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May 16, 2017

Updated May 18, 2017: Corrections were made to Section I (a), identified in **bold underline** text.

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads

ROUTE TO: School Business Administrators, District Data Coordinators

FROM: Peter Shulman, Deputy Commissioner
Peggy McDonald, Acting Assistant Commissioner
Division of Learning Supports and Specialized Services
Laura Morana, Acting Chief Academic Officer
Division of Teaching and Learning
Kevin Dehmer, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Finance

SUBJECT: *Every Student Succeeds Act* Data Collections

IN THIS MEMO:

- I. **Data Elements Requiring District Action**
 - a. School Attendance (used to calculate Chronic Absenteeism)
 - b. Per-Pupil Expenditures
 - c. Military-Connected Students
 - d. Industry Valued Credential/Career Readiness
- II. **Data Collected by the State: No District Action Required – For Your Information Only**
 - a. Preschool Enrollment
 - b. Foster Care
 - c. Teacher Qualifications
- III. **Future District Data Collections: No Immediate District Action Required**
 - a. Adjusted Four- and Five-Year Graduation Cohort
 - b. English Language Proficiency Indicator

The purpose of this memo is to notify districts of new data that will be collected and/or reported by the state on behalf of districts to comply with new requirements in the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* and to improve public reporting for schools and their communities. As a result of the new *ESSA* requirements, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) must initiate the collection of new data elements and amend the process of some current data collections. These data collections include information that will be incorporated into the *ESSA* school accountability system, as well as New Jersey's school and district performance reports.

It is important that districts ensure their data is accurate prior to being submitted to the state. If information is not available in this memo, the NJDOE will provide guidance in future correspondence on all new collections.

I. Data Elements That Require District Action

a. School Attendance (used to calculate Chronic Absenteeism)

In New Jersey's *ESSA* State Plan and the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC), the NJDOE has proposed using chronic absenteeism as an indicator of school quality and student success. Student attendance, reported through the **NJ SMART State submission in August**, will be used to calculate the Chronic Absenteeism measure. Districts must verify the accuracy of attendance data for the 2016-17 school year prior to the **August 3, 2017** NJ SMART **State** submission. *There will not be an opportunity to change 2016-17 attendance data after submission.*

Although the NJDOE has collected attendance data since 2013, stakeholders have requested additional guidance to further clarify data reporting. Refer to the NJDOE's updated [guidance on reporting student absences and calculating chronic absenteeism](#) for more information.

b. Per-Pupil Expenditures

ESSA requires that districts report direct-instruction costs at the school level. Further, all expenditures, comprised of direct-instruction costs at the school level plus district-level expenditures, must be reported by funding source. Therefore, in addition to the school-level requirement for direct-instruction expenditures, all expenditures must be reported as funded by local and state funds, or funded by federal funds. Because New Jersey districts already maintain fund accounting systems, the NJDOE is currently collecting expenditure data through its online Audit Summary Application (AUDSUM) in sufficient detail to comply with the *ESSA* funding source reporting requirement.

Regarding the direct-instruction cost by location code reporting requirement, the NJDOE acknowledges accounting systems may require structural changes to support school level reporting of expenditures. New Jersey districts are *strongly* encouraged to effectuate structural changes and implement school-level accounting beginning July 1, 2017. In cases in which the district believes that additional time beyond July 1, 2017 is necessary to implement changes to the accounting system, the NJDOE is requiring those changes to be in effect for some

portion of the 2017-18 fiscal year. All districts will report direct-instruction costs by location to the NJDOE for the year ending June 30, 2018. The NJDOE has issued additional [guidance on per-pupil expenditure reporting requirements](#) to address in detail the timing and implementation of structural changes to existing accounting systems that some districts may need to fulfill the requirement to report direct-instruction expenditures by location.

c. Military-Connected Students

Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, *ESSA* requires that New Jersey identify and report on the progress of students who are a dependent of a full-time, active duty member of the Armed Forces. Armed Forces, for the purposes of this data collection, include members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and National Guard. Districts should be aware that military-connected students will be treated as a subgroup **for reporting purposes only**.

The military-connected student identifier will be collected within the NJ SMART SID Management collection. The following options will be used:

1 = Not Active Military Connected

Student is not a dependent of a full-time, active duty member of the Armed Forces

2 = Active Military Connected

Student is a dependent of a full-time, active duty member of the Armed Forces

Parents or guardians who choose not to respond should be defaulted to value 1, “Not Active Military Connected.” The NJDOE has provided [guidance on reporting military-connected students](#) to assist districts in communicating this modified data element to district administrators and parents. NJ SMART’s SID Management Student Data Handbook will be updated with the new definition this summer, when the data element is changed.

Note that the NJDOE began collecting military-connected data in August 2015, but the number of acceptable options will be reduced from four to two to align with *ESSA* requirements.

d. Industry-Valued Credential/Career Readiness

As part of the 2017 NJ SMART Career and Technical Education (CTE) submission July-August 2017, districts have the opportunity to report whether students enrolled in CTE programs have earned industry-valued credentials while enrolled in their CTE program. Districts may enter up to three industry-valued credentials for each student. Guidance on how to report this data as well as a list of recognized industry valued credentials is available on the [NJ SMART webpage](#).

II. Data Collected by the State: No District Action Required – For Your Information Only

a. **Preschool Enrollment**

ESSA requires that New Jersey include in its school and district performance reports the number and percentage of students enrolled in state-funded preschool programs. The NJDOE currently collects enrollment data on state-funded preschool programs offered by districts in NJ SMART, and therefore **no further district action is required**. Note, however, that **this information will be included in future school performance reports**.

b. **Foster Care**

ESSA requires states to include students in the foster care system as a subgroup for data reporting purposes. The 2016-17 school performance reports (to be produced in the winter of 2017-18) will include subgroup data for students in the foster care system. The NJDOE will partner with the New Jersey Department of Children and Families to collect this information on behalf of districts and, therefore, **no district action is required**. Note that **this information will be included in future school performance reports**.

c. **Teacher Qualifications**

ESSA requires New Jersey to include information about teacher qualifications on school performance reports. Required elements include the percentage of teachers who are inexperienced, out-of-field, or ineffective. Definitions for each element can be found in section 5.3 of the [New Jersey's ESSA State Plan](#). Currently, districts provide all needed data to the NJDOE through NJ SMART Course Roster(s), SID and Staff Member Identification (SMID) submissions. All submitted information is then linked to the official New Jersey Teacher Certification Information System (TCIS). Therefore, **no further district action is required**. Note, however, that **this information will be included in future school performance reports**.

III. Future District Data Collections: No Immediate District Action Required

a. **Adjusted Four- and Five-Year Graduation Cohort**

The NJDOE has proposed several flexibilities to maintain high standards for all students while providing schools appropriate time to graduate students who have not yet mastered the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, particularly English learners and students with disabilities. Upon federal approval of New Jersey's *ESSA* State Plan, graduation data for these students may require modification. The NJDOE will communicate details about this data element once the state plan is reviewed and approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

b. **English Language Proficiency Indicator**

ESSA requires states to use progress toward English language proficiency as part of the calculation for school accountability. While the majority of data required to calculate students' progress toward attaining English language proficiency is

already being collected (through the NJ SMART SID and the State Assessment collections), the transition to the new accountability system will require some small adjustments to these data collections for English learners. The NJDOE will send additional guidance to districts once the state plan is reviewed and approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

- c: Members, State Board of Education
- Executive County Superintendents
- Executive Directors for Regional Achievement Centers
- Executive County Business Officials
- Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
- Garden State Coalition of Schools
- NJ LEE Group