



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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October 28, 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 Notice of Grant Opportunity

Last week the Department posted a [press release](#) announcing two new grant opportunities totaling \$1.25M. The goal of the New Jersey Achievement Coaches program is to empower many of our outstanding educators to provide direct support to their peers through high quality training and resources. The content of the coaching sessions will focus on components of teaching practice identified by educators as most important for additional training, such as instructional strategies, aligning instruction to new content standards, and using evidence to shape instruction and guide professional learning. Further, this content will be developed by our districts through the second grant opportunity: the New Jersey Achievement Coaches Content Development Program.

Funding for these programs is intended to cover educators' work, time, and travel expenses as well as district management of these activities from February through August 2015. I strongly encourage you to review these opportunities and consider partnering with us in this effort. Please see the following for more details:

- [Achievement Coaches program overview](#)
- Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO) applications, and technical assistance:
 - [Achievement Coaches NGO](#) (applications due 11/19)
 - Technical Assistance: November 3, 2014, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
 - ✓ Location: New Jersey Department of Education, Building 100, River View Plaza, Trenton, first floor conference room
 - ✓ Registration: Must be completed at <http://education.state.nj.us/events/> by 11/2/14.
 - [Achievement Coaches Content Development NGO](#) (applications due 11/25)
 - Technical Assistance: November 10, 2014, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

- ✓ Location: New Jersey Department of Education, Building 100, River View Plaza, Trenton, first floor conference room
- ✓ Registration: Must be completed at <http://education.state.nj.us/events/> by 11/9/14.

Based on some initial inquiries, one of the topics we will address during the Achievement Coach Technical Assistance session is the selection process used by each district to form an Achievement Coach cohort. Please note that even though **districts should not select educators for Achievement Coach cohorts prior to submitting the NGO application**, they must be able to provide evidence in their application of a well-developed educator identification and selection process including the following:

- After a district receives notification that the grant application has entered the Pre-Award Review (PAR) process (expected to be in mid-December 2014), it must notify *all* eligible educators of the opportunity to apply for participation in a cohort (see [Appendix A](#) in the application and attached below for a suggested timeline for this process).
- Eligible educators will include those who were rated Highly Effective in 2013-14. In addition, educators with a summative evaluation rating of at least 3.0 in 2013-14 (or similar for those yet to receive their mSGP score) may be considered by districts for exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to, recognition of excellence by an agency outside of the school district such as the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, Teacher of the Year program, Governor's Award, and the Milken Award.
- Districts must select the best educators for the positions using an application and rubric provided by the state in the NGO application. Evidence an educator might provide to demonstrate achievement on the descriptors on the skills-based rubric include:
 - **Professionalism** - positive engagement in department-based activities, professional learning communities, faculty meetings, school committees, school board meetings, PTA, etc.
 - **Commitment to School Culture of Continuous Improvement** - successful prior service as a mentor to provisional teachers, as a cooperating teacher to pre-service educators, ScIP or DEAC member, etc.
 - **Communication** - facilitation of professional learning programs, faculty meetings, etc.
 - **Collaboration** - participation in an active professional learning community at the school site or district level, or with a regional or statewide professional organization, or current/prior service on a school or district Professional Development Committee or School Improvement Panel, etc.
 - **Organization** – planning/coordinating after-school programs, school trips, clubs, PLCs, etc.
- Districts must also include a sixth district-created descriptor that provides additional, valuable information about the attributes of the applicant.

The Achievement Coach program has great potential for recognizing some of the best educators in the state while supporting their professional growth. However, the success of this program ultimately relies on outstanding educators working together to ensure that the content and training within this program is both relevant and impactful. Therefore, **we ask that district**

leaders ensure that all of their respective staff members are made aware of this opportunity and encouraged to participate.

As always, I invite you to send any thoughts or questions to educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us.

PS/CB/102814 AchieveNJ NGO Update final.doc

Attachment

c: Members, State Board of Education
David Hespe, Acting Commissioner
Senior Staff
Diane Shoener
Executive County Superintendents
Executive Directors of Regional Achievement Centers
Executive County Business Official
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group

Appendix A: Suggested Timeline for Achievement Coach Cohort Selection

Date	Action/Notes
12/15/14	NJDOE notifies LEAs of PAR Status
12/17/14	<p>Communication by LEA to all eligible educators about opportunity to apply for Achievement Coach Cohort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application pool must be limited to educators rated Highly Effective on the 2013-14 summative evaluation, unless the LEA can demonstrate compelling reasons for expanding their pool to others (for example, district size limiting the number rated Highly Effective, desire to include certain educators without a summative rating who demonstrate other evidence of effectiveness and/or those rated Effective above a 3.0, etc).
12/17/14 - 1/16/15	<p>Window for educators to apply for Achievement Coach Cohort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts must use the NJDOE Achievement Coach application forms (included as Appendix D and E) and at least one additional district descriptor as a filter for selection (with final judgment given to the selection committee). This district descriptor should outline the characteristics of an Achievement Coach candidate that would make him/her successful as a coach in your LEA.
1/19/15 - 1/28/15	<p>DEAC or separate selection committee (of at least 2 teachers and 1 administrator from the LEA) reviews applications, conducts any interviews (if necessary)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In districts that include 7th grade and above, at least one teacher in a cohort must be from grades pre-school through 6, and one must be from grades 7-12.
1/30/15	LEA announces educators selected to Achievement Coach Cohort(s)
2/1/15	<p>Official beginning of grant program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts must submit selected Achievement Coaches' names and application materials upon completion of this process to the NJDOE. Districts who select educators other than those rated Highly Effective on the 2013-14 summative evaluation must also provide rationale for this decision to the NJDOE upon completion of the selection process.