

Professional Development and Support

Support for Continuous Improvement

AchieveNJ promotes the development of great educators by creating new structures and strengthening existing ones to provide opportunities for continuous professional learning and development. The evaluation system and the other policies described below allow teachers and school leaders to enhance their knowledge and skills and to **align their own professional learning goals with the learning goals for their students.**

Frequent and Focused Professional Conversations

AchieveNJ requires each district to adopt [state-approved teacher and principal practice evaluation instruments](#) to assess **educator practice**. Aligned to the state's professional standards, these instruments communicate a shared language of educator effectiveness across the district and provide a basis for focused conversations about professional practice. In addition, through an increased number of required observations and conferences with supervisors, AchieveNJ gives teachers more opportunities to engage in one-on-one conversations about their instruction and to receive more nuanced and tailored feedback than before. Teachers are encouraged to bring evidence and artifacts from their lessons to supplement observers' records and enrich these conversations.

All teachers set specific [Student Growth Objectives \(SGOs\)](#) as a measure of **student learning** each year. SGOs are academic growth goals for groups of students that are aligned to state curriculum standards and can be tracked using objective measures. Teachers and their supervisors meet to agree on the goals and how they will be assessed, discuss the progress of the students, and review final student outcomes. Monitoring student progress on SGOs provides opportunities for teachers, both individually and through professional learning communities, to improve their use of formative assessments and adjust their instruction to meet student needs.

Ongoing professional learning is essential for improving educator effectiveness, and principals are held accountable for fostering this culture by their supervisors. The supervisor (often the superintendent) measures the principal in part on how well they implement the teacher evaluation system, including providing focused feedback and access to professional development (PD) opportunities.

Expanded Mentoring Support

AchieveNJ maintains the state's system of support for novice teachers and recognizes that experienced teachers who are new to a district also need specialized support during their first year. Accordingly, districts must expand their mentoring plans to include systems of support for all new teachers, not just novices entering the profession for the first time.

- Under AchieveNJ all **novice teachers in the provisional teacher program** continue to be paired with an experienced teacher who serves as a mentor for one year. Mentors of novice teachers are required to be trained and are expected to provide regular, confidential guidance and support, including observing and providing feedback, modeling strong practice, and initiating conversations about professional practice. Novice teachers are evaluated by their supervisor, but evaluation results in the first year are not linked to tenure attainment.
- All **novice teachers and experienced teachers new to a district** receive a comprehensive orientation to the district's policies and procedures, including, in particular, training on the evaluation system.
- In addition to a district orientation, **experienced teachers new to the district** receive tailored supports including occasional mentorship by a supervisor, colleague, or team. The nature and intensity of these supports is determined by the supervisor in consultation with the new teacher during the creation of the individual professional development plan upon transfer to the district.

Specialized Support Through Individual PD Plans and Corrective Action Plans

AchieveNJ adds critical sources of data to inform PD planning at the individual, school, and district levels. All educators have ongoing opportunities to engage in professional learning as guided by an **individual Professional Development Plan (PDP)**. Teachers and school leaders now utilize their educator practice and student learning data to prioritize areas for improvement as they develop their plans in consultation with their supervisors. **Teachers must have at least one development goal derived from the results of observations and evidence in the teacher's annual performance evaluation.** They must also have at least one aligned to (a) the teacher's role as a member of a collaborative professional learning team or (b) any school and/or district improvement goals. PDPs may be modified throughout the year as needed and must be annually updated by October 31.

Teachers who are rated Ineffective or Partially Effective on the annual summative evaluation will be placed on a **Corrective Action Plan (CAP)**. To implement the CAP, teachers will work with their supervisors to create a plan for support focused on meeting the needs for improvement identified through the evaluation. The CAP will include specific goals and timelines for professional growth and delineate the responsibilities of both teachers and administrators in implementing the plan. For these teachers, the CAP will take the place of the required individual professional development plan. Teachers with a CAP will receive an additional observation and mid-year conference. Tenured teachers with a CAP must have multiple observers (this is already required for non-tenured teachers).

The following bullets summarize important points for all teachers who are placed on a CAP:

CAP Content

- Clear improvement needs
- Specific goals and timeline
- Replaces individual professional development plan
- Does NOT replace required professional development identified by supervisor
- CAP must be in place by October 31, or for mSGP teachers, within 15 days of receipt of the summative rating

Progress Toward Goals in CAP

- Discussed at each post-observation conference
- One extra observation and mid-year conference required
- Tenured and non-tenured teachers must have multiple observers
- CAP goals may be updated to reflect the teachers progress, position or role.
- CAP remains in effect until next summative rating

For mSGP teachers, CAPs must be in place within 25 days following receipt of the summative score. However, districts should consider providing extra support to mSGP teachers who are in jeopardy of earning a low evaluation rating based on the available observation and SGO data at the end of the school year. This can provide the teacher with more targeted coaching and support during the first part of the following school year and help lay the groundwork for a high quality CAP if the summative score requires one to be developed. CAPs remain in place until the next summative rating.

For more information about individual PDPs, CAPs, and the role of educators in PD planning at all levels, please visit the [Office of Professional Development Website](#). In particular, please note the [Optional PDP template and sample](#) and [Optional CAP template and sample](#).

Additional Data to Inform PD Planning and Practice

Data about educator practice on the elements of the evaluation instruments can be grouped and analyzed in multiple ways — such as by individual, by group, or by practice element. Supports and educator growth opportunities can thus be aligned to individual or shared developmental needs identified through the evaluation process.

Moreover, by assessing student growth from year to year, the evaluation system provides teachers and school leaders with a critical source of information about student progress. By analyzing student growth data from standardized assessments and SGOs at the classroom, school, and district levels, teachers and school leaders can work individually and collectively to improve instruction and tailor educator development opportunities in support of identified student learning needs. Taken together, the enriched educator practice and student growth data will assist districts in setting priorities and allocating resources to their PD systems. The multiple lenses on educator performance offered through AchieveNJ provide valuable insight for strengthening focused PD planning at all levels.

For More Information

- Contact your School Improvement Panel and District Evaluation Advisory Committee, which include educators.
- Visit the Office of Professional Development website at <http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/>.
- Visit the AchieveNJ website at www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ.
- E-mail educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us, or call the AchieveNJ Help Line at 609-777-3788.
- E-mail TeachPD@doe.state.nj.us for information on PD requirements.