



RU-GSE EE4NJ Evaluation Progress Report Report #1, Year 1

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We plan to study all aspects of the new piloting teacher evaluation program, as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Rutgers University and the New Jersey Department of Education, as signed on January 26, 2012. In our research efforts, we will be guided by the outlined goals and obligations for this evaluation research project. More specifically, we will focus on the four main goals of this evaluation:

1. To assess the extent and quality of schools' and districts' efforts to develop and implement measures of teacher performance and student achievement growth.
2. To identify common contextual facilitators and barriers to the implementation of the new teacher evaluation system.
3. To assess various stakeholders' perceptions of the teacher evaluation system.
4. To examine the impact of implementing the new teacher evaluation system on collaborative school cultures and professional development.

We will report on our ongoing research through interim reports and monthly phone calls, as agreed upon in the signed MOU. In our interim reports, we will provide information on our progress to date including information on survey data collection as well as progress with site visits and related data collection efforts. Additional interim reports will be submitted to NJDOE on June 30, 2012 and September 30, 2012. The final report under this MOU will be submitted to NJDOE by December 31, 2012.

We have made substantial progress in the approximately 9 weeks since the final MOU between the NJ DOE and Rutgers was signed (January 26, 2012). The dates of work covered in this final MOU agreement is January 9, 2012 – December 30, 2012.

Progress:

	1/12	2/12	3/12	4/12	5/12	6/12	7/12	8/12	9/12	10/12	11/12	12/12
Planning												
Design Surveys												
Administer Surveys		P		T			P					
Analyze Surveys												
Design Site Visit Guide												
Schedule Site Visits												
Conduct Site Visits												
Enter Interviews & Documents in Data Base												
Analyze Interviews & Documents												
Enter Teacher Evaluation Data												
Analyze Teacher Evaluation Data												
Phone Calls/Presentations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Written Reports			PR			PR			PR			F
P = Principal Survey, T = Teacher Survey, X = Phone Calls/Presentations, PR = Progress Reports, F = Final Report												

*Please note that black shading indicates activities completed, darker gray shading indicates activities in process, and lighter gray indicates activities yet to be completed.

Highlights

RU-GSE’s EE4NJ evaluation research team is now fully in place with the hiring of a Project Coordinator and a Data Analyst. In addition, we have a Research Assistant providing support especially in relation to the site visits. The team meets bi-weekly with additional virtual meetings as needed. In addition, email exchanges and phone conversations occur on a daily basis.

Members of the research team have attended recent EPAC meetings and plan to attend all additional ones throughout the remainder of the year. At the most recent EPAC meeting, the RU research team met with the Project Managers of the DEPACs to talk about data collection expectations as well as issues surrounding data confidentiality. The meeting was productive and a good way to introduce ourselves to this group.

We have also attended a DEPAC meeting in one district. This was extremely helpful in thinking through data confidentiality issues as well as our site visit protocol.

We have monitored the EE4NJ wiki as well as compiled documents we have been given by the DOE or obtained through the wiki.

In addition to seeing NJ DOE representatives at EPAC meetings, we participated in the agreed upon monthly conference calls to provide updates and brainstorm ideas.

Over the past 6 weeks, we developed our first Administrator Survey which went through several iterations. This work included researching prior state evaluations of other teacher evaluation

systems as well as testing of individual survey questions and the entire survey. Once questions were finalized and response categories were written, we created the survey in an online system ensuring that all skip patterns worked appropriately, etc. by taking the survey many times. We submitted the survey to Rutgers IRB and received approval from this governing body. We worked carefully with District Project Directors over the past several weeks to identify the correct administrators to survey. The survey was distributed to all listed individuals via a link embedded within an email (please see below for additional information); however, because the survey was targeted to administrators and because we focused on those who either observed teachers or were responsible for management of the teacher evaluation process, many of the individuals to whom we sent the questionnaire were screened out through specific survey items. This included teachers who had been trained on the teacher observation system to support the work of their peers and parent and school board members of the DEPAC. This is a problem that will be partly fixed by the teacher survey and partly fixed in the next administration of the “administrator” survey. Our Project Coordinator is following-up with DEPAC Project Managers to request that they resend the email with an active link and encourage more of their administrators to complete the survey. She will then follow up with a targeted email to those individuals that have not yet completed the survey.

The data from the administrator survey is being processed as it is being received. At this point, we are not able to make conclusions on data collection.

The second data collection activity is to conduct site visits. The Site Visit Guide has been created and has been submitted to Rutgers IRB for approval. Meanwhile we are preparing to train site visitors and have scheduled our first site visit for March 27 and 29 in Pemberton.

Next Steps:

Start Processing Data from Administrator Survey.

We have begun preliminary descriptive analysis of survey data and have compiled an initial data set comprised of all participating school districts. We are pleased with the overall quality of our online survey instrument - Qualtrics - and intend to use the same instrument with the two additional surveys which we expect to distribute among teachers and administrators later this spring and in the summer of 2012.

Continue Targeted Follow Up with Specific Individuals Still to Submit Administrator Survey.

We have nearly reached the 100% mark for response rate in many districts. Some districts have shown more cooperation than others, but overall we have been able to follow up with survey reminders sent from DEPAC directors to targeted individuals within districts. This process will end on March 26, 2012.

Conduct Scheduled Phone Calls with DEPAC Project Managers to Finalize Details of Site Visits including Scheduling.

We have started scheduling site visits. The first one will take place on March 27 and 29, 2012 in Pemberton Township. We will conduct interviews and focus group meetings with administrators and teachers of tested and untested subjects from the district. Pemberton Township has been very supportive and has worked with our team on scheduling all data collection procedures to take

place in the Board of Education building. Additionally, we will work with Monroe and West Deptford school districts to schedule site visits for the beginning of April, 2012. Phone calls and scheduling with these two districts will take place on March 22, 2012. Once these three districts have been scheduled and we have reviewed our site visit process, we will schedule the last three site visits.

Schedule Research Team Members Training to Conduct Site Visits and Operate Audiorecording Equipment Prior to Actual Site Visits.

Prior to conducting site visits in piloting school districts, our team will conduct a scheduled training for team members who will be collecting interview and focus groups data. Our goals for this training are as follows:

1. Train team members in conducting successive interviews with school administrators and teachers with respect to the outlined research goals for this project. Calibration of interviewing techniques are critical for accurate and efficient data collection.
2. Train team members to successfully and effortlessly operate audio-recording equipment ensuring smooth interviewing process.

Attend DEPAC meeting in Pemberton Township on March 29, 2012.

As a part of our ongoing effort to establish close and appropriate rapport with piloting districts and learn about challenges and successes in the implementation of the new teacher evaluation program, we were invited to attend a DEPAC meeting in Pemberton Township, following our data collection visit on March 29 at 4:00 PM.

Begin Site Visits Pending Rutgers IRB Approval. We are currently scheduled for our first site visit to occur in the last week in March in Pemberton Township.

We expect the approval of our Site Visits Guide instrument from Rutgers University Institutional Review Board, which was submitted prior to site visit scheduling. We hope to obtain approval from this institution by March 23, 2012. We have been successful in obtaining separate IRB approvals for our overall project and also for our Administrator Survey. This approval will allow us to begin interviews according to the original timeline for data collection.

Continue to attend EEPAC meetings as well as scheduled monthly calls with NJ DOE.

As an integral part of our work we will continue to follow closely the implementation efforts in piloting districts. We intend to attend all EEPAC meetings and learn about the new program implementation process through these meetings. We will also work toward our commitment to keep an open communication with the NJ DOE through monthly phone conferences and ongoing email correspondence. This first quarterly report is also part of this communication.