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May 6, 2014

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons
School Leaders

ROUTE TO: All District Principals, Assistant/Vice Principals, and Teaching Staff Members

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

SUBJECT: AchieveNJ Update

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With the end of the school year approaching, the Office of Evaluation within the New Jersey Department of Education (“the Department”) is focused on supporting educators in finishing 2013-14 evaluations. In addition, we are preparing to build on the successes and learn from the challenges of the first year of implementing AchieveNJ. This memo includes information and resources for a strong end to the current school year and an even stronger start to 2014-15. As always, we invite you to visit the [AchieveNJ website](#) and send comments or questions to educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us.

I. Reminder of Mandatory 2014-15 Evaluation Rubric Survey

As explained in the past few AchieveNJ Updates, all districts are required to submit their educator evaluation rubrics to the Commissioner for approval by June 1 each year. **On May 13 the Department will broadcast the link to a mandatory survey to fulfill this reporting requirement** (accessible to District Web User Administrators through Homeroom). The survey contains questions about the district’s selected practice instruments and their ratings, plans for training, use of required district and school committees, number of required Student Growth Objectives (SGOs), plans for employing Corrective Action Plans, and number of required Administrator Goals. Districts will indicate their selected practice (observation) instruments

from the list of state-approved instruments or will state that they have approval for a locally-developed instrument if applicable. Districts must respond by June 1, and we will notify all districts about rubric approval no later than August 1.

II. Resources

A. Completing 2013-14 Teacher Evaluations

In order to clearly delineate the elements involved in completing this year's evaluations for teachers, we have published this [one-page chart](#) (included here as Appendix A) listing the components and several supporting resources.

B. Completing 2013-14 Principal Evaluations

We have recently published two new materials to support the completion of this year's evaluations for principals and assistant/vice principals (APs/VPs):

- This [Finishing Strong for Principal Evaluation](#) document (included here as Appendix B) offers a list of steps districts should consider in the remaining months of the school year.
- This [AP/VP Evaluation Leadership Scoring Worksheet](#) is an optional tool offered to help districts score the Evaluation Leadership component. Please note we previously released the [Principal Evaluation Leadership Scoring Worksheet](#).

C. Student Growth Objectives 2.0

Later this spring, we will release updated versions of our suite of SGO guidance materials. "SGO 2.0" reflects the evolution of the SGO process based on educator input and feedback. Updated SGO materials will focus on the following five points:

1. SGOs are **learning targets for key concepts and skills** that students can be expected to master in a course based on a **rough sense** of where they start. Educators should use multiple measures of student prior learning ([see example](#)).
2. SGOs should be **embedded within the typical work of a teacher**. Educators can measure starting points using readily available information, align SGOs with standards normally taught, and embed SGO tests into the regular testing protocol of the school/department.
3. **SGO quality relies on summative assessment quality**. Educators should focus on improving summative assessment quality, developing common assessments where appropriate. In many cases, educators can modify pre-existing assessments to avoid redundant testing of students.
4. SGOs should be a **true reflection of both the curriculum and the students** an educator teaches. The [SGO Quality Rating Rubric](#) can be used to incorporate a significant number of students and course standards within an SGO.
5. SGOs should be collaborative, i.e., **teacher-driven, administrator-supported, and student-centered**. Even though administrators are responsible for approving and scoring SGOs, they should encourage teachers to take ownership of the SGO process as a powerful way to help them integrate standards, instruction, and assessment to improve student achievement.

Approximately 800 administrators attended one of the Office of Evaluation's winter SGO workshops. We collected information from these educators about future SGO training sessions. In response to their feedback, we will provide 3-hour, interactive workshops in various locations around the state during May and June focused on the **quality of assessments** and on **using a variety of baseline data to set targets**. Participants will be able return to their district and use the presentation and materials to directly train their staff. We recommend bringing a team of up to five SGO implementation leaders and teachers who will be responsible for turn-keying the information to district staff. Teachers are integral to the SGO development process and should be included as part of school/district teams. In addition, we will provide series of webinars over the summer for staff who cannot attend the training sessions in person. Please register for the in-person workshops through our [website page](#).

Thank you for all of your hard work during this first year of AchieveNJ implementation. Please continue to send us your questions and suggestions, as we incorporate this feedback into our support materials and events.

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c: Members, State Board of Education
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Appendix A: Requirements and Resources for Finishing Teacher Evaluations in 2013-14

Component	State Requirement(s)*	State Deadline(s)*	Resources
Observations Complete	Minimum of 3/teacher; see resources for details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-tenured teachers: April 30; note notification of contract status for next year must occur by 5/15 • Tenured teachers: Annual Summary Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Practice Overview
Teacher Practice Score	1.0-4.0 numerical score based on district observation instrument	Annual Summary Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Evaluation Scoring Guide
SGO Assessment and Scoring Complete	1-2 SGOs assessed and scores finalized (average if 2 SGOs)	When data is available; Preferably at time of Annual Summary Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SGO Scoring Checkpoints and Considerations • SGO Scoring Checklist • Administering and Scoring SGO Assessments
1-4 Summative Rating	Each available weighted component used to derive a 1-4 summative rating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-mSGP teachers: When data is available; preferably at time of Annual Summary Conference • mSGP teachers: Early 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Evaluation Scoring Guide • Calculate Your Rating Tool
Annual Summary Conference	Required for all teaching staff members	End of School Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional form for teachers not receiving mSGPs (Word PDF) • Optional form for teachers receiving mSGPs (Word PDF) • Evaluation of Teachers with Extended Absences
mSGP Score	Required for qualifying teachers	Provided from NJDOE in early 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mSGP Conversion Chart • 2012-13 mSGP Report User Guide • 2012-13 mSGP Report Presentation • Course Roster Verification & Submission Guide
Professional Development	All teachers create PDP or CAP informed by evaluation outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time of Annual Summary Conference • Within 30 days of employment for new hires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of PDP and CAP Requirements • Optional Teacher PDP Template and Sample (Word PDF)
Tenure Implications	Educators rated Ineffective or Partially Effective placed on CAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 9/15 of following school year • Within 15 days of receiving Ineffective or Partially Effective rating (if after 9/15) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional Teacher CAP Template and Sample (Word PDF) • Summary of Legal Requirements for Evaluation and Tenure Cases

* Some districts may have additional requirements and/or earlier deadlines for various components.

Appendix B: Finishing Strong for Principal Evaluation in 2013-14

The following are recommendations for districts to consider when completing evaluations for principal and assistant/vice principals (APs/VPs) in the final months of the school year.

Summative Ratings and Annual Conferences
1. Make certain the district has specific processes in place for arriving at a 1.0 - 4.0 practice score for each principal/AP/VP.
2. Assure a plan is developed for scoring all Administrator Goals and determining the Student Growth Objective (SGO) score for each principal and VP/AP (the average score of all teachers' SGOs in a school).
3. Review the Evaluation Leadership Instrument for principals and VPs/APs . Make certain the district has a plan for collecting and reviewing performance data related to the instrument. Consider the usefulness of the Evaluation Leadership scoring worksheets for principals and APs/VPs for adoption by your district.
4. For principals and VPs/APs with Student Growth Percentile (SGP) grades in their schools, review the Schoolwide median SGP component of their evaluation. Make certain these administrators understand that their summative rating will not be complete until after SGP is released (early 2015).
5. Notify non-tenured principals and VPs/APs of contract status for 2014-15 on or before May 15.
6. Conduct annual summary conference with each principal and VP/AP by the end of the school year.
Professional Development
7. Guide principals and VPs/APs to develop professional development plans (PDPs) related to areas of need as highlighted by their observations and summative reports.
8. Determine who will be placed on a corrective action plan (minimally those principals and VPs/APs rated ineffective or partially effective) and communicate the process.
9. Identify common themes across administrator evaluations and identify PD opportunities for the administrative team as a whole.
Learning from 2013-14 and preparing for 2014-15 (can occur during the summer)
10. Take time to debrief the evaluation process with principals, VPs/APs, and their evaluators.
11. Make adjustments in the principal and VP/AP evaluation processes considering lessons learned in 2013-14.