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April 30, 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

This memo provides an update on our ongoing work to improve educator evaluations in New Jersey. Please share this information broadly with administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders in your district.

1. UPDATES AND RESOURCES

Evaluation Reform Elements: A Common Language

To ensure that communication and collaboration happens in a meaningful and consistent way, teachers, school and district administrators, and all other stakeholders need to share a common understanding of the language and terminology used to describe educator evaluation systems. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) understands that, due to the scope of and complexity of evaluation reform, some confusion exists about the meaning of various terms and phrases. In order to establish a common language as we pursue this work together, we have provided a glossary of definitions and explanations in Appendix A.

On the whole, we define the major elements of this work in the following way:

Evaluation Reform encompasses all activities related to developing, piloting, and implementing new evaluation systems for teachers and principals in New Jersey. This work started with the Governor's Educator Effectiveness Task Force in 2011 and has continued with the Excellent Educators for New Jersey (EE4NJ) teacher and principal evaluation pilot programs. The eventual goal is for all New Jersey districts to adopt a rigorous and meaningful educator evaluation system that differentiates between levels of performance and provides feedback for professional support and development.

The **Evaluation System** refers to the overarching umbrella of all components of educator evaluation that are combined to generate a summative assessment of performance. In New Jersey, we are following the Educator Effectiveness Task Force recommendations and working with stakeholders and pilot districts to design our evaluation system based on the following components:

- *Teacher evaluation system* – This system is composed of teaching practice and student achievement measures, with varying weights assigned to the following components: classroom observation, additional measures of teaching practice, student assessments, school-wide performance measures, and additional measures of student performance.
- *Principal evaluation system* – This system is composed of professional practice and student achievement measures, with varying weights assigned to the following components: human capital management, principal performance, aggregated school-wide student performance, and school-specific student performance goals.

The **Teaching Practice Framework** is a combination of the philosophy, tools, and processes used to evaluate educators on the teacher and principal observation components of the evaluation system (i.e., Danielson, McReL, Stronge, etc.).

The **Teaching Practice Observation Instrument** is the specific teaching practice tool used to assess the observable competencies of teaching practice. The instrument consists of the rubrics and accompanying definitions and descriptions of the ratings used in assessing teaching practice. It may also include more detailed representations of teaching practice such as indicators or examples. The selected teaching practice observation instrument must have an evidence base documenting that it meets various specifications, which are [outlined in the NJDOE evaluation FAQs](#).

Teacher Evaluation

Teaching Practice Framework and Observation Instrument Review

All New Jersey districts must adopt an evidence-supported teaching practice observation instrument, as [outlined in the evaluation FAQs](#), by January 2013. The NJDOE is planning on creating a non-exhaustive list of teaching practice observation instruments that meet the specific criteria. Districts may select from these teaching practice observation instruments or identify other instruments that meet the specific criteria. If districts choose to adopt a teaching practice observation instrument not on the list or to modify or develop their own teaching practice observation instrument, they will be required to provide the evidence-based documentation to the department. We will provide more information about the reporting and review process in upcoming memos.

2012-13 Teacher Evaluation Pilot Program

As you know, NJDOE recently posted two Notices of Grant Opportunity for districts to apply for the second year of our teacher evaluation pilot program. The submission period closed on April 26 and the department is now reviewing applications. Selected districts will be notified in approximately six weeks.

External Research on the Pilots

NJDOE has contracted with Rutgers University to serve as an external researcher to the teacher evaluation pilot in 2011-2012. Rutgers has identified the following four main goals for their work:

1. To assess the extent and quality of schools' and districts' efforts to develop and implement measures of teaching performance and student achievement growth;

2. To identify common contextual facilitators and barriers to the implementation of the new teacher evaluation system;
3. To assess various stakeholders' perceptions of the teacher evaluation system; and
4. To examine the impact of implementing the new teacher evaluation system on collaborative school cultures and professional development.

Rutgers spent the first several weeks establishing the processes for collecting and analyzing data, and has provided the NJDOE with an interim report on those activities. This [report has been posted on our website](#), with individual district data excluded for confidentiality reasons. Additional interim reports will be submitted on June 30, 2012 and September 30, 2012. In these interim reports, Rutgers will provide information on progress to date in survey data collection, site visits, and related data collection efforts. The final report will be submitted to NJDOE by December 31, 2012.

Principal Evaluation Pilot Program and Integration Vision

The [Notice of Grant Opportunity](#) (NGO) for the 2012-13 principal evaluation system pilot program was posted on April 19 and sent to all Chief School Administrators. This pilot will include approximately 10 individual local education agencies (LEAs) or groups of LEAs who form a consortium that are selected to participate during the 2012-2013 school year. Applications are due May 30, 2012; more details can be found in the April 19 memo, posted [here](#).

With the beginning of the principal evaluation pilot NGO process, we are pursuing our goal to establish integrated teacher and principal evaluation systems for all New Jersey districts. Following the recommendations of the Educator Effectiveness Task Force, the teacher and principal evaluation pilots have been designed to allow significant stakeholder input into the development and implementation of new evaluation practices. Together, these two initiatives have one singular focus – providing meaningful feedback and data on performance to help all of our educators continuously improve their practice and ultimately to ensure that all students in New Jersey graduate from high school ready for college and career.

Teacher and principal evaluations should share a common thread of growth and improvement for all educators within the same school. Student and school-wide performance measures are significant components of both the new teacher and principal evaluation systems; therefore, there must be consistency in how these measures are calculated and applied to provide continuity across a school building and hold teachers and principals similarly accountable. Equally important is ensuring that a principal's evaluation assess his or her ability to accurately conduct observations of teachers and provide meaningful feedback.

During the 2012-13 pilot year, our state Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC) will expand to collaborate on both teacher and principal evaluation pilot activities. All participating pilot districts – whether piloting teacher or principal evaluations, or both – will convene district-level advisory committees that will also inform the state's work. This will allow us to explore the intersections between the teacher and principal evaluation systems and make sound recommendations for the integrated system.

Timeline of Educator Evaluation Activities

In order to represent all major components of our educator evaluation work, we have created a visual timeline. This is attached as Appendix B.

2. SPOTLIGHT FROM THE FIELD: ALEXANDRIA TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

Under the leadership of Superintendent Matt Jennings, Alexandria is showing significant progress in several areas. With regard to evaluation system design on the whole, Dr. Jennings has said, "A sense of urgency around this work that is shared by a critical mass is needed because the overall lack of feedback that teachers receive from traditional evaluation systems does them a disservice. Additionally, most current systems do not successfully differentiate levels of effectiveness among teachers."

Specifically, Alexandria is demonstrating leadership with non-tested grade levels and subject areas and common assessments in the following ways:

- Alexandria continues to demonstrate significant progress in one of the more complex areas of teacher evaluation reform: **linking student learning to teacher evaluation in non-tested grade levels and subject areas**. The district began several years ago to develop common assessments in each grade level and subject area. The district is utilizing a collaborative approach in this area where teachers and administrators collectively select SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results –Oriented, and Time Bound) learning goals for classes and groups of students. Formalized learning goals are created and submitted in early fall of the school year, and teachers are rated according to their progress in achieving the goals. For more information and examples on this goal-setting, please view [Alexandria's Teacher Performance Evaluation System manual](#).
- Through the process of **common assessment administration and two days of arena scoring** where staff members in the same subject area participate in a blind scoring process, student progress is identified and teachers are able to use the data to plan for instructional improvements.
- Two weeks prior to each teacher's annual performance review, **staff members are able to submit additional evidence of student learning that aligns with the SMART goals** so that administrators can develop a clear picture of student progress prior to completing the end-of-year Annual Performance Report for teachers.
- The district is also utilizing **Global Scholar's Pinnacle Insight technology software to assist administrators and teachers in analyzing results from the common assessments**. The software helps to analyze critical formative assessment data in teacher-friendly formats, which helps teachers to monitor students' learning and provide appropriate follow-up and targeted support.

For more information about Alexandria's work as an EE4NJ pilot district, visit their website at <http://www.alexandriaschools.org/domain/359>.

3. QUESTIONS

NJDOE is continuing to update the EE4NJ 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\Monthly Memos\EE4NJ Monthly Memo 4-30-12.Doc

Attachments

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Christopher Cerf, Acting Commissioner
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Garden State Coalition of Schools
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APPENDIX A: Definitions and Explanations of Educator Evaluation Terminology

The following definitions and explanations of educator evaluation terminology are provided:

Evaluation Reform

EVALUATION SYSTEM AND COMPONENTS

- Evaluation System
- Teaching Practice Framework
- Teaching Practice Observation Instrument
 - Competencies
 - Evidence-supported Teaching Practice Observation Instrument
 - Research-based Teaching Practice Observation Instrument

Individual Professional Development Plan

InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards

OBSERVATIONS

- Calibration
- Certification/Proof of Mastery
- Data Capture
- External Observer
- Observation
- Observation Conference
- Observer
- Observer Training
- Inter-rater Agreement

SCHOOL STAFF

- Chief School Administrator
- Supervisor
- Teaching Staff Member

SCORING

- Aspects of Scoring Quality
- Reliability
- Rubric
- Score Drift (Observer Effects)
- Types of Scoring and Quality Control
- Validity

Student Learning Objectives (SLO)

Student Growth Percentiles (SGP)

Summative Rating

Evaluation Reform: All activities related to developing, piloting, and implementing new evaluation systems for educators in New Jersey. This work started with the Governor’s Educator Effectiveness Task Force in 2011, and has continued with the Excellent Educators for New Jersey (EE4NJ) teacher and principal evaluation pilot programs. The eventual goal is for all New Jersey districts to adopt a rigorous and meaningful educator evaluation system that differentiates between levels of performance and provides feedback for professional support and development.

EVALUATION SYSTEM AND COMPONENTS

- **Evaluation System:** The overarching umbrella of all components of teacher and principal evaluation that are combined to generate a summative assessment of performance. New Jersey is following the Educator Effectiveness Task Force recommendations and working with stakeholders and pilot districts to design our evaluation system based on the following components:
 - *Teacher evaluation system* – This system is composed of teaching practice and student achievement measures, with varying weights assigned to the following components: classroom observation, additional measures of teaching practice, student assessments, school-wide performance measures, and additional measures of student performance.
 - *Principal evaluation system* – This system is composed of professional practice and student achievement measures, with varying weights assigned to the following components: human capital management, principal performance, aggregated school-wide student performance, and school-specific student performance goals.
- **Teaching Practice Framework:** A combination of the philosophy, tools, and processes used to evaluate educators on the teacher and principal observation components of the evaluation system (ie: Danielson, McReL, Stronge, etc.).
- **Teaching Practice Observation Instrument:** The specific teaching practice tool used to assess the observable competencies of teaching practice. The instrument consists of the rubrics and accompanying definitions and descriptions of the ratings used in assessing teaching practice. It may also include more detailed representations of teaching practice such as indicators or examples. The selected teaching practice observation instrument must have an evidence base documenting that it meets various specifications, which are [outlined in the NJDOE evaluation FAQs](#).
 - **Competencies:** The specific indicators of teaching practice that are assessed by a given teaching practice evaluation framework. These may vary between frameworks, but generally they are similar. Some examples include classroom management, questioning, and/or professional responsibility.
 - **Evidence-supported Teaching Practice Observation Instrument:** 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; and (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 means that the measure actually assesses the dimension of teaching effectiveness it claims to measure. The establishment of such claim must be attested by knowledgeable practitioners or experts in the content.
- **Research-based Teaching Practice Observation Instrument:** 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).

Individual Professional Development Plan: A written statement of actions developed by the supervisor and the teaching staff member to continue the teaching staff member's professional growth and/or correct deficiencies. The individual professional development plan includes timelines for implementation, and responsibilities of the individual teaching staff member and the school district for implementing the plan.

InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards: The 2011 InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, finalized in May 2011, outline what teachers should know and be able to do to ensure every K-12 student reaches the goal of being ready to enter college or the workforce. These standards were developed in response to the need for a new vision of teaching to meet the needs of next generation learners. These standards outline the common principles and foundations of teaching practice that cut across all subject areas and grade levels and that are necessary to improve student achievement. They are a revision of the 1992 model standards which New Jersey adapted in 2003 as the New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards. At the current time, the 2011 InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards are in the process of being adopted for the purposes of approving and alignment to teacher evaluation. The 2011 standards can be accessed at: [http://www.ccsso.org/resources/programs/interstate_teacher_assessment_consortium_\(intasc\).html](http://www.ccsso.org/resources/programs/interstate_teacher_assessment_consortium_(intasc).html).

OBSERVATIONS

- **Calibration:** 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.

- **Certification/Proof of Mastery:** A set of requirements or assessments used upon completing training to determine whether a trainee observer has achieved mastery of the content of the training as well as accuracy and consistency in using the rubric as applied to practice.
- **Data Capture:** A process by which the data supporting claims associated with the system, such as those related to observer mastery of a rubric, success in calibration, or observation scores and evidence, are captured and stored in a format that can be accessed and used.
- **External Observer:** An individual appropriately trained as an observer and not currently working in the school of the teacher he/she is observing; this observer must be either certified or have demonstrated proof of mastery in the teaching observation instrument adopted by the district, and be held to all scoring quality monitoring standards.
- **Observation:** A visit to an assigned work station by an observer for the purpose of formally collecting data on the performance of a teaching staff member's assigned duties and responsibilities and of a duration appropriate to same.
- **Observation Conference:** A discussion between a supervisor and teaching staff member to review a written report of the performance data collected in a formal observation and its implications for the teaching staff member's annual evaluation.
- **Observer:** An individual trained on the observation instrument as an observer and either certified or demonstrated to have proof of mastery in the teaching observation instrument adopted by the district, and held to all scoring quality monitoring standards.
- **Observer Training:** The process by which candidate observers learn about the instrument, as well as how to apply accurately and consistently the scales and score levels of the rubric to content that is as similar as possible to that seen in practice.
- **Inter-rater Agreement:** The result when two observers using the same measure to evaluate the same teacher produce the same results in ratings and feedback (sometimes referred to as “inter-rater reliability”). Inter-rater agreement is one aspect considered in the determination of whether scores from a measure of teaching effectiveness can be considered "reliable." There are some important caveats and conditions when measuring levels of agreement:
 - Observers can agree by chance, especially if using rating scales with few score points. There are measures of agreement corrected for chance, such as *kappa*, that help provide a more accurate assessment of what the observers are contributing over and above chance agreement, and *these should be used in preference over raw agreement*.
 - Observers can be wrong and agree with each other. Agreement alone does not assure accuracy of scoring—just consistency. Therefore, calibration is necessary to ensure accuracy of scoring.

SCHOOL STAFF

- **Chief School Administrator:** The superintendent of schools, or if there is no superintendent, the administrative principal.
- **Supervisor:** Any appropriately certified individual assigned with the responsibility for the direction and guidance of the work of teaching staff members.
- **Teaching Staff Member:** A member of the professional staff of a school district holding office, position, or employment of such character that the qualifications require him or her to hold a valid and effective standard, provisional, or emergency certificate, issued by the State Board of Examiners.

SCORING

- **Aspects of Scoring Quality:** There are different aspects of scoring quality that are worth defining:
 - *Accuracy* is consistency with master coders—whether the observer assigns the “correct” score to the performance. “Correct” scores must be obtained through a judgment process, most preferably with experts who complete a master-coding process and reach consensus on the final score, evidence, connection with the rubric and score level, and rationale. This aspect is particularly important for observers who may see a limited range of practice (in *any* part of the scale) in their observations. This can lead to “relative scoring” wherein the observed practice scores are spread artificially by the observer to encompass the full score range of the instrument. Observers in such circumstances should be exposed frequently to examples at all levels of practice to reset their scoring to the observation instrument standards.
 - *Inter-rater agreement* is consistency with other observers—whether two observers completing independent ratings of the same performance agree on the score(s) that they assigned (i.e., two observers using the same measure to evaluate the same teacher produce the same results). This agreement can be exact (no difference in scores), adjacent (usually defined as within one score category of each other’s scores), or discrepant (usually defined as more than one score category apart). In high-stakes situations, it may be necessary to resolve differences in observer scores that are discrepant or even adjacent.
 - *Trend agreement* is consistency over time—whether observers assign the same score to the same performance when scored on occasions separated in time.
 - *Unbiased scoring* is consistency across candidates —whether observers ignore aspects of the performance, teacher, students, teaching style, specific content, setting, or any other facets that are irrelevant to the instrument. Observers improperly influenced in their scoring by such factors should be retrained and recalibrated or removed from scoring.
- **Reliability:** The degree to which an instrument measures something consistently. This measurement property of an instrument must be evaluated across different observers and contexts.

- **Rubric:** 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.
- **Score Drift (Observer Effects):** Score drift occurs when the scores assigned by an observer to the group of teachers move away from the standard set on the observation rubric. Drift can be positive (scores are more lenient than intended by the instrument) or negative (scores are more stringent than intended by the rubric). Other types of score drift include *scale compression*, when an observer inappropriately uses only part of the scale to assign scores to observations that encompass the entire range of performance, and *scale expansion*, when an observer inappropriately uses the full range of scores on the scale to assign scores to observations occurring in a narrower range of performance. Observers can become more variable (expand their scale) or less variable (compress their scale) over time, even if the range of observed performance remains constant. Observers should be calibrated on a regular basis to ensure that score drift is not occurring. Similarly, quality control measures such as double scoring should also be done on a regular basis to determine if observers' scoring need to be calibrated.
- **Types of Scoring and Quality Control:**
 - Certification and Proof of Mastery are scoring skills assessments completed at the end of training to verify that an observer has learned to apply the rubric accurately. Certification and proof of mastery typically are a relatively extensive assessment of skills and should encompass scoring teaching performance (typically using videos) across the entire score range on all aspects of the rubric so that observers are able to identify what teaching looks like across the scoring continuum.
 - Double-scoring occurs when two (or more) observers assign scores to a performance independently of each other. This can be done by having two observers in the same classroom session or through the use of video capture.
- **Validity:** 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. Instruments cannot be valid in and of themselves; an instrument or assessment must be validated for particular purposes.

Student Learning Objectives (SLO): A standards-based statement in specific and measurable terms that describes what learners will know or be able to do as a result of mastering the skills and knowledge in the curriculum. As an example, teachers may assess students at the beginning of the year and set objectives, and then assess again at the end of the year (pre- and post-testing). Often the principal or a designee works with teachers to approve the SLO and determine success.

Student Growth Percentiles (SGP): For K-12 education in New Jersey, the phrase “growth model” describes a method of measuring individual student progress on statewide assessments (the NJASK) by tracking student scores from one year to the next. Each student with at least two consecutive years of NJASK scores will receive a *student growth percentile*, which measures

how much the student changed relative to other students statewide with similar scores in previous years. SGPs range from 1 to 99, where higher numbers represent higher growth and lower numbers represent lower growth. All students, no matter the scores they earned on past NJASK tests, have an equal chance to demonstrate growth at any of the 99 percentiles on the next year's test. Growth percentiles are calculated in ELA and mathematics for students in grades 4 through 8. Additional SGP information can be found [here](#), and a video tutorial is located [here](#).

Summative Rating: The final annual rating for every teacher, resulting in one of the four following category assignments: highly effective, effective, partially effective, or ineffective. All relevant evaluation data will be combined in a structured way to determine the summative rating.

APPENDIX B: New Jersey Educator Effectiveness Landscape and Timeline

Educator Effectiveness Landscape in SY 2012 - 2013				
Teacher Evaluation		Principal Evaluation		Regulatory Changes
Participating in Teacher Evaluation Pilot	Not Participating in Teacher Evaluation Pilot	Participating in Principal Evaluation Pilot	Not Participating in Principal Evaluation Pilot	
All districts have the option of applying to be a teacher evaluation pilot. The NGO for this pilot opportunity has been released.	All districts that do not participate in the teacher evaluation pilot will meet specific capacity-building requirements.	All districts have the option of applying to be a principal evaluation pilot.	All districts that do not participate in the principal evaluation pilot should continue implementing in accordance with state regulations.	Regulations to accompany the educator effectiveness reforms will be proposed before the beginning of SY 2012 - 2013.

Milestone	Sp '12	Su '12	F '12	W '12/'13	Sp '13	Su '13	F '13	W '13/'14	Sp '14	Su '14	F '14
	SCHOOL YEAR 2012 - 2013										
TEACHER EVALUTION - ALL DISTRICTS (PILOT DISTRICTS WILL IMPLEMENT ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS)*											
Create a District Advisory Committee											
Adopt an evidence-supported teaching practice instrument											
Train teachers on teaching practice instruments											
Train observers on teaching practice instruments											
Complete progress reports on milestones											
TEACHER EVALUATION - PILOT PARTICIPANTS ONLY											
Submit teacher evaluation NGO application to NJDOE											
Review Conditional Grant Award, which NJDOE will send to selected districts											
Revise application per pre-award revision requests from NJDOE											
Approve grant agreement and return to NJDOE											
Begin observations**											
PRINCIPAL EVALUATION - PILOT PARTICIPANTS											
Submit principal evaluation NGO application to NJDOE*											
Review Conditional Grant Award, which NJDOE will send to selected districts											
Revise application per pre-award revision requests from NJDOE											
Approve grant agreement and return to NJDOE											
REGULATORY CHANGES											
Proposed regulatory changes submitted to NJ State Board of Education											
NJ State Board discussion of proposed regulatory changes											
Anticipated adoption											

Milestone	Sp '12	Su '12	F '12	W '12/'13	Sp '13	Su '13	F '13	W '13/'14	Sp '14	Su '14	F '14
SCHOOL YEAR 2013 - 2014											
TEACHER EVALUATION - ALL DISTRICTS											
Full implementation of teacher evaluation regulations***											
PRINCIPAL EVALUATION - ALL DISTRICTS											
Expanded implementation of principal evaluation regulations											
REGULATORY CHANGES											
Proposed regulatory changes submitted to NJ State Board of Education											

Key	
Sp	March 1 - May 31
Su	June 1 - August 31
F	September 1 - November 30
W	December 1 - February 28

*These requirements apply only to classroom teachers

**See NGO for additional requirements that must occur leading up to an October 1st observation start date, districts have some flexibility in managing to these milestones

*** Teacher evaluation regulations may be updated based on additional lessons learned during SY 2012-1013