May 28, 2013

TO: Chief School Administrators
             Charter School Lead Persons

FROM: Peter Shulman, Assistant Commissioner/Chief Talent Officer *PS*
             Division of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness

SUBJECT: Educator Evaluation Update

<u>**IN THIS MEMO:**</u>

The New Jersey Department of Education ("the Department") continues to work with educators to prepare for statewide implementation of AchieveNJ. Please share the information in this update broadly with your school and local community. Specifically, **please share the memo with all educators in your district**.

For more information, please view our updated evaluation website and our AchieveNJ Resources Guide. As always, we invite you to call our Evaluation Help Line at 609-777-3788 or email us at educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us with any questions or feedback.

I. REQUIREMENTS AND RESOURCES

A. <u>Regulations, Policies, and Communications</u>

As you know, on March 6 we <u>proposed regulations</u> to the State Board detailing the elements of <u>AchieveNJ</u>, the new evaluation and support system to be implemented statewide in the coming school year. Throughout March and April, we conducted regional presentations and other meetings with over 5,000 educators in attendance and released over 25 <u>resources and guidance materials</u> explaining various components of the system.

This initial outreach effort yielded some important feedback and lessons learned. During the April and May State Board meetings, we proposed the following key updates to the regulations:

- Change the weight of the Student Growth Percentile (SGP) from 35 percent to 30 percent for 4th-8th-grade Math and English Language Arts (ELA) teachers for 2013-14. This will increase the weight of the teacher practice component from 50 percent to 55 percent for those teachers; the weight of the Student Growth Objective (SGO) component will remain at 15 percent. In the future, component weights will be posted by April 15th for the following school year.
- Change the student enrollment requirement for attributing students to a teacher for an SGP score from 60 percent to 70 percent of the time between the start of the school year and the beginning of state testing.
- Extend the requirement for the District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) to exist through the end of SY16-17.
- Prohibit the use of the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) for SGOs for teachers who will also receive SGP scores based on those tests, ensuring that the NJ ASK account for no more than 30 percent of any teacher's evaluation.
- Clarify that the definition of an "announced observation" means the teacher is given notice of both the day and time of the observation. All teachers (tenured and non-tenured) must have at least one announced observation with a pre-conference and at least one unannounced observation as part of the three required observations. The Superintendent is given discretion to decide whether the third required observation is announced or not.

Additional efforts to share resources and continue educator outreach include the following:

- We responded to over 90 public comments through the formal State Board Comment and Response process (see pages 10-40 of the <u>updated proposed regulations</u>).
- We posted a <u>Directors and Supervisors Evaluation Overview</u> describing guidelines for individuals in those positions for next year. In addition, we have been working closely with the New Jersey School Counselors Association, the New Jersey Speech-Hearing Association, the Athletic Trainers' Society of New Jersey, and the New Jersey Association of School Librarians to support their development of evaluation tools that are specific to the needs of those educators. We will share these resources when available.
- We updated the <u>AchieveNJ website</u>, <u>Frequently Asked Questions</u>, and <u>resources</u> to address some of the most common issues we are hearing about.

In response to several requests for more support related to SGOs, please consider the following:

- The SGO process should be as collaborative as possible between teachers and their colleagues, as well as teachers and their administrators.
- As final assessments are given in the current school year, teachers and administrators should consider how such assessments might be used for SGOs next year.
- Preparation for writing SGOs can begin in advance of the school year. However, individual SGOs should be developed by teachers only when they have access to specific learning data about their assigned students (September or October for most teachers). Final SGOs cannot be set until teachers have class lists and learning data for students who will be measured by the objectives in SY13-14. For information on relevant learning data to be considered as part of the SGO-setting process, please see our detailed guidance on developing SGOs.
    - By understanding their students' "starting points" through academic data, teachers will be able to create SGOs specific to their students' needs and preparation levels. This tailored approach is one of the great assets of the SGO process.
    - While addressing specific classes or sections or students, individual SGOs need to be developed in consultation with the principal and take into account departmental, school, and district goals. Groups of teachers – such as a professional learning community or grade-level unit – may collaborate to develop a common focus for SGOs while providing mutual support in pursuing the objectives through the course of the year. Such collaborative approaches, however, should always take into account the learning data of each teacher's assigned students.

During the summer of 2013, the Department will offer a series of interactive SGO workshops, which will include significant group work and discussion. Participants will leave the workshops with a clearer understanding of the SGO process, and will take away detailed strategies and materials to use to train their staff effectively. Districts should send groups of three to five educators, including at least one teacher. District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) and School Improvement Panel (ScIP) members, directors of curriculum, supervisors and principals, and others who will be involved with SGO training are encouraged to attend. For location and registration information, please view the Upcoming Forums and Events section of our website.

B. Deadlines and Reporting Requirements

Through the end of this school year, districts should continue to test and refine evaluation rubrics in preparation for full implementation by utilizing the series of resources and guidance posted on our website. Upcoming deadlines include the following:

- **By July 1, 2013:** Thoroughly **train teachers** on the evaluation rubric.
- **By August 1, 2013:** Respond to the Department's survey collecting information about district requirements (details below).
- **By August 31, 2013:** Thoroughly **train evaluators** on the evaluation rubric.
- **By October 31, 2013:** Thoroughly **train principals and their evaluators** on the principal practice evaluation instrument.
- **By November 15, 2013:** Ensure all teachers have set **SGOs** with principal approval.

Similar to the evaluation reporting survey conducted by the Department in February, districts will be asked to verify the following activities by August 1:

- The District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) has been formed and is providing guidance for the planning and implementation of evaluation policies and procedures;
- The educator evaluation rubrics for all teaching staff members have four defined annual rating categories (Ineffective, Partially Effective, Effective, and Highly Effective);
- The district has taken steps to test and refine elements of the educator evaluation rubrics;
- School Improvement Panels (ScIPs) were formed by February 1 and include at least the principal (or a designee), assistant principal, and a teacher (note: changes to the members of the ScIP prior to SY13-14 are permitted as long as minimum requirements are met);
- Teacher training on the district's teacher evaluation rubric (including the adopted teacher practice instrument) was completed by July 1; and
- Plans for the following are in place:
  - Evaluator training for teacher evaluation (by August 31);
  - Notification of all teaching staff members of adopted evaluation policy/process (by October 1);
  - Training for new teachers, principals, APs/VPs on the evaluation rubrics, especially the relevant educator practice instrument;
  - Training for principal evaluation (principals, assistant/vice principals (AP/VPs), and their evaluators) (by October 31); and
  - Setting SGOs for all teachers (by November 15); teachers not likely to receive an SGP score must set two SGOs and teachers likely to receive an SGP score must set one or two SGOs.

The reporting window will open in July; at that time, districts will receive a communication with a link to the survey and directions for submission.

C. __Educator Practice Instruments__

Districts have already selected and reported their educator practice evaluation instruments for SY13-14, and are not expected to change these decisions for the coming school year. However, we are currently conducting an additional Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process to allow for expanded options on the state-approved list for future use. Districts will be able to report any changes in selected instruments as part of their yearly submission of evaluation rubrics for state approval.

As explained in a recent April memo, the current RFQ process is taking place as follows:

- April 30: Updated RFQ applications available on AchieveNJ website
- April 30 - May 23: Providers and districts submit instruments and information
- May 23 - June 13: Department reviews submissions
- June 14: Approved districts and providers notified; updated lists posted on our website

D. __Course Roster Data Submission__

The practice submission window for SY12-13 district course roster data opened on April 15th and will close on June 25th, and we strongly encourage districts to engage in this practice exercise. As we have detailed in previous memos, beginning in SY13-14, the Department will

use this roster data to assign growth scores to qualifying teachers as one measure in annual evaluations. (Districts will receive teacher growth scores for SY12-13 as well for informational purposes only.) ***The accuracy of student growth scores assigned to teachers depends entirely on the accuracy of course roster data.*** For this reason, it is imperative that districts ensure the quality of their data.

The official course roster data submission window for SY12-13 occurs between July 5th and August 2nd. Please see the [NJSMART section of the Department's website](#) for more details about the practice and official submission windows. For full details about the use of roster data to calculate growth scores for the purposes of evaluation, see Section I.D. of this [January memo](#).

E. Flexibility for Initial Implementation

As districts prepare to implement AchieveNJ this fall, we recognize that in unique circumstances, certain components of a district's evaluation rubric may conflict with proposed regulations. For example, the Marshall Rubrics teacher practice evaluation instrument requires several 10-minute observations, and our proposed regulations require observations of at least 20 or 40 minutes. To support districts in their planning for SY13-14 and to provide flexibility without undermining the intent of the Department's rules, districts may seek the Department's guidance for navigating conflicts between the evaluation rubrics and the rules.

The Department is committed to providing clear direction as quickly as possible and therefore will respond to requests on an ongoing basis. Districts with a conflict should complete, sign, scan, and submit this [AchieveNJ Request for Flexibility form](#) by **July 12, 2013** via email to [educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us](#) or by fax at (603)633-0160. The Department will reply no later than August 15 to any request received on or before this deadline. If a flexibility measure is granted, the Department shall provide the school district with next steps and information about the formal waiver process to be completed in the fall.

*Please note that **this application is not a formal waiver process** under N.J.A.C. 6A:5. The Department will publish additional reminders and guidance about the required waiver procedures once the AchieveNJ regulations are adopted and take effect later this year.*

F. Links Between Evaluation and Common Core Implementation

As we strive to prepare all students to compete in the 21st-century global knowledge economy, we are working as a Department to implement a cohesive set of initiatives. Improvements to educator evaluation and supports are intended to complement other elements of New Jersey's education system – in particular, implementation of the [Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and related assessments](#). Understanding that district leaders manage multiple priorities every year, we want to be as explicit as possible in demonstrating the ways that these initiatives intersect at the classroom, school, and district levels.

As you know, the CCSS are being implemented across New Jersey, and the new [Partnership for Assessments of Readiness for College and Careers](#) (PARCC) assessments for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics will be in use starting in SY14-15. The [New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS)](#) continue to be in use for other grades and subjects, as

is the NJ ASK for science in grades 4 and 8. The chart below describes the timeline associated with these and related evaluation activities.

Standards, Assessments, and Evaluation: Timeline of Activities

Year	Evaluation Activity	Standards/Assessments Activity
2010-11	• Educator Effectiveness Task Force (EETF) underway • EETF recommendations released	• New Jersey adopts CCSS (June 2010) • New Jersey joins PARCC (spring 2010)
2011-12	• Evaluation pilot underway	• CCSS implementation begins • Additional implementation plans for CCSS and PARCC in development
2012-13	• Evaluation pilots underway • All districts building capacity for new system • SGP scores from NJ ASK attributed to qualifying teachers; data sent to districts for informational purposes	• CCSS implementation continues • NJ ASK aligned to CCSS for ELA and math and to NJCCCS for science • PARCC item field testing underway
2013-14	• Full implementation statewide • SGP scores from NJ ASK attributed to qualifying teachers; data used to determine teacher growth scores as one of multiple measures in final summative evaluations	• Full CCSS implementation underway • PARCC assessment field testing in Spring 2014
2014-15	• SGP scores from PARCC attributed to qualifying teachers; data used to determine teacher growth scores as one of multiple measures in final summative evaluations	• Full administration of PARCC assessments for grades 3-11 in ELA and math

AchieveNJ supports implementation of the CCSS and PARCC assessments in several ways. Instruction and student growth are the major "input" and "output" of our education system. New evaluations are intended to capture the efficacy of instruction in improving student growth – and to provide information for offering support and recognition for educators in doing this work. The CCSS and NJCCCS form the basis of standards-based instruction – the "input" of evaluation. PARCC and NJ ASK assessments, as well as SGOs, are key measures of the "output" of student growth.

The following elements of evaluation offer various windows into the effectiveness of standards-based instruction:

1. **Evaluation practice instruments are designed to foster and capture standards-based instruction**. For example, Domains 1a and 2b of the Danielson instrument, Standard III of McREL, and Domain 2.44 of Marzano focus on the importance of content in instruction. As districts implement these instruments, teachers should understand the importance of aligning instruction to established content standards.

2. **The observation process, including pre- and post-conferences, allows supervisors and principals to view and document standards-based instruction in classrooms**. During these sessions, teachers and leaders should discuss the alignment of instruction to content standards. Professional development should be designed to support this work.

3. **Student achievement measures are based on established content standards**. The NJ ASK and PARCC assessments are aligned to the CCSS and NJCCCS for each subject and grade level. Educator-established SGOs should be linked directly to standards as well (for more information and examples, see the SGO Guidebook).

4. **Assessment results offer additional evidence of student mastery of content standards**. Teacher-set SGOs, as well as SGP scores from the NJ ASK and PARCC assessments, provide two of the multiple data points for determining a teacher's efficacy in teaching to the standards and promoting student growth.

5. **Summative evaluation conferences allow teachers and school leaders the opportunity to discuss observation and assessment results**. During the final evaluation conference, teachers and leaders should review multiple sources of data to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement in ensuring student growth.

When implemented effectively, standards-based instruction fosters student learning, which contributes to positive teacher and leader evaluation results. AchieveNJ is designed to provide multiple opportunities for educators to demonstrate their focus on standards and their students' success in mastering that content.

II. EDUCATOR EVALUATION PILOTS

A. Teacher and Principal Evaluation Pilots

As the end of the school year approaches, the Department continues to support and collect data from pilot districts to inform the refinement of plans for statewide implementation of AchieveNJ. Two new resources offer feedback and advice from pilot participants, which other districts might find useful as they prepare for full implementation this fall:

- As part of our recent outreach initiative to explain various components of the system and hear educator feedback, we released the Training and Implementation Overview. This guidance document includes specific examples and quotations from pilot participants in the areas of training and establishing a common language around the teacher practice evaluation instrument as well as work on measures of student growth.
- The Rutgers University Graduate School of Education (RUGSE), the external evaluator contracted by the Department to study pilot implementation, has released a brief entitled "Strategies for Training on a Teacher Practice Evaluation Instrument: Advice from New Jersey's Teacher Evaluation Pilot Districts". This report focuses on findings and lessons learned about promising practices in training on the evaluation instrument.

Over the summer, we will continue to analyze data from pilot participants and will create additional guidance materials for use across the state based on these lessons learned. We appreciate the significant dedication these districts have demonstrated and are grateful that their example continues to guide stronger, more practical policies and guidance.

B. <u>Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC)</u>

Over the past several months, the EPAC has been meeting regularly and discussing several specific components of evaluation and pilot work, including:

- **Data**: Several pilot districts discussed ways they have used SGP data to facilitate meaningful discussions with educators during the evaluation process.
- **SGOs**: The majority of the April EPAC meeting was devoted to work on SGOs, and feedback from this session is being used to develop regional workshops and web-based training modules.
- **Final EPAC Report**: The group has begun to outline the final EPAC report, slated for release at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year.

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