AchieveNJ
Teach. Lead. Grow.

2013-14
Preliminary Implementation Report
on Teacher Evaluation

State of New Jersey
Department of Education

Contents

Letter from Assistant Commissioner Peter Shulman

At the New Jersey Department of Education, we are committed to ensuring that all of our students – no matter their background or circumstances – receive an outstanding education that will prepare them for success in college, work, and life. We know that no school factor matters more to student success than the effectiveness of our teachers and leaders. This is why we continue to focus on supporting every element of an educator's professional life, including meaningful methods of evaluation and professional support. "AchieveNJ" is the comprehensive system of requirements, guidance, and support that comprise the statewide evaluation initiative. Although changes to educator evaluation are happening in nearly every state across the country, AchieveNJ is unique in a few important ways.

First, **New Jersey educators continue to play a major role in shaping the statewide system**. Thanks to the districts who worked with us to pilot new evaluations from 2011-2013, the system is based on the feedback and advice of our own teachers and administrators. After passage of the *TEACHNJ Act*, regulations shaping AchieveNJ codified specific requests from educators and addressed concerns and challenges that emerged in the early stages of the work. Few other states engaged in two years of piloting before finalizing statewide requirements. And this work continues as we collaborate with educators to consider additional improvements to the system.

Next, **local control and flexibility remain at the center of AchieveNJ**. Where many other states have prescribed very specific instruments and requirements for each element of an educator's evaluation, New Jersey has given the majority of evaluation decisions to district and school leaders. The state has set broad lanes to help ensure all educators receive the kind of meaningful feedback they deserve, but has given districts the leadership role in defining and managing the details of the system. We understand that the only way this initiative can be successful is for educators to take ownership of the work. We also believe that educators are professionals who can and should make decisions about their own professional growth and inform school and district policies.

Finally, and as usual, **New Jersey is leading the nation in ensuring that every student has access to effective educators who set high expectations** for their work. While momentum in other states to embrace improvements to standards, assessments, and evaluations as one cohesive system has slowed, we remain committed to providing educators with an integrated system that will benefit students and teachers alike. Educators, policy makers, and representatives of higher education and the business community have all shown willingness to collaborate and to compromise while staying focused on our common goals.

As we continue to implement AchieveNJ, we can reflect on the successes and challenges of the work so far. The report that follows is an interim look at teacher evaluation in 2013-14 based on a variety of data sources, including contributions from partner districts who shared their time and information. While much of the report discusses elements of the evaluation process, what we care most about is the outcome: whether teachers are actually getting more useful feedback and information that helps them do their best work. While it is too soon to draw broad conclusions about the success of any one component – or of the system itself – what is clear from this study is what we hypothesized from the start: New Jersey is home to many outstanding educators and leaders who do what it takes to help every student achieve at high levels. These professionals deserve our recognition, our gratitude, and our encouragement that this is difficult work worth doing and that we support them every step of the way.

Sincerely,

Peter Shulman, Assistant Commissioner/Chief Talent Officer
Division of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness

Executive Summary

Developing a fair and effective educator evaluation system is a multi-year process that depends on local teachers and leaders taking ownership of the work. After several years of developing and piloting the new statewide evaluation and support system, statewide implementation of AchieveNJ began in 2013-14. Even at this early stage, preliminary results from this pivotal year show that the system is allowing districts to better identify areas of strength and weakness in teacher practice and to respond accordingly to this information. This interim report does not include analysis of final summative evaluations for teachers in 2013-14; an updated version will be published next spring when all statewide data is available. The most notable preliminary findings about new teacher evaluations in 2013-14 include the following:

- The system is based on and continues to be shaped by **extensive educator input and engagement.**
    - The two-year pilot program included 7,354 teachers, 276 administrators, and 30 districts.
    - Since the spring of 2013, Department staff members have conducted or participated in hundreds of presentations and workshops at the school, district, regional, and association levels, visiting over 350 school districts in the state. Over 25,000 educators attended some form of training, workshop or presentation offered by the Department in 2013-14.

- Many educators are using **SGOs to focus on their practice and on individual student growth**.
    - For the first time, the vast majority of teachers in New Jersey are setting specific and measurable learning goals for their students through the SGO process.
    - Many educators found the process of developing SGOs to be beneficial to their practice.
    - Educators in the report sample commonly used pre-existing assessments for SGOs rather than adding new assessments.

- New Jersey teachers are receiving **more observations and feedback than ever before**, and school leaders are focusing more of their time and talent on instructional quality in schools.
    - The majority of all teachers received at least the 3 required observations, with an estimated increase of 180,000 observations for tenured teachers in 2013-14.
    - Districts are differentiating between the most and least effective teaching in their schools – and between the most and least effective elements of a specific lesson.

- An analysis of observations can help **administrators see and respond to common areas for teacher and school development.**
    - Leaders are examining the trends across lessons to determine where to focus their efforts for further teacher or observer professional development.

- Feedback from educators is **helping the Department to identify and respond to challenges** with improved guidance, direct district support, and changes in requirements as appropriate.
    - For each major challenge identified, the state has released improved guidance and/or workshop opportunities and granted waivers or made regulatory adjustments as needed.

In 2014-15, the state continues to examine if and how the system is, in fact, giving teachers more frequent, thorough, and useful feedback; shaping professional development plans for individuals and districts; and increasing the use of data in classrooms, schools, and districts. Particular areas of focus for this year include:
- Identifying barriers and best practices;
- Offering targeted solutions; and
- Coordinating support and empowering district and school leaders – including teachers.

Just as a teacher grows and improves year after year, building on successes and making adjustments so as to not repeat mistakes, the Department continues to work with the state advisory committee, stakeholder groups, and practicing educators to improve AchieveNJ.

Introduction

Four years ago, educator evaluation in New Jersey – and across the country – was extremely inconsistent. While some districts promoted better practices than others and many had begun to use more robust observation instruments, the state had weak requirements and guidance to support this work. This reality resulted in the vast majority of educators receiving satisfactory ratings that lacked meaningful differentiation – regardless of student outcomes. This served both students and educators poorly; without frequent and reliable feedback about their practice, teachers were left in the dark about ways to better help students. Schools and districts lacked specific data to inform decisions about professional development at all levels. With the advent of more rigorous standards and aligned assessments, improving evaluations became more important than ever. Educators were seeking meaningful opportunities to examine their practice and learn new instructional strategies.

In 2014, this landscape has improved dramatically. Over the past several years, New Jersey educators and policy makers have worked together to build a better evaluation and support system—one that has been informed by the experiences and insight of educators across the state.

During this time, the Department has had direct contact with more than 25,000 educators in over 100 presentations, workshops, panels, and school visits and has released over 30 guidance bulletins to superintendents. State advisory groups have been convened over 24 times. The state has responded to hundreds of questions, comments, and survey responses through our regulatory process and ongoing outreach efforts.

Major steps in this process are listed in Appendix A (including links to relevant reports providing more details on various activities). In order to understand the full scope of the work as context for this study, please review this information.

The statewide system that launched in 2013 includes multiple measures of educator practice and student growth and emphasizes frequent and meaningful feedback throughout the school year. This interim report includes both qualitative and quantitative information gathered from state data and partner districts (see the Methodology section (2.1) for more information). The analysis covers Student Growth Objectives, teacher practice, and state and district implementation successes and challenges. The Department will publish a final version of this report after Student Growth Percentile and statewide rating information has been analyzed and released. In addition, a separate study of principal evaluation implementation is underway.

A hallmark of AchieveNJ is the degree to which the system varies from district to district to reflect local needs. The system has been built this way intentionally to ensure that those most directly impacted by policies and procedures are the ones shaping and leading those very structures.

Part One: State Support for AchieveNJ Implementation

Like the vast majority of education initiatives in New Jersey, evaluation systems are largely built and run at the local district level. The state sets guidelines and requirements, while districts determine the details of elements such as training sessions and other related professional development opportunities, observation frameworks, student learning targets, advisory committee activities, and communications structures.

A hallmark of AchieveNJ is the degree to which the system varies from district to district to reflect local needs. The system has been built this way intentionally to ensure that those most directly impacted by policies and procedures are the ones shaping and leading those very structures. This section describes the supports offered by the Department in collaboration with teachers and leaders to assist with district implementation in 2013-14. Recognizing that this work will take many years to develop and refine, the state intentionally set out to listen and learn in the first full year of implementation and to provide support in the areas that emerged as needing it most.

1.1 Collaboration with Educators

State Advisory Committees

Throughout the two-year evaluation pilot from 2011-2013, the Department convened the Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC). This group of teachers, administrators, district leaders, and representatives of education associations and institutes of higher education met regularly to provide feedback to the Department on local challenges and successes and to help shape policy decisions for the state. For a full account of this work, please see the Final EPAC Report.

In the fall of 2013, the Department transitioned this advisory role from the EPAC to a new committee – the AchieveNJ Advisory Committee (ANJAC). The ANJAC includes some EPAC members in addition to new educators and leaders and fulfills a similar role in advising and providing feedback to the state. The relationship between the Department and the ANJAC in 2013-14 allowed the state to shape guidance, field support, and policy recommendations for the future. New Jersey teachers and leaders have undeniably shaped major evaluation policy decisions, as demonstrated in the detailed chart included as Appendix B.

Collaboration with Local Groups

In addition to the evaluation development steps listed in the Introduction, the *TEACHNJ Act* and AchieveNJ require specific forms of educator input. In 2012, each district was required to form a District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) with various members to guide evaluation implementation at the local level. The unique DEAC concept was part of the evaluation pilot; after pilot districts and the EPAC highlighted the critical role of such a group, the state extended the requirement for all districts in the initial years of implementing new evaluations. In 2013-14, the Department worked with ANJAC members to support DEACs by providing lessons and advice from pilot districts for this group, as well as sample agendas and other resources on the AchieveNJ website.

The *TEACHNJ Act* also requires each school to form a School Improvement Panel (ScIP) annually to oversee implementation of teacher evaluation, mentoring, and professional development. The first ScIPs were formed by February 1, 2013 in preparation for statewide implementation of AchieveNJ the following fall. Now, ScIPs must be in place by August 31 each year. In 2013-14, the Department worked with ANJAC members and other school leaders across the state to better understand what level of guidance could best support ScIPs. The first ScIP Guidance document was published in August of 2014 based on this feedback and was supported by a series of statewide presentations and supporting resources.

Section 3.1 of this report examines DEAC and ScIP activities in 2013-14.

1.2 Direct State Support to Districts

Starting with the announcement of proposed regulations outlining the new evaluation system in March 2013, the Department employed a comprehensive communications and outreach strategy to ensure educators across the state have access to resources and support.

Since the spring of 2013, Department staff members have conducted or participated in hundreds of presentations at the school, district, regional, and association levels. In the course of these interactions, Department staff have visited over 350 school districts in the state. Specifically:

- From April-June of 2013, the Office of Evaluation led 9 regional presentations to explain the new evaluation system and hear feedback and questions from educators.
- From June 2013 through February of 2014, Department staff led 44 workshops across the state to help educators understand the process for setting Student Growth Objectives (SGOs).
- Throughout the 2013-14 school year:
  o Three full-time Department Implementation Managers worked in schools and districts every day to provide training, coaching, and other direct support based on educator needs;
  o Other Department staff participated in or led dozens of presentations to groups such as the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA), New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA), New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), county superintendent roundtables, etc., to explain various elements of the evaluation system and hear feedback; and
  o State officials responded to calls and emails for evaluation support full time during business hours and on a timely basis
- In the spring of 2014, the Department offered 39 SGO 2.0 workshops based on lessons learned from 2013-14 to help improve the SGO process for the coming year. These sessions were so popular that the Department added more sessions for summer and early fall.
- In the summer of 2014, the Department offered 42 teacher practice workshops across the state based on qualitative data from 2012-14 indicating that student engagement and questioning techniques were an area of weakness for teacher practice.
- Overall, more than 25,000 educators attended some form of training, workshop, or presentation offered by the Department in 2013-14.

> **More than 25,000 educators** attended some form of training, workshop, or presentation offered by the Department in 2013-14.

The kind of direct educator support tailored to local needs is a defining characteristic of AchieveNJ implementation in 2013-14. The Department considers this level of support essential for providing educators with the necessary guidance and resources for doing such challenging work well.

1.3 Resources

Based in large part on feedback from and collaboration with educators, the Department has produced and continuously updated a comprehensive library of resources related to each element of evaluation. These resources are posted on the AchieveNJ Website on various pages organized by category. In addition, the AchieveNJ Resource Catalog (Appendix C) lists the major materials by topic area. Throughout 2013-14, the Department worked with educators to improve these materials and to consider needs for additional resources to support particular topics.

Part Two: Lessons From 2013-14

As explained above, this interim report covers the Student Growth Objective and teacher practice components of evaluation. A final report including the Student Growth Percentile component will be published when all final 2013-14 data is available (spring 2015).

2.1 Methodology for this Study

This report combines the informal feedback gathered through the Department's support of AchieveNJ implementation described above with quantitative and qualitative data gathered from a statewide collection as well as outreach to a selection of districts. In April 2014, the Department invited 53 "partner districts" across the state to participate in this study by sharing additional evaluation data for analysis. Of these partner districts, 17 shared some or all of the data that was requested (see Appendix D).

The data presented in this report represents preliminary results from 2013-14. As noted above, the Department will publish a final version of this report after Student Growth Percentile and statewide rating information has been analyzed and released

Survey Data

Each year, all school districts must submit to the Department the name of the principal and teacher evaluation instruments they plan to use in the upcoming school year. During this collection, which is executed through the Department's Homeroom Interface, the Office of Evaluation asks districts to answer other questions specifically related to compliance with state law and regulations. Surveys of this nature were answered by over 99% of districts in advance of both the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years.

A sample of districts were also asked to provide qualitative feedback through a questionnaire. The questions asked related to 1) Planning and Infrastructure; 2) Teacher Observations and Scoring; 3) Principal Observations and Scoring; 4) SGOs; 5) Administrator Goals; 6) Median Student Growth Percentile Scores and Roster Verification; 7) Evaluation Leadership; 8) Communications, Committees, and Feedback; and 9) Links to Professional Development.

Student Growth Objective (SGO) Data

SGOs are long-term academic goals for groups of students set by teachers in consultation with their supervisors. The SGO data shared by partner districts included forms detailing the SGOs established by some or all of that district's teachers. Each SGO was evaluated against a modified version of the SGO Quality Rating Rubric published by the Department. In all, approximately 350 SGOs were evaluated for this analysis in addition to results from the district survey and teacher reflections.

Teacher Practice Data

As explained in more detail in Section 2.3, New Jersey districts have flexibility to select from a list of over 25 state-approved teacher practice instruments. In 2013-14, approximately 58% of districts chose to use a version of the Danielson instrument and another 36% chose one of four other instruments (Stronge, McREL, Marzano, and Marshall). Partner districts shared observation data at the most granular level available for the teacher practice instrument that they chose. For the Danielson 2011 instrument, this typically included scores on several components at all three observations conducted over the course of the year. For districts using the Stronge instrument, this represented scores across seven standards, all scored based on the accumulation of evidence across the rating period. This sample provided data on 8,350 teachers who were collectively observed approximately 25,000 times.

2.2 Student Growth Objectives (SGOs)

SGOs are long-term academic goals that teachers set for groups of students, accounting for 15% of each teacher's evaluation in 2013-14 (see examples in Figure 1). SGOs must be

- Specific and measurable;
- Aligned to state academic standards;
- Based on student growth and/or achievement as assessed through a variety of measures (not required to be a standardized test);
- Set using available student learning data;
- Developed by a teacher in consultation with his or her supervisor; and
- Approved and scored by a teacher's supervisor.

Within this context, AchieveNJ regulations provide educators a high degree of flexibility to create SGOs that address their students' needs. In 2013-14, the Department strongly encouraged districts to help teachers set goals that made sense for their unique distribution of students and their relative starting points. Educators were advised to take advantage of a range of assessment tools that they were currently using or could modify for SGO purposes, including not only more typical tests but portfolios and performance assessments as well.

> "We created professional learning communities to discuss student targets, formative assessments, differentiation, and quality test creation. **These are conversations that were inspired by the SGO process."**
> - Kelly Harmon, English Language Arts Teacher, Monmouth County Vocational School District

Findings from SGO Analysis

1. Teachers set specific learning goals for their students and many reported this was beneficial to their practice. Through the SGO process, all teachers set specific learning targets for their students while considering the content standards that students would be taught, some type(s) of available learning data, and assessment methods to measure learning. Many educators and administrators who participated in focus groups, committees, and professional development sessions with the Department shared that the SGO process helped improve teacher practice and student learning by promoting:

- Data-driven instruction based on a deeper understanding of individual student needs;
- More effective differentiation of instruction to ensure student mastery;
- Alignment of standards, instruction, curricula, and assessments;
- Higher quality assessments that more accurately measure student mastery;
- Closer tracking of student progress;
- Reflective and collaborative teaching practices; and
- Increased communication and learning among educators.

A majority of SGOs in the sample (70%) had high-quality, specific and measurable statements for student learning. These statements identified the percentage of students who would achieve specific performance and/or growth targets by the end of the instructional period as measured by the given assessment(s). The other 30% of SGOs often lacked specificity. For example, "75 point increase on scale score," was stated on one of the SGOs in the sample. Without differentiating targets for students based on their starting points or clearly identifying appropriate assessments, such vague SGOs offer much less value to the teacher. Figure 1 includes some examples of specific and measurable SGOs (many more can be found in the online SGO Exemplar Library):

Subject/Grade	SGO
10th-grade Math	By April 2014, 75% of my students in Algebra 2 class will increase their RIT score for MAPs by 2 points as indicated in the Projected Growth Report.
12th-grade Marketing	75% of the students will score at least 75% mastery on the Financial Competency Assessment for Cash Register Terminal Analysis by February 15.
Kindergarten ESL	At least 80% of my students will increase at least 1 proficiency level in Speaking (linguistic complexity) based on the WIDA Speaking Rubric.
8th-grade Science (special education)	At least 70% students will score 65%, 75%, or 85% (based on preparedness groupings) on the science assessment.
7th-grade Social Studies	75% of the 7th-grade Social Studies students in each preparedness group will meet their targeted score on the department developed post-assessment.

Figure 1: SGO Examples

2. Educators were inconsistent in how clearly they connected SGOs to specific standards. The Department's optional SGO forms included a "Rationale for Student Growth Objective" section that asked educators to identify the content standards to be taught and the assessment method for measuring performance. Teachers completed this section by listing the standard number and in many cases providing a description of the standard. Even though almost all SGOs included some reference to the standards used, there was a high degree of variability in the details provided across the range of the SGO sample.

For example, one middle school science teacher provided broad standard groups and descriptions as follows:
- NCCCS Life Science 5.1.8.A.B.D (understanding scientific explanation, generate scientific evidence through active investigation, participate productively in science)

Another middle school science teacher identified more specific standards and provided the detailed description of each of them as shown below:
- NJCCCS Science Practice Standards
  - 5.1.8.A.c Using measurements to explain data (graphs): Predictions and explanations are revised based on systematic observations, accurate measurements, and structured data/evidence.
  - 5.1.8.A.2 Using tools to gather data: Results of observation and measurement can be used to build conceptual-based models and to search for core explanations.

In some cases, teachers did not include the specific standards on the form but included a separate form listing these and/or referred to the standards that were included in the standardized assessment that was being used. More specific standards-alignment allows teachers to more effectively identify how their instruction is helping students to attain curricular goals.

3. Educators used multiple data sources and nearly all (98.5%) of sample SGOs included baseline data to identify students' starting points. These data helped educators identify more specific student needs and set goals accordingly. The majority of educators (77%) used only one data point of baseline information to determine students' starting points. Educators used a pre-test to determine course pre-requisite skills and/or content knowledge in 89% of the sample SGOs. 18% used two or three data points, and nearly 4% used four or more data points. These additional data points included things such as formative and summative assessments taken between September and October, the prior year's NJ ASK scores, IEP information, and composite scores for homework completion and class participation. 22% of the sample SGOs indicated that multiple measures of student starting points were included when setting targets. Educators were evidently diligent in setting baseline metrics, but the underlying data sources varied significantly in number and type.

4. Educators used differentiation to set meaningful targets. Many educators used differentiated approaches to set meaningful targets through tiered goal-setting. Of the 350 SGOs sampled, 39% included specific performance targets for different student preparedness groupings rather than one target for the entire class. These tiered targets enabled more individualized ambitious and achievable goals for students. For example, a 7th-grade social studies teacher created three groups of students based on their starting points and set the targets for them as shown in Figure 2 below:

Preparedness Group	Number of Students	Target Score (%)
Low	61	65
Medium	65	70
High	20	80

Figure 2: Student groupings based on starting points for example SGO

5. Districts reported wide variance in the types and quality of assessments used for SGOs. The wide variety of detail provided in describing the types of assessments used by teachers make it difficult to ascertain precise numbers but in general, commercial assessments were commonly used by math and ELA teachers, especially at the elementary level. Teachers of other subjects and those at upper grade levels relied upon teacher-created assessments, some of which were department-wide.

6. Educators commonly used pre-existing assessments for SGO purposes rather than adding new assessments. 63% of educators in the sample used district or department-created common assessments or commercial assessments like the DRA2 or MAP to measure progress, thereby increasing the comparability of SGOs between teachers. A large majority (88%) of surveyed districts reported that at least half of their teachers used common assessments. Over half (54%) of districts in the survey reported that the summative SGO assessments were embedded into the typical testing schedule and did not increase the overall number of assessments given to students

Opportunities for Improvement in Future Work

Given that 2013-14 was the first year of the SGO requirement for all New Jersey districts, it is not unexpected that educators experienced challenges along the learning curve. Many of the opportunities for improvement identified below reflect the inherent challenges of engaging in this sort of work for the first time.

Make SGO development a collaborative process. As teachers and administrators grappled with the technical and logistical aspects of SGOs, there was a strong focus on management and compliance, sometimes at the expense of the quality of the process. This was noted early on in 2013-14 by members of the state's AchieveNJ Advisory Committee (ANJAC) and reinforced throughout the year during interactions with numerous educators. While administrators are ultimately responsible for ensuring the SGO process is rigorous and of high quality, a collaborative approach to goal setting between teachers and supervisors is likely to result in the most valuable experience.

Align goals and scoring plans. The SGO sample analysis revealed that educators could use more support in developing scoring plans that are aligned to the SGO statement. Only half (49%) of the SGOs in the sample had aligned scoring plans where the scoring range for "full attainment" accurately reflected the teacher's stated goal. For example, an SGO statement reads "at least 70% of my students will increase their STAR rating score by ½ a grade level." However, the scoring plan on this SGO states, "51-75% students will attain target score of 70%." Variations on this type of misalignment may have caused difficulties when assigning a final rating for the teacher based on student performance. Teachers and administrators may want to carefully check the alignment of goals and scoring plans during the approval process and refer to guidance in the published SGO exemplars as needed.

<u>Set ambitious and achievable targets</u>. While it is difficult to objectively determine the strength of goals set for students based only on a review of the scoring plans, the Department has collected information anecdotally that many educators found the process of setting goals challenging. Additionally, a survey of educators who attended the Department's January and February 2014 SGO workshops showed that nearly half of the respondents (47%) wanted more support for setting "ambitious and achievable targets." In 2013-14, some educators may have set targets that were too high, resulting in a lower SGO rating that did not fairly reflect the learning gains of their students. Conversely, it seems more likely that teachers, erring on the side of caution in year one, set learning targets too low for their students. This is borne out in some of the sample SGOs collected. For example, a learning target set by a math teacher was for 75% of students to answer 3/11 questions on the post assessment correctly. Similarly, a teacher of an Advanced Placement course with 6 students stated that he had met his objective if half of his students scored 20% on the short response section of the writing assessment.

Three factors that contributed to the challenge of target-setting are described below:

1. Using Only One Measure of Student Preparedness: 77% of sample SGOs relied on only one data source for student starting points to set the learning target. While one data point – most often a pre-test score (89%) – provided a snapshot of student knowledge and skill, it was not necessarily predictive of future student learning.

2. Using a Pre-test/Post-test Model: In many cases, the pre-test and post-test used by 89% of sampled SGOs were identical. The "pre-test" was sometimes diagnostic in nature and allowed educators to measure the current skills or prerequisite knowledge of students prior to developing appropriate instructional strategies for students (the Diagnostic Reading Assessment, or rubrics to measure writing competence, for example). However, in many cases, the pre-test was a version of the summative assessment and a measure of what students were expected to learn throughout the course. This led to poor pre-test scores from which a prediction of expected learning was challenging to determine. For example, a 5th-grade social studies teacher recorded a class average of 25% on the pre-test. His SGO was for 50% of his students to increase their score by 3%.

3. Parsing Targets in Terms of Increasing Scores by a Set Amount: Most SGOs (89%) stated that students would increase their baseline scores by x percent or by y points. However, predicting an ambitious and achievable learning gain from pre-test to post-test for students involved a good deal of guesswork. This was exacerbated by pre-tests scores that were often very low. Also, even though 75% of sample districts reported that tiered SGOs were used by at least some of their staff, 61% of sample SGOs showed that teachers set a single target for all students rather than identify differentiated targets for students with varying starting points. For example a math teacher using the STAR assessment for his elementary school class had pre-test scores ranging from 164 to 404. His SGO called for 58% of students to increase their scores by the same 35 points, not taking into account the proportionality or appropriateness of this target based on starting points.

Educators may access an array of resources to help them set better targets including the revised <u>SGO Guidebook</u> and <u>SGO 2.0 Presentation</u>. These resources will help educators identify and use multiple measures of student starting points, consider alternatives to the pre-test/post-test model, and set realistic targets in a way that is less arbitrary and more reflective of traditional teacher practices.

<u>Focus on assessment quality</u>. While some teachers had access to commercial assessments such as those commonly used for math and ELA, educators teaching science, social studies, fine and performing arts, health and physical education, and other subjects had to develop their own assessments. A survey of educators who attended the Department's SGO workshops in winter 2014 revealed that 58% were interested in more guidance for developing or choosing high quality assessments. The Department responded to this request and others as described in the next section.

State Response

Throughout 2013-14, the Department sought educator feedback and responded to challenges educators faced in order to make the SGO process easier to understand and use.

Workshops
Approximately 5,000 educators attended SGO workshops conducted by the Department and thousands more received in-district training by the Office of Evaluation's Implementation Managers. Training included four sets of SGO workshops across the state as well as in-district training with the Office of Evaluation staff to provide guidance to help educators develop SGOs that would improve teacher practice and student achievement. The content of these training opportunities was aligned with the needs of educators at different stages of the SGO process throughout the year.

Tools
The Department also created a series of tools to help educators understand and use the SGO process, several of which are listed and linked below. Many of these tools were designed by and for use by educators to help improve SGO quality and impact.
- **SGO 2.0: From Compliance to Quality**: In conjunction with educators at Clearview Regional School District and Pequannock Township Public Schools, and technical experts at the Reform Support Network, the Department created a set of workshop materials to help teachers improve target setting and assessment quality. The Department trained approximately 2,000 educators from 300 school districts at this workshop from May – September, 2014.
- **SGO Forms**: Based on feedback, the Department revised several optional forms including condensing the "simple" and "tiered" *SGO Form* into one, modifying the *SGO Quality Rating Rubric* to take into account emerging best practices and developing an *Assessment Blueprint and Completion Guide* to take the place of three forms previously used to help evaluate and approve assessments.
- **SGO Quality Rating Rubric**: To support educators in developing high-quality SGOs, the Department updated the *SGO Quality Rating Rubric* for 2014-15 with more specific information on assessment quality and using multiple measures of student starting points. The Department also created an *Evaluating SGO Quality Presentation* to describe components and share examples of high-quality SGOs and an *Assessing and Adjusting SGOs* tool to describe the value of assessing submitted SGOs and making adjustments as needed before the February 15th deadline.
- **SGO Exemplars**: The Department has worked with dozens of educators and content specialists over the past year to develop exemplars that can serve as teaching tools for teachers, educational service professionals, and supervisors involved in SGO development.

Regulatory Changes
The Department made a few changes to state requirements in response to feedback from educators about SGO implementation – including a review process for 2013-14 SGO scores in cases where this component of evaluation drove a negative result for an educator. Please see Section 3.2 for more details on these changes.

Recommendations
Based on a variety of information including surveys, district visits, conversations with teachers and administrators, feedback from the AchieveNJ Advisory Committee, and discussions with technical experts, the Department produced recommendations and updated guidance to assist educators in developing SGOs in 2014-15. These are summarized in Figure 3 below and more detail can be found in the revised SGO Guidebook.

Key Points	Action Steps
1. SGOs are **learning goals for key concepts and skills** that students can be expected to master in a course based on an **approximate sense** of where they start.	• Base learning goals on what you want students to know and do by the end of the SGO period. • Get a rough sense of where students begin by using **multiple measures** of student prior learning (see example). • Use pre-assessments only when appropriate.
2. SGO quality is critically dependent on **assessment quality.**	• **Increase the quality** of the SGO assessments and develop common assessments where possible. (SGO 2.0 Presentation)
3. SGOs should be a **true reflection** of the daily practice of effective teachers and of the curriculum and students an educator teaches. (2013-14: Lessons from Educators, section 6)	• **Align** critical standards, effective instruction, and high quality assessment in SGOs. • Incorporate a **significant number** of students and portion of curriculum within the SGO(s) (see SGO Quality Rating Rubric). • Set **differentiated learning goals** for students based on their starting points.
4. SGOs should be **collaborative** – teacher-driven, administrator-supported, and student-centered (as stated in code *6A:10-4.2 (e) 3*).	• 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 **improve teacher practice and student achievement.**

Figure 3: Findings and recommendations for SGOs based on 2013-14 implementation

2.3 Teacher Practice and Observations

For all teachers, the practice score comprises the majority of the summative evaluation. This clear emphasis on the importance of teachers' daily instructional work and professional growth was intentional. The Department understands that student growth on local and state assessments offers just one perspective into a teacher's effectiveness. Observations and other windows into instruction are also critical for providing teachers with fair, relevant, and useful feedback. This component of AchieveNJ allows school and district administrators to better understand what is happening at the classroom level and to support common areas for professional growth.

> The Department understands that **student growth on local and state assessments offers just one window into a teacher's effectiveness.** Observations and other windows into instruction are also critical for providing teachers with fair, relevant, and useful feedback.

While many other states have opted to mandate one state teacher practice instrument, New Jersey chose to promote local flexibility. Based on direct feedback from the pilot program and the state advisory group, the Department has allowed districts to select the practice – or observation – instrument best suited to their local needs. The state maintains a list of over 25 approved instruments and allows districts to submit their own "home-grown" or adapted versions as well. While the instruments have differences that make analysis across all districts difficult at times, there are many areas of commonality among them. For example, although the Marshall Rubrics and the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching vary somewhat in the

length of observation envisioned by the authors, they both reflect research suggesting that questioning and discussion are important parts of any lesson.

Generally, scoring on teacher practice instruments can be broken down into three sets of activities: (a) planning; (b) instruction and related actions in the classroom; and (c) year-long professional growth. When this section refers to observation instances or averages, it focuses primarily on the elements scored within an observation cycle – typically planning, instruction, and teacher action in the classroom. Some data from the professional growth sections of practice instruments is analyzed separately.

Findings about Conducting Observations

While SGOs have garnered much attention as a new element for teachers, administrators often identify the observation and feedback process as the biggest shift in the way they spend their time in schools. While many were familiar with the procedure of evaluating classroom teaching using a rubric prior to AchieveNJ, the new system requires more frequent and/or robust observations. Pilot district collaborators emphasized the importance of this frequency to ensure that teachers have multiple opportunities to display their instruction and to get more robust feedback on how they might improve.

1. Teachers are getting more observations and feedback than ever before. Prior to 2013-14, many teachers received only one observation. By the Department's estimates, over 180,000 additional observations took place last year for tenured teachers.

Based on survey and focus group responses, districts appear to have largely executed the required minimum three observations for their teachers (or received waivers to execute less for certain circumstances, as explained in Section 3.2). Examples of this evidence include:

Partner District	Average # of Observations
A	2.98
B	3.22
C	3.00
F	3.00

Figure 4: Average # of observations in sample districts

- **Partner District Data[1]:** Figure 4 shows a sample of partner districts for whom specific in-classroom visits were identified and their average number of observations per teacher calculated. As displayed, all districts are at or near an average of three observations. Where districts are below three, many explained that it was the exceptions (teachers on leave, switching buildings, teaching pull-out classes, etc.) that prevented them from reaching their goal.
- **Partner District Survey:** Partner districts were surveyed on how much time each observation took and how many observations each observer conducted during the first year of implementation. This data is further evidence that school leaders are taking this work seriously. The majority of districts (75% of respondents) indicated that their administrators conducted on average between either 41-60 or 61-80 observations. Just one district indicated administrators performed less than 40 observations and three reported that administrators performed more than 80 on average. When these numbers were compared with the ratio of administrators to teachers in each district, averages once again came to about three observations per teacher. Additionally, all districts surveyed indicated that they used and executed a master schedule of observations in their districts, with three indicating that scheduling was done at the building level. This is yet another indicator that districts adjusted their systems to meet new requirements.
- **Priority School Data:** Data submitted by Regional Achievement Center (RAC) staff from priority schools showed an average of three observations per building. Thus, even in schools with substantial operational challenges, building leaders were able to meet the basic requirements for conducting observations.

In addition to these formal data collections, Implementation Managers in the Office of Evaluation collected information directly throughout the year from county offices, statewide and local associations, and educators

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[1] Specific partner districts used in graphics are removed for purposes of confidentiality.

in order to provide timely and targeted support. These state officials confirmed the prevailing average of three observations across districts in their field visits.

2. Observations take less time to conduct as observers become more familiar with instruments. In addition to the number of observations conducted, the time it took observers to complete observations, conferences, and reports is an important consideration. While observations generally take either 20 or 40 minutes to conduct, there is additional work necessary to prepare, capture all evidence, and communicate feedback to the teacher: specifically, a pre-conference, the lesson observation, time to record additional information or feedback following the lesson, and a post-conference. The majority of districts responding to the survey (71%) noted that it took them less than two hours to complete all work associated with a given observation, with a few under an hour and nearly all reporting less than three hours on average. Many districts surveyed reported that observations took less time as the year went on, with nearly all others indicating that it took the same amount of time, not more. Both of these findings are consistent with the feedback pilot districts shared after their second evaluation year. Using these findings, the Department has already begun to work with districts on how to further reduce the time observations take to complete and has shared some initial strategies learned from partner districts in this guidance provided in August 2014: Starting Stronger: 5 Ways to Improve Educator Evaluation in 2014-15.

Findings about Observation Quality

While more frequent and thorough observation of instruction is a positive component of AchieveNJ, simply completing more observations will not result in schools and districts reaching their intended outcomes. However, many districts have taken the opportunity presented by AchieveNJ to redefine what good teaching looks like in their classrooms. In doing so, many have changed the way they think about teaching performance across schools as well as the way they communicate about observations both through scoring and through written and oral feedback. Implementing these activities with fidelity and quality takes time, but after just one year of implementation observations begin to yield useful data that districts can learn from.

> While more frequent and thorough observation of instruction is a positive component of AchieveNJ, simply completing more observations will not result in schools and districts reaching their intended outcomes. However, **many districts have taken the opportunity presented by AchieveNJ to redefine what good teaching looks like** in their classrooms.

Early in the implementation of a new system, it is worthwhile to reflect on whether data elements are more reflective of the quality of the observer or of the teacher's practice taking place in the classroom. This section uses evidence primarily to analyze the quality of implementation by observers in order to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement in implementation. Specific analysis of a particular teacher's practice is more effectively and appropriately done by the educator's immediate supervisor at the local level.

1. Districts are differentiating between the most and least teaching in their schools. Overall, what is encouraging in each of the data sets in Figure 5 below is that districts are indeed differentiating among the quality of classroom lessons that they observe; the strongest and weakest observation scores in each of sample districts are substantially different. Observers are noting considerable differences in stronger and weaker pedagogy.

The standard used to display this spread is the score at the 10th and 90th percentile marks of each distribution in survey districts[2]. These measures test the stretch of the distribution of scores, while accounting for the outliers at the very top and bottom. The three districts selected below are of varying size

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[2] Specific partner districts used in graphics are removed for purposes of confidentiality.

and display examples of a few different types of observation distributions reflected in the data. Each shows more than a half of a point difference between the 10th and 90th percentile, demonstrating a significant difference between the best and worst lessons taking place in each district[3]. The nature of these results create a substantially different picture for most districts to work from then they have had in the past, when teachers most commonly received either satisfactory or unsatisfactory ratings, and the vast majority were rated satisfactory each year.

Figure 5: Spread of Average Scores for Individual Lessons Observed
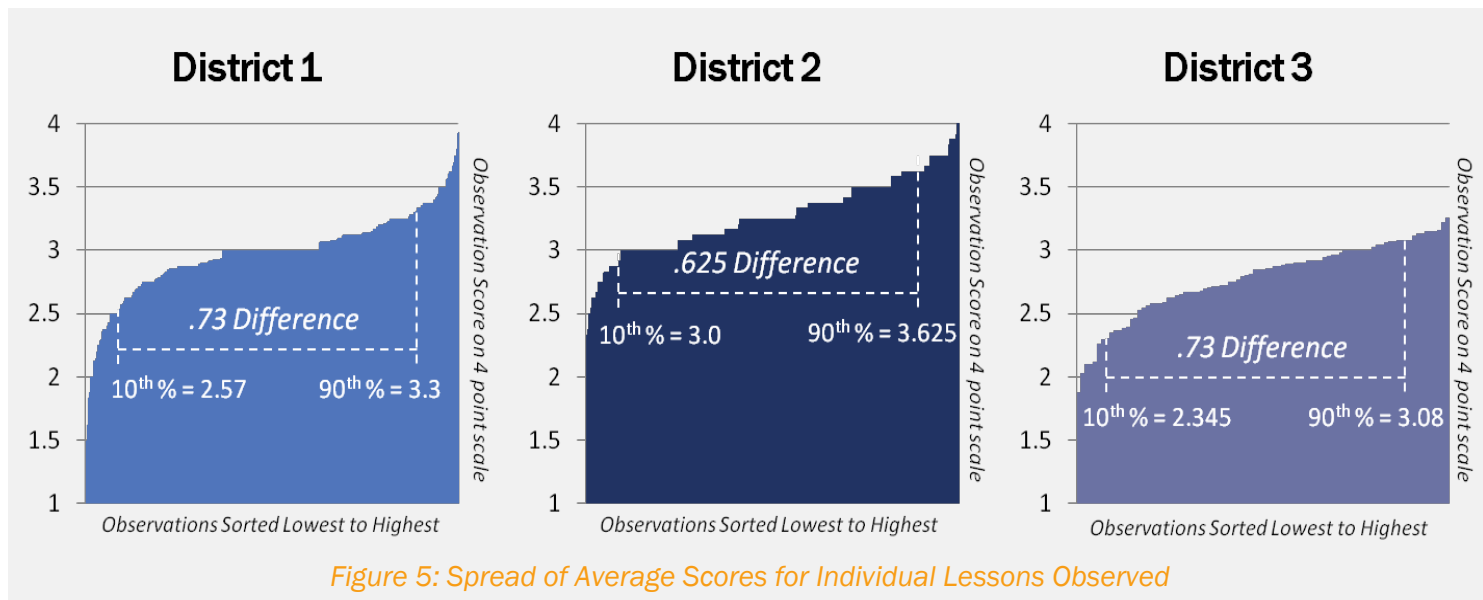
2. The ineffective lesson (receiving all 1s) or the "perfect" lesson (all 4s) is, in fact, rare. While there is no true or perfect distribution on a criterion-referenced measure like an observation instrument, examining the nature of rating distributions can identify themes that may inform improvement. Examining the data shared in the examples above, the extent to which observation scores are distributed in each district varies but all three districts show scores clustering around the proficient (Effective) level of practice. While scores were distributed over several points, no district used the entire scale available and in fact the majority of observations in each case fell between ratings of 2.5 and 3.5. This is not surprising, as observation scores are usually compiled by averaging 10-15 indicators, each of which may identify strengths and weaknesses within a lesson but when averaged together result in a score somewhere in between. With that in mind, if the most ineffective lessons and the most highly effective lessons are differentiated by only a tenth of a percentage point, districts must consider whether observers are using the instrument with fidelity.

3. Observers are identifying the strengths and weaknesses of individual lessons and sharing that information with teachers. While many lessons receive an average score in the Effective range, examining the quality of practice at the component level helps teachers better understand what parts of their instruction are strong or need improvement. This can be determined by looking at the variation of scores assigned within each observation and then taking the average across an entire district. Figure 6 below depicts a sample of observations conducted by a specific observer using the Danielson framework. Where there are orange squares, the observer is indicating that those areas are basic or below basic (generally in need of some improvement). White squares indicate proficient practices and blue denotes distinguished practice. In observations where there are differing colors across a row, the observer has communicated to the teacher that some parts of their lesson are better than others. This information can be very useful, as it shows teachers where they can focus their efforts for improvement.

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[3] District 1: .73 difference between 10-90, District 2: .625 difference, District 3: .73 difference

Lesson	Domain 1: Planning and Preparation						Domain 2: Classroom Environment				Domain 3: Instruction			
	1a	1b	1c	1d	1e	1f	2a	2b	2c	2d	3a	3b	3c	3d
1	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2
2	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3
3	3	3	3		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
5	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3
6	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3
7	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3

Figure 6: Sample distribution from Danielson framework

4. While the majority of observations in each district showed scoring variation, there were cases where educators were scored the same on all components. In one partner district, approximately 20% of all observations scored had no variation in scores. This pattern can be seen in lessons 3 and 4 in Figure 7. If a teacher were to receive just those scores, he or she might not learn much about where to focus professional growth. Districts can reflect on scoring variation by sorting their scores by observer and looking for trends that run counter to what they know about classroom teaching in their schools. If such trends exist, leaders might ask the observer identified to examine written notes from a specific observation and reflect to see if the trend is indicative of what they saw, or if perhaps they didn't have the confidence to make a judgment in that situation or the courage to communicate their opinion. For examples of how districts might work to improve scoring accuracy and quality of feedback see the Syllabus for Success provided in September 2014.

5. Districts are using data to identify common areas of teaching practice that need improvement. Figure 7 shows the distribution of a variety of component practice scores from a partner district. In addition to looking at observation data within a specific lesson, leaders can also use the trends across lessons to determine where they might focus their efforts for further teacher or observer professional development. In fact, different instruments used across the state often yielded similar insights. For example, across Danielson districts, three components that consistently scored low were 3b (Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques), 3c (Engaging Student in Learning), and 3d (Using Assessments in Instruction). While each of these components have discrete elements, they all involve the way teachers engage with their students and use assessment to better understand what students know. Similarly, in the two McREL districts that shared data, there were lower overall scores in meeting diverse student needs and assessing student knowledge. Districts may reflect on these patterns to determine if they are a function of scoring or indeed an indication of a need for further professional development in these areas.
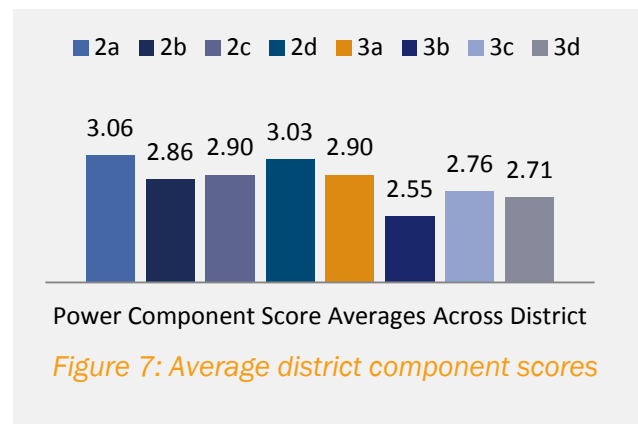
■ 2a ■ 2b ■ 2c ■ 2d ■ 3a ■ 3b ■ 3c ■ 3d

3.06 2.86 2.90 3.03 2.90 2.55 2.76 2.71

Power Component Score Averages Across District

Figure 7: Average district component scores

Opportunities for Improvement in Future Work

While high quality observation instruments make it easier to distinguish between lessons at either end of the performance spectrum, leaders should look at evidence from lessons in the middle of their distributions in order to continue to both improve observation accuracy and instructional quality. Evaluators should actively seek to identify which components in mid-range observations reflect the strengths and weaknesses of an educator in order to provide guidance for improvement and recognition of excellence.

Additionally, when component scores are low or high, districts should reflect on whether such averages reflect practice or implementation. For example, nearly all district data submitted showed that teachers tended to score higher on the parts of the instrument associated with professional conduct. While several conclusions can be reached from this, many partner districts shared that these scores were impacted by a lack of clear expectations for some of these indicators. As districts clarify their expectations around these components, they may become more comfortable making decisions about effectiveness and therefore more likely to use the different scoring tiers.

State Response

The ability to identify trends as described above allows districts and the state to collaborate on common areas in need of support, which the Department has continued to address.

Workshops
Recognizing the need identified by many districts in the area of questioning, discussion, and student engagement in 2013-14, the Department conducted workshops in the summer 2014 on how to assess and improve in these areas. Over 2,000 educators attended 42 workshops conducted to help districts improve on these skills. If a district determines that this is a continued need, they can find a copy of the presentation on the AchieveNJ website, with associated materials to facilitate the training.

Achievement Coaches Program
In October 2014, the Department announced two grant opportunities for districts to participate in the New Jersey Achievement Coaches program. The goal of this effort is to empower district teams of 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 evaluation identified by educators as most important for additional training, such as improving practice, aligning instruction to new curricula and content standards, and using evidence to shape instruction and guide professional learning. This content will be developed by districts through 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. The Department expects to award grants in February 2015 and the program will run from February - August 2015. This work emphasizes the state's desire to keep educators at the center of evaluation leadership. By empowering educators to shape the guidance and resources that can best impact teacher practice, the Department aims to tailor support most efficiently.

Waivers and Regulatory Changes
The Department responded to feedback from educators about various challenges with conducting observations by granting waivers for particular circumstances and changing state requirements for some observation procedures. Please see Section 3.2 for more details on these responses.

Part Three: District Implementation Successes and Challenges

3.1 DEAC and ScIP Roles and Activities

The District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) and the School Improvement Panel (ScIP) are two important groups that can guide decisions and communications about evaluation policies and practices. Following the state requirement for a DEAC in pilot districts, feedback from pilot educators indicated that such a group was essential for ensuring successful implementation of evaluation changes at the local level. Therefore, evaluation regulations codified the requirement for this group to exist in each district across the state through at least the 2016-17 school year. The *TEACHNJ Act* also included a requirement for the ScIP in response to feedback from educators that a school body was needed to help ensure educator leadership in evaluation at that level.

2013-14 Findings

In order to determine the rate at which these bodies were in place and being utilized in 2013-14, the Department examined data from the state-wide survey used to track compliance with basic evaluation components, as well as partner district qualitative survey data.

- According to the state-wide data, over 99% of districts have a DEAC in place that is "providing guidance on implementation of the district's evaluation policies and procedures."
- When partner districts were asked how they were using the DEACs, nearly all respondents listed several ways in which their DEACs were being utilized, with about 80% noting that they are "gathering feedback from educators" and 60% sharing that they used the group to "analyze implementation successes and challenges to recommend improvements."

Similarly, over 99% of districts across the state reported having their ScIPs in place.

- 100% of partner districts noted that their ScIPs were formed and meeting, though when asked how highly functioning the groups were, only about 20% said the ScIP was highly functioning and leading implementation.
- When asking partner districts about their utilization of the ScIP, the top two responses included "gathering feedback from educators about evaluation" and "analyzing implementation successes and challenges to recommend improvements," with about 80% of respondents identifying these as primary activities for ScIPs.
- Other activities identified included "linking evaluation outcomes to professional development plans," "working with the DEAC," and "leading communications with educators about evaluation." All respondents identified at least one of these areas as something their ScIP was engaged in.

The goal of state guidance and support was to respond to educator requests and questions, rather than to offer prescriptive solutions that might not work in a given context.

State Response

In supporting implementation of DEACs and ScIPs in 2013-14, the Department remained mindful of the need for local ownership of and investment in such groups. The goal of state guidance and support was to respond to educator requests and questions, rather than to offer prescriptive solutions that might not work in a given context.

The Department continues to engage with the AchieveNJ Advisory Committee (ANJAC) and other educators to examine the need for guidance and support for these important local bodies. In response to educator requests for guidance and examples to inform the best use of DEACs and ScIPs, the Department has built out sections of the AchieveNJ website

and posted various resources for each group. The DEAC Corner includes specific suggestions on the effective use of DEACs from pilot districts, sample agendas, and other information. The ScIP Corner offers initial guidance on the best use of ScIPs from districts in 2013-14 as well as answers to frequently asked questions and other resources. In addition, the Department created a ScIP workshop and is presenting it to groups of educators across the state in the fall of 2014. Feedback from educators attending these sessions will inform development of additional resources and support structures.

3.2 Requests for Flexibility and State Response

Throughout the 2013-14 school year, the Department worked with districts to better understand challenges with implementation and to provide flexibility where appropriate to ease district burden. In addition to the daily support of three state Implementation Managers visiting schools and districts to answer questions and provide guidance, the Department utilized two key mechanisms for broader support: waivers and regulation updates.

Waivers

Recognizing challenges facing many New Jersey districts, the Department offered a simple waiver process to address the following issues:
- Capacity challenges in tenured teacher observations in some districts: The Department granted more than 70 waivers to districts encountering problems in completing three observations for tenured teachers due to demonstrated administrative capacity limitations.
- Observation time in Marshall districts: The Department granted 26 waivers to districts using the Marshall Rubrics practice instrument to resolve the discrepancy between the frequent 10-minute observation requirement in that instrument and the less frequent 20- and 40-minute state requirement.
- Multiple observer requirement in very small districts: The Department granted 3 waivers to districts without the personnel to fulfill the multiple observer requirement.

Again demonstrating the state emphasis on local flexibility with evaluation implementation, this waiver process remained true to the spirit of the *TEACHNJ Act* and AchieveNJ while providing districts with sensible accommodations for unique issues.

Regulation Updates

Several implementation challenges that emerged in 2013-14 were common enough across all districts that the Department proposed changes to regulation to improve the system.

April 2014 Proposal
The following changes went through the State Board approval process from April – September 2014 and were adopted on October 1:
- Slightly delay the deadline for setting SGOs, changing it from October 15 to October 31, to allow educators more time to identify student starting points and set high-quality learning targets.
- Amend the SGO personnel file procedure so SGOs are filed at the end of the year, not at multiple intervals to ease burden (note: SGOs remain part of the personal evaluation record that is confidential by law).
- Remove the December 1 deadline for completion of at least one co-observation to give districts more flexibility with implementation (note: two co-observations are still required at some point in the school year).
- Amend written requirements of the observation report so districts can use electronic versions to save time.

- Clarify that a teacher present for less than 40% of the total school days in an academic year can receive at least two observations to earn a teacher practice score.

The full text of these regulations is found in the current Administrative Code.

August 2014 Proposal

Feedback from pilot districts in 2011-13 indicated that implementation improved significantly between the first two years employing the new evaluation system. The Department originally intended to keep the same evaluation component weights for 2014-15 to allow districts to build on the progress made in 2013-14 and focus on specific areas of improvement identified through that work. However, state officials continued to listen to feedback from educators around key areas of concern – one of which is the transition of the state assessment from the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) and its impact on the use of test scores in evaluation.

Although median Student Growth Percentile (mSGP) scores from the NJ ASK in 2013-14 were not available at the time of publication – and thus that aspect of implementation is not covered in this interim report – the mSGP element continues to be the most controversial with educators. Based on concerns about the assessment transition, the Department proposed to lower the weight of the mSGP component for 2014-15 for teachers from 30% to 10%. The Department presented regulations that would allow for these changes to the State Board in August 2014.

The proposal also includes a review process for 2013-14 SGO and Administrator Goal scores for cases where such a score was the sole reason why an educator's summative rating dropped from Effective to Partially Effective or from Partially Effective to Ineffective. This review process – conceived to address concerns in districts where SGO implementation may have faced significant challenges – ensures that educators will not be unfairly penalized for having inaccurate or incomplete goals in place due to extenuating circumstances. Full details on the August 2014 regulatory proposal are included in this August 12, 2014 memo.

By making these regulatory changes, the Department has worked to demonstrate a commitment to a cycle of continuous learning and improvement. State officials continue to work with educators to make the evaluation system as flexible and reasonable as possible – while also ensuring high expectations for all teachers and students.

> **The Department has worked to demonstrate a commitment to a cycle of continuous learning and improvement.** State officials continue to work with educators to make the evaluation system as flexible and reasonable as possible – while also ensuring high expectations for all teachers and students.

Part Four: Moving Forward: 2014-15 and Beyond

Since the inception of the evaluation pilots over three years ago, the Department has approached this critical initiative with the same emphasis on growth as is expected of teachers and students. In the second year of AchieveNJ, the Department is focused on improvement in three areas:

- Continuing to provide outstanding support and training to all educators and districts;
- Learning from the quantitative and qualitative data resulting from the evaluation system; and
- Using data and continued feedback to better support areas of need across the state.

4.1 Continued State Support

Tens of thousands of educators have had face-to-face contact with representatives of the Office of Evaluation through regional presentations or in-district meetings and trainings since the introduction of AchieveNJ. In just a three-week period at the start of the 2014-15 school year, for example, more than 6,000 educators participated in workshops and presentations led by state officials.

The Department pledges to continue this same level of support. As in 2013-14, new resources will be posted to the AchieveNJ website on a regular basis. Implementation Managers and presenters on a variety of evaluation topics will remain available free of charge for district trainings based on educator requests. The ANJAC, in its second year of work with the Department, will meet at least eight times during 2014-15. Throughout the year, the state will continue to provide timely guidance on key elements contributing to strong local implementation and share promising practices from school districts in a timely way.

4.2 Areas for Additional Research

The Department will not only learn from the experiences of educators through district visits, the ANJAC, and other opportunities, but also through the significant amount of data resulting from AchieveNJ. This includes analysis of data collected on an annual basis from districts, but also from more detailed data shared by partner districts like that discussed in this report.

Once state evaluation data for 2013-14 is finalized, after districts have the opportunity to correct scoring errors and mSGP scores are released during the winter of 2014-15, the Department will release aggregate data results so that educators can participate in the full analysis of the evaluation system. As part of the 2013-14 evaluation data analysis, the Department will explore a variety of important questions:

- What is the distribution of summative ratings for teachers and school leaders?
- What are the distributions of ratings among the various components of teacher evaluation (practice score, SGO score, and mSGP)?
- What are the distributions of ratings among the various components of principal evaluation (practice score, evaluation leadership score, average SGO score, school SGP, administrative goals)?
- What do these distributions tell us about the evaluation system?
- What are the relationships between evaluation results and student achievement in the state?

In addition, this report will be updated and a final version published to continue to inform improvements to the system.

Throughout 2014-15, the Department will explore the fundamental questions underlying the evaluation initiative using statewide and more granular data shared by partner districts. These questions will include:

- Are teachers receiving more frequent, more thorough, and more useful feedback so that they can improve their practice as teachers?
- Are the results of the evaluation system shaping professional development plans for individuals and districts?

- Does the increase in evaluation data improve the quality of human resource decisions made by school districts?

4.3 Future Vision

The ability to learn from questions shared above will allow the Department to narrow in on more precise insights and specific solutions tailored for districts and schools as explained below.

Identifying Barriers and Best Practices: The Department will examine summative data at the district level to identify barriers and best practices with implementation. In cases where it is clear that districts are encountering challenges, the Department will work with those districts to examine problems in detail. Further, the state will tap those districts demonstrating best practices to share elements of their success. Lessons from this work will inform decisions about evaluation policy at the state level as appropriate, just as this took place in the first year of implementation.

Offering Targeted Solutions: As explained throughout this report, the Department has identified themes from early data shared by districts and has provided targeted training in response. This type of support will continue and in addition the Department will use new insights gleaned at the school and district level to better provide direct support. This support will help districts problem solve along a continuum of steps including but not limited to:
- Revisiting local policies and plans that are in place;
- Increasing training and communication at the district level;
- Improving the use of performance management systems and other support structures; and
- Targeting professional development for challenge areas of implementation such as observation and feedback or SGO development

> The Department will work to empower educators, districts, partner organizations, and other support structures to continue **to take more ownership over local evaluation systems.**

Coordinating Support and Empowering District Leaders: The Department will work to empower educators, districts, partner organizations, and other support structures (County Offices, Regional Achievement Centers) to continue to take more ownership over local evaluation systems. The Office of Evaluation recognizes that improving coordination in this manner can take time, but knows that the system will not reach maturity until it is embedded in the everyday practices of districts and all parties are aligned on keys for success. This means spreading responsibility to ensure that all stakeholders across the state are armed with the skills and information necessary to continuously improve their practices.

The 2014-15 school year is a new opportunity to learn from the foundational experiences of last year, to implement evaluations with more efficacy and efficiency, and – most importantly – to strengthen the growing connection between evaluation and instructional practice. As districts become more familiar with evaluation procedures and related data, they will be well positioned to shape the future contours of their local system in partnership with the state. The Department remains committed to learning from New Jersey educators to continuously improve upon all aspects of evaluation, sustaining and growing communication channels, providing support, showcasing best practices across the state, and, as needed, proposing modified regulations. This approach will further the common goals shared by all – effective instruction and high levels of academic growth for all 1.3 million schoolchildren in the state.

Appendices

Appendix A: Educator Involvement in Developing AchieveNJ

Date/Year	Activity	Educator Involvement
9/2010	Governor Christie establishes Educator Effectiveness Task Force	9 Task Force members, all education professionals
9/2010 – 3/2011	Educator Effectiveness Task Force conducts meetings; drafts report	20 presentations from a range of educators and evaluation experts
3/2011	NJDOE releases Educator Effectiveness Task Force Report	9 Task Force members, all education professionals
9/2011 – 6/2013	• New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) conducts teacher evaluation pilot • NJDOE contracts with Rutgers University Graduate School of Education (RUGSE) to evaluate pilot	4,229 teachers across 10 pilot districts
9/2011 – 6/2013	NJDOE convenes state Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC)	22 original appointed members (with approximately 100 attending most meetings) consisting of teachers, principals, district leaders, higher education, parents, education associations and representatives from each pilot district.
6/2012 – 6/2013	• NJDOE adds principal evaluation to pilot program • NJDOE requires capacity-building activities for all non-pilot districts to prepare for new evaluations	7,354 teachers, 276 administrators across 30 pilot districts; All NJ teachers/leaders prepare for new system
7/2012	NJDOE expands Office of Evaluation	Recent EPAC members and NJ educators named as Director and Policy Manager
8/2012	Governor Christie signs *TEACHNJ Act*, which calls for new evaluations based on multiple measures and ties tenure decisions to evaluation outcomes	All major education stakeholder groups (NJEA, NJASA, NJPSA, NJSBA, etc.) offer unanimous support for bipartisan legislation
1/2013	RUGSE releases Pilot Year 1 Report	Includes surveys of pilot educators
2/2013	NJDOE releases EPAC Interim Report with initial recommendations based on first pilot year	Reflects feedback from EPAC members
3/2013	NJDOE announces proposed regulations for statewide evaluation system in 2013-14 and begins educator outreach initiative to share information and gather feedback	Several hundred educators offer additional feedback and input
9/2013	State Board adopts evaluation regulations	Reflects input from educators in comment/response period
9/2013 – 6/2014	NJDOE rolls out first year of statewide implementation of AchieveNJ	Educators engaged in ongoing collaborative efforts

Date/Year	Activity	Educator Involvement
9/2013 – Present	NJDOE convenes AchieveNJ Advisory Committee (ANJAC)	37 teachers, principals, district leaders, and representatives of higher education, parents, and education associations
11/2013	NJDOE releases Final EPAC Report	Reflects feedback from EPAC members
1/2014	RUGSE releases Final Pilot Report	Includes surveys of pilot educators
2/2014	NJDOE releases 2012-13 teacher median Student Growth Percentile scores as practice exercise for all districts	All qualifying teachers receive data in preparation for 2013-14 results
5/2014 – 8/2014	NJDOE partners with districts to collect quantitative and qualitative data for 2013-14 Implementation Study	Varying data elements from over 8,000 educators across 17 partner districts
9/2014 – 6/2015	NJDOE conducts year 2 of statewide AchieveNJ implementation	Educators engaged in ongoing collaborative efforts

Appendix B: Educator Feedback and State Response in Shaping AchieveNJ

What the Department Heard	In Response, the Department...
Pilot Years (2011-13)	
Time constraints, heavy training load, balancing district activities provided significant challenges.	• Delayed statewide implementation • Set capacity-building requirements for all districts
At end of SY11-12, non-tested grades and subjects, and summative ratings had not been adequately addressed.	• Researched these topics in expanded pilot • Discussed issues in EPAC meetings • Shared information in reports/communications
Collaborative, transparent approach to adopting new evaluations was most valued.	• Added time for collaboration in EPAC meetings • Required District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) and School Improvement Panel (ScIP) groups statewide
EPAC advised districts should choose from a wide variety of high quality observation instruments	• Maintaining and updating state-approved list of teacher and principal practice instruments
Process for ensuring number, accuracy, and fidelity of observations needed improvement.	• Required training for all districts as part of capacity-building • Established universal observation requirements
EPAC advised DOE to balance announced/ unannounced observations, support new teachers with multiple observers and pre- and post-conferences, and incorporate double-scoring.	• Built these parameters into universal observation and training requirements
Districts did little to prepare to use observation data to make personnel decisions or to plan collective professional development.	• Shared recommendations in final EPAC report • Linked PD to AchieveNJ in recent PDP templates • Continuing to develop relevant guidance
Evaluation rubric should be simplified in first year of full implementation.	• Included one practice instrument and two measures of student achievement (mSGP, SGO)
State must acknowledge SGO learning curve.	• Limited total SGOs to 2 at most
Frequent and accurate two-way communication needed between DOE and educators.	• Required DEAC and ScIP groups statewide • Provided communications recommendations in Final EPAC Report and on website • Planning additional guidance
Growing size of EPAC plus meeting structure/time constraints created frustrations among members.	• Improved EPAC meeting structure/feedback mechanisms in second pilot year • Designed ANJAC to be smaller, more interactive

What the Department Heard	In Response, the Department...
Statewide Implementation Year 1 (2013-14)	
State advisory committee should continue.	• Launched ANJAC in November 2013
To maximize DEAC potential, state should provide more guidance on their operation.	• Solicited input from ANJAC • Launched DEAC Corner page of website
In many cases, SGOs have been set with top-down, compliance-based processes.	• Produced clarifying materials/workshops stating explicit intent that SGOs should be teacher-driven
Educators need more information about high-quality SGO assessments and target setting.	• Produced SGO 2.0 materials/workshops focusing specifically on these areas
Educators need a wider variety of SGO examples.	• Working to triple exemplars
October 15 deadline for SGO approval is too tight.	• Proposed to extend SGO deadline to October 31
Teachers struggle with effective discussion and questioning techniques in the classroom.	• Offering statewide workshops for teachers on this topic
Information is not reaching all audiences who need it.	• Increased scope of communications via county offices and superintendents, superintendent round tables, principal email newsletter, *The Bridge* newsletter • Tailored support for delivery through many channels (implementation managers, workshops, website, etc.) • Reorganized website to make resources more accessible
District leaders and educators feel overwhelmed by new initiatives, too much information and are concerned about impact of new measures such as SGOs and PARCC on evaluations.	• Initiated changes to streamline evaluation processes • Proposed review process for educators negatively impacted by SGO score alone for 2013-14 • Proposed reduction in weight for PARCC component (mSGP) for 2014-15 • Produced key points for principals and county offices

Appendix C: AchieveNJ: Resource Catalog

General Information
- AchieveNJ Website: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/
- AchieveNJ FAQ: http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq_eval.shtml
- AchieveNJ Overview (narrative): http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/guide.pdf
- AchieveNJ Overview Presentation (slides): http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/intro/OverviewPPT.pdf
- Starting Stronger: 5 Ways to Improve Educator Evaluation in 2014-15: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/implementation/startingstronger14-15.pdf
- Syllabus for Success: Monthly Activities to Promote Evaluation Leadership: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/implementation/SyllabusforSuccess.pdf

Evaluation of Various Types of Employees
- Teacher Evaluation Overview: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/1PagerTeachers.pdf
- 2014-15 Teacher Evaluation Requirements and Resources: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/implementation/14-15TeacherEvalChart.pdf
- Sample Teacher Evaluation Implementation Schedule: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/implementation/SampleTeacherEvaluationImplementation%20chedule.pdf
- Principal Evaluation Overview: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/intro/1PagerPrincipals.pdf
- Assistant/Vice Principal Evaluation Overview: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/principal/APandVPEvaluationOverview.pdf
- Special Education Teacher Overview: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SpecialEducatorOverview.pdf
- Evaluation of Teachers of English Language Learners: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/ELLTeacherOverview.pdf
- Evaluation of Teachers with Extended Absences: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/extendedleave.pdf
- Specialists and Others Evaluation Overview: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/SpecialistsandOthersOverview.pdf
- Directors and Supervisors Evaluation Overview: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/DirectorsandSupervisorsOverview.pdf
- School Librarians: Frequently Asked Questions: http://www.nj.gov/education/genfo/faq/FAQ_eval_Librarian.pdf

Measures of Student Achievement in Evaluations
- 2014-15 SGO Overview: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGOOverview.pdf
- SGO 2.0 Presentation: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGO20FromCompliancetoQuality.pptx
- 2014-15 SGO Guidebook: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/14-15SGOGuidebook.pdf
- SGO Quick Start Guide: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGOQuickStartGuide.pdf
- SGO Exemplars: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/exemplars.shtml
- Individual SGO Forms: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/forms.shtml
- SGO FAQ: http://www.nj.gov/education/genfo/faq/faq_eval.shtml#sgo
- Student Growth Percentile (SGP) Overview: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGPOverview.pdf
- SGP Overveiw Presentation: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGPOverviewPresentation.pdf
- 2012-13 mSGP Report User Guide: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/percentile/mSGPuserguide.pdf
- Video on SGPs: http://survey.pcgus.com/njgrowth/player.html

Measures of Educator Practice in Evaluations
- Teacher Practice Overview: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/TeacherPracticeOverview.pdf
- 2014-15 Principal Evaluation Leadership Instrument: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/principal/PracticeInstrument.pdf
- 2014-15 AP/VP Evaluation Leadership Instrument: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/principal/APVPPracticeInstrument.pdf
- Sample Administrator Goals: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/principal/SampleAdministratorGoals.doc

Professional Support Tied to Evaluations
- Professional Development and Support Overview: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/PDOverview.pdf
- School Improvement Panel (ScIP) Overview: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SchoolImprovementPanelandImprovingEvaluation.pdf
- ScIP Guidance 1.0: http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/scip/ScIPGudiance1.pdf

Evaluation Scoring, Summative Conferences, and End of School Year Resources

- 2013-14 Teacher Evaluation Scoring Guide:
  http://www.state.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/TeacherEvaluationScoringGuide2013-14.pdf
- 2014-15 Teacher Evaluation Scoring Guide:
  http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/TeacherEvaluationScoringGuide.pdf
- 2013-14 Principal Evaluation Scoring Guide:
  http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/PrincipalEvaluationScoringGuide2013-14.pdf
- 2014-15 Principal Evaluation Scoring Guide:
  http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/PrincipalEvaluationScoringGuide.pdf
- Median Student Growth Percentile Conversion Chart:
  http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/mSGPConversionChart.pdf
- Course Roster Verification and Submission Guide:
  http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/CourseRosterVerificationandSubmission.pdf
- Optional mSGP Teacher Summary Conference Form:
  http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/scoring/mSGPsummaryform.docx
- Optional 2013-14 non-mSGP Teacher Summary Conference Form:
  http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/scoring/nonmSGPsummaryform2013-14.docx
- Optional 2014-15 non-mSGP Teacher Summary Conference Form:
  http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/scoring/nonmSGPsummaryform.docx
- "Calculate Your Rating" Tools: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/scoring.shtml

TEACHNJ and Regulatory Resources

- Summary of Legal Requirements for Evaluation and Tenure Cases:
  http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/implementation/legalrequirements.pdf
- TEACHNJ Guide: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/intro/TeachNJGuide.pdf
- Amendments to Evaluation Regulations, Proposed April 2, 2014:
  http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/ProposedEvalRegs.pdf
- Current Evaluation Regulations: http://www.nj.gov/education/code/current/title6a/chap10.pdf

Committees (DEAC, ScIP, ANJAC)

- DEAC Recommendations from Pilot Districts: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/deac/Recommendations.pdf
- DEAC Corner Web Page: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/deac/
- School Improvement Panel (ScIP) Overview:
  http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SchoolImprovementPanelandImprovingEvaluation.pdf
- ScIP Guidance 1.0: http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/scip/ScIPGudiance1.pdf
- ScIP Corner Web Page: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/scip/
- AchieveNJ Advisory Committee Members: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/anjac/members.pdf

Department Reports and Memos

- Broadcast Memos: *Go to* http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/ *and click on "Broadcast Memos" toward the end of the page for a list of memos organized by date*
- 2013-14: Lessons From Educators: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/implementation/2013-14LessonsFromEducators.pdf
- Final EPAC Report (2011-2013): http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/FinalEPACReport.pdf
- EPAC Interim Report (2011-12): http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/EPACInterim11-12.pdf
- New Jersey Educator Effectiveness Task Force Interim Report (2011):
  http://www.nj.gov/education/educators/effectiveness.pdf

Appendix D: District Participants in Year 1 Report

In order to complete this study, the Department used data from a variety of sources and partnered with several volunteer districts to gather additional qualitative and quantitative data through surveys, interviews, etc. The following list includes districts that provided information in one or more of these areas:

- Bogota School District
- Camden City Public Schools
- Collingswood Public Schools
- Delsea Regional School District
- Glen Rock Public Schools
- Hillsborough Township Public Schools
- Manchester Township School District
- Montgomery Township School District
- Morris School District
- Mt. Olive School District
- Newark Public Schools
- North Bergen School District
- Parsippany-Troy Hills School District
- Passaic Public Schools
- Paterson Public Schools
- River Dell Regional School District
- Upper Saddle River School District

Appendix E: Glossary and Acronyms

AchieveNJ – The new educator evaluation and support system outlined in regulations that support the *TEACHNJ Act*, implemented statewide in SY13-14.

Annual Summative Evaluation Rating (or Summative Rating) – An annual evaluation rating that is based on appraisals of educator practice and student performance, and is the sum of all measures captured in a teaching staff member's evaluation rubric. The four summative performance categories are Highly Effective, Effective, Partially Effective, and Ineffective.

Corrective Action Plan (CAP) – An individual professional development plan for educators who are rated Ineffective or Partially Effective on the annual summative evaluation, focused on meeting the needs for improvement identified through the evaluation. Teachers with a CAP will receive an additional mid-year observation and conference.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) – The state standards for English language arts and math, adopted by the State Board of Education in 2010, which define what is expected of students at each grade level.

Chief School Administrator (CSA) – The superintendent or designee in charge of a school district.

District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) – The DEAC oversees and guides the planning and implementation of the district board of education's evaluation policies and procedures.

Evaluation Rubric – A set of criteria, measures, and processes used to evaluate all teaching staff members in a specific school district or local education agency. Evaluation rubrics consist of measures of professional practice, based on educator practice instruments and student outcomes. Each district board of education will have an evaluation rubric specifically for teachers; another specifically for principals, assistant principals, and vice principals; and evaluation rubrics for other categories of teaching staff members.

Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC) – The statewide advisory group convened at the start of the evaluation pilot in 2011 to provide feedback and guidance to the State in developing evaluation policies.

Observation – A method of collecting data on the performance of a teaching staff member's assigned duties and responsibilities that will be included in the determination of the annual summative evaluation rating.
- **Announced Observation:** An observation for which the person conducting an observation for the purpose of evaluation will notify the teaching staff member of the date and the class period when the observation will be conducted.
- **Co-observation:** An observation for which two or more people observe simultaneously, or at alternate times, the same lesson or portion of a lesson for the purpose of increasing accuracy and consistency among observers. Also known as "double scoring."
- **Long Observation:** An observation for the purpose of evaluation that is conducted for a minimum duration of 40 minutes or one class period, whichever is shorter.
- **Post-observation Conference:** A meeting, either in-person or remotely between the teaching staff member and the person who conducted the observation for the purpose of evaluation, to discuss the data collected in the observation.
- **Short Observation:** An observation for the purpose of evaluation that is conducted for at least 20 minutes.
- **Unannounced Observation:** An observation for which the person conducting an observation for the purpose of evaluation will not notify the teaching staff member of the date or time when the observation will be conducted.

Observation Instrument – A teaching practice observation instrument or principal evaluation observation instrument selected by a district from state-approved lists. The instrument provides scales or dimensions that capture competencies of professional performance, and differentiation of a range of professional performance as described by the scales, which must be shown in practice and/or research studies. The scores from the instrument, whenever applicable, are components of the teaching staff member's evaluation rubrics and the scores are included in the summative evaluation rating for the individual.

Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) – A consortium of 19 states plus the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers (http://www.parcconline.org/about-parcc).

Professional Development (PD) – A comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and administrators' effectiveness in raising student achievement.

Professional Development Plan (PDP) – The Teacher PDP is an individualized plan, which includes at least 20 hours per year of qualifying activities, developed annually by each teacher's supervisor in consultation with the teacher and aligned with the Professional Standards for Teachers. The School Leader PDP is an individualized plan that he or she develops annually in collaboration with the chief school administrator and that aligns with the Professional Standards for School Leaders.

School Improvement Panel (ScIP) – A group required in each school by the *TEACHNJ Act* to include the school principal or designee, an assistant principal or vice principal, and a teacher who has a demonstrated record of success in the classroom. The ScIP's role is to ensure, oversee, and support the implementation of the district's evaluation, professional development, and mentoring policies at the school level.

Student Growth Objective (SGO) – An academic goal that teachers and administrators set and supervisors approve for groups of students.

Student Growth Percentile (SGP) – A specific metric for measuring individual student progress on statewide assessments by tracking how much a student's test scores have changed relative to other students statewide with similar scores in previous years.

TEACHNJ Act **(Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey Act)** – The tenure reform law passed unanimously by the New Jersey Legislature and signed into law by Governor Chris Christie in August, 2012. The AchieveNJ evaluation and support system was developed to support requirements of this law.