Required LEA Documentation of *Title II, Part A* Funds

It is necessary for the LEAs to maintain written documentation (e.g., budget information, planning documents, other materials) demonstrating that it would not be able to meet State mandates without the use of *Title II, Part A* funds in the event the LEA is audited.

The use of all Federal funds must comply with the guidance set forth by the U. S. Department of Education.