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July 30, 2012

**TO:** Chief School Administrators  
Charter School Lead Persons

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

**SUBJECT: Educator Evaluation System Implementation Update**

This memo provides an update on our ongoing work to improve educator evaluations in New Jersey. Please share this information broadly with administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders in your district.

## 1. UPDATES AND RESOURCES

### New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Evaluation Team

I am pleased to announce that the NJDOE Evaluation Team has welcomed a new Director of Educator Evaluation. Timothy Matheney took on this leadership position in early July, after working on the 2011-12 state Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC) in his role as a New Jersey principal. Mr. Matheney served as the Principal of South Brunswick High School for eight years after working as an Assistant Principal and teaching at the university level in Minnesota. He earned his Bachelor's degree from Princeton University and his Master's from the University of Michigan. He began his career in education as a high school social studies teacher.

"I am eager to build on the groundwork the Department has laid in engaging practitioners to help shape and inform New Jersey's new evaluation system," Matheney said. "By collaborating with educators in our teacher and principal evaluation pilots in the coming school year, we aim to create the most effective and efficient framework to roll out across the state. Our students, teachers, and principals deserve the best, and that is what we are working to deliver."

### Teacher and Principal Evaluation

#### **Teacher Evaluation Pilot Cohort 2 Selection Announcement and Title I NGO Rebid**

The Department announced on July 17 that 10 districts have been identified as pre-awardees for Cohort 2 of the teacher evaluation pilot, pending final review procedures. These districts

are: Bordentown Regional; a consortium of Collingswood Borough, Audubon, and Merchantville; Cranford Township; Haddonfield; a consortium of Lenape Valley Regional and Stanhope; Middlesex County Vocational; Piscataway Township; Rockaway Township; Teaneck; and Woodbury City. In addition, the ten districts participating as Cohort 1 of the teacher evaluation pilot plan to join the second year of pilot work with supplemental funding from the state. For more details, please see the [press release](#).

In addition, the Department recently announced a rebid of the Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO) released to eligible Title I districts. The Department will provide technical assistance to all eligible districts, including those that previously applied and did not qualify, in order to include as many districts as possible in the pilot. This technical assistance session has been scheduled for August 9, 2012 in the third floor conference room at the New Jersey Department of Education, 100 River View Plaza, Trenton. Participation is not mandatory, but districts interested in applying are strongly encouraged to attend. Registration must be completed in advance by clicking on the following link: <http://education.state.nj.us/events/month/?month=08&year=2012>. Please see Appendix A for a list of Title I districts eligible to apply to this NGO rebid.

### **Principal Evaluation Pilot Selection Announcement**

The Department announced on July 17 that 14 districts have been identified as pre-awardees for the principal evaluation pilot, pending final review procedures. These districts are: a consortium of Alexandria and North Hunterdon-Voorhees RHS, Bergenfield, Edison, Elizabeth, Lawrence Township, Monmouth County Vocational, Morris, Newark, North Brunswick, Paterson, Pemberton, Rockaway Township, Spotswood, and Stafford. For more details, please see the [press release](#).

### **Teaching and Principal Practice Evaluation Instrument Review**

In the design of a statewide system for teacher and principal evaluation, the Department has aimed to provide districts with ample flexibility and support to make district-level decisions. One of the most significant of these decisions is which teaching and principal practice evaluation instrument to use.

All districts must select teaching practice instruments by December 31, 2012. To prepare for this milestone, the state will be releasing an approved instrument list, the goals of which are as follows:

- to provide flexibility for districts to select instruments that meet their distinct needs as well as state requirements;
- to include a wide variety of approved instruments, including no- and low- cost instruments from other states and districts; and
- to provide assurance to districts that their selected instruments meet the technical criteria established by the state.

In the coming week, we will be taking the first steps in creating that list by releasing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), which will solicit teaching practice evaluation instrument submissions from a variety of entities. Contrary to some beliefs that have been circulating, **districts are not limited to the four instruments in use during the 2011-12 Cohort 1 teacher evaluation pilot year.** Instrument providers, local school districts, and other

stakeholders can use the RFQ to submit an instrument for review. If the instrument meets the technical requirements, it will be included on the approved list, which will be posted on our website in mid-September. The first deadline for submitting teaching practice evaluation instruments is August 24<sup>th</sup>, and there will be subsequent review periods through December 31, 2012.

Please note that the approved instrument list will *only* include instruments that have met the technical requirements for use in New Jersey. All districts are required to follow [public bidding laws and regulations](#) in acquiring an evaluation instrument and should consult with their Business Administrator (BA) for guidance. If the BA needs additional support, he or she should contact the appropriate county office of education.

Note that the instruments on the approved list *will not* have contracts with the state, necessitating that districts develop their own contracts; please refer to our [FAQs on public bidding](#) for more information. Additionally, local districts must ensure that they have the supports in place to meet the implementation requirements of the evaluation instrument, such as teacher and administrator training and/or proof of mastery. Related details can be found in our [evaluation requirement FAQs](#).

We will continue to provide updates on our website and in future evaluation memos as this process progresses. The process and timelines for the principal practice evaluation instrument RFQ will be determined in the upcoming month.

### Capacity-Building Requirements for All Districts for 2012-13

As we prepare for statewide rollout of an improved educator evaluation system in 2013-14, all districts will conduct capacity-building activities detailed in previous memos and explained in our [FAQs](#). The first of these requirements is to form a District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) to ensure stakeholder engagement in evaluation reform. We strongly advise these committees be formed as soon as possible, as they will help to drive decision-making for all other parts of the process. To that end, we have provided an overview of the required membership of the DEAC (Appendix B) and a sample communications plan that DEACs may use to guide their initial meetings and plans for the 2012-13 school year (Appendix C). We will continue to provide information and resources for next year's capacity-building activities as they become available.

## **2. SPOTLIGHT FROM THE FIELD: WOODSTOWN-PILES GROVE REGIONAL SCHOOLS**

Thanks to the leadership of Superintendent Tom Coleman, prior to the end of the school year the Woodstown-Piles Grove Regional District hosted a full day of feedback sessions with teachers and administrators to **explore successes, challenges, and lessons learned from pilot implementation**. Participants included members of the teaching staff and administrative team who shared insightful information with members of the statewide Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC) and New Jersey Department of Education

representatives. The day was followed by a conference call for additional teachers who desired to participate.

With regard to piloting the new evaluation system on the whole, Mr. Coleman remarked, “What we have learned from this process is that first and foremost for it to succeed, it must be understood that this is as much a process about people as it is about a more effective tool for evaluating teacher performance. It is essential to give due diligence and respect to the former in order for the latter to succeed. In that regard we found that it requires a re-calibration of our priorities that re-engineers how we expend our professional energy.”

Some of the high-level recommendations from the feedback sessions include the following:

- The most effective rollout of the new evaluation system requires supportive leadership that has created a culture of trust and clearly communicated the goals of the system.
- Effective implementation has the potential to produce:
  - a common understanding by teachers and administrators of what great teaching looks like;
  - thoughtful self-reflection and more discussions about instructional practice;
  - more consistency and fairness in conducting observations; and
  - more administrators engaged in evaluating teachers and broader administrator accountability for evaluating teachers.
- Training needs to be carefully structured and adequate time given for evaluators and teachers to understand new expectations.
- Support systems for administrators are needed to assist with shifting priorities.
- The observation schedule must be planned in advance with clear deadlines in order to complete all observations throughout the year.

Salem County and District Teacher of the Year Peter Mazzagatti, who participates in the district and state advisory committees, took part in the feedback sessions. He shared that “the teacher visitation was helpful for the district because it once again opened up the lines of communication between the Department of Education, EPAC members, and the teachers being directly affected by these changes. I feel that open communication not only fosters goodwill, but it also makes things seem less mysterious and people become less adversarial to the process. Finally, it also provides everyone a much clearer picture of what is working and what still needs to be done. In the end we want to get this right, and visitations like the one we had I truly believe help to do just that.”

Jeanne DelColle, the current New Jersey Teacher of the Year and a member of EPAC who participated in the sessions, commented that “by recognizing the growing pains that have been voiced, we are reminded that change takes time and learning a new system is a process that requires strong foundations in order to work. However, with successful collaboration, good leadership, and open lines of communication between staff and administration, teacher evaluation that is coherent, encourages reflection on practice, and targets professional development will create a more effective system that will help both students and teachers in the long run.”

The insights shared through this experience were invaluable to the EPAC members, who are charged with making recommendations for implementing the new statewide evaluation system. By engaging teachers and practitioners as thought partners and learning from their experiences, the Department strives to leverage the expertise and insights of New Jersey educators to create the best possible evaluation system for the state. We are grateful for Mr. Coleman's leadership and for all district personnel who participated in these feedback sessions.

For more information about Woodstown's work as a pilot district, visit their website at <http://www.woodstown.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=1406>.

### 3. QUESTIONS AND RESOURCES

We are continuing to update the educator evaluation website, and we invite you to visit <http://www.state.nj.us/education/EE4NJ/> and view new [FAQs](#) for additional information. If you have questions that are not addressed in our communications or the FAQs, please send them directly to our email inbox at [EE4NJ@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:EE4NJ@doe.state.nj.us).

PS/TM/JP/E:\Communications\Memos\Summer Evaluation Memo-7-30-12.Doc

#### Attachments

- c: Members, State Board of Education
  - Christopher Cerf, Acting Commissioner
  - Senior Staff
    - Diane Shoener
    - Marie Barry
    - Karen Campbell
    - Jeff Hauger
    - Robert Higgins
    - Mary Jane Kurabinski
    - Timothy Matheney
    - Peggy McDonald
    - Cathy Pine
    - Megan Snow
    - Ellen Wolock
    - Amy Ruck
    - Todd Kent
  - CCCS Staff
  - Executive County Superintendents
  - Garden State Coalition of Schools
  - NJ LEE Group

## **APPENDIX A: Eligible LEAs for Rebid Title I Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO)**

Title I LEAs with 100% of their schools receiving Title I funds and having school wide status (as approved by the NJDOE), and who have not received funding under EE4NJ Cohort 1 or the School Improvement Grant (SIG) Program:

Asbury Park	Village Charter School
Bridgeton	Vineland City
Camden Academy Charter High School	Willingboro Township
Camden County Vocational School District	Woodbine
Camden's Pride Charter School	
Camden's Promise Charter School	
Central Jersey Arts Charter School	
Clementon Borough	
Commercial Township	
Dover Town	
DUE Season Charter School	
East Orange Community Charter School	
Essex County Vocational*	
Foundation Academy Charter School	
Freedom Academy Charter School	
Freehold Borough	
Garfield	
Gloucester City	
Guttenberg	
Harrison	
Jersey City Community Charter School	
Jersey City Golden Door Charter School	
Lady Liberty Academy Charter School	
Lakewood Township*	
LEAP Academy Charter School	
Long Branch	
Millville	
Mount Holly Township	
New Brunswick	
North Star Academy Charter School	
City of Orange Township	
Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology	
Paulsboro	
Perth Amboy	
Pleasantville	
Pride Academy Charter School	
Salem City	
TEAM Academy Charter School	
Union City	

*Note: Red Bank Borough is ineligible to apply, as it received funding under the EE4NJ Cohort 1 pilot program. Woodbury School District is ineligible as it was funded under the original Cohort 2B NGO # 12-AY01-A01.*

*\*Eligible to serve only non-SIG schools*

## **APPENDIX B: District Evaluation Advisory Committee Composition**

No later than **November 2012**, all districts must form a District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) to ensure stakeholder engagement in evaluation reform. We strongly advise these committees be formed as soon as possible, as this committee will oversee and guide the planning and implementation of the district's evaluation policies and procedures. Composition of this committee should include the following:

- Teachers from each school level in the district; central office administrators overseeing the teacher evaluation process; and administrators conducting evaluations. Members must also include the superintendent; a special education administrator; a parent; and a member of the district board of education.
- At the discretion of the superintendent, membership on the DEAC may be extended to representatives of other groups.



## APPENDIX C: Model Communications Plan for Educator Evaluation Work

<u>Suggested Components</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
1. Convene District Evaluation Advisory Committee	1. ASAP; no later than November 30
2. Communicate and solicit stakeholder support for evaluation activities	2. ASAP; ongoing
3. Establish awareness/gain ongoing support from educators and the public through regular communications and events	3. Ongoing
4. Create and maintain district web page about evaluation	4. By January 31; ongoing
5. Develop educator feedback loop	5. By January 31; ongoing
6. Monitor and revise communication plan	6. Ongoing

### Suggested Elements

*Please note: the following is a list of activities suggested to support evaluation activities – not a list of requirements. **Only the first element – convening the District Evaluation Advisory Committee – is mandated by the state.** The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) would like to support district efforts with communications, and can supply materials as needed. Please contact [ee4nj@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:ee4nj@doe.state.nj.us) with any questions about these or other communications activities, or to share your communications materials for public posting.*

#### **1. Convene District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC)**

- Use NJDOE guidelines (provided in [FAQ](#)) to convene team
  - Consider nominee/selection process if there are numerous interested parties
- Hold first meeting by November 30, 2012; note: NJDOE advises this group be convened *as early as possible* in the 2012-13 school year
- Hold additional meetings at least monthly in person for members to discuss challenges and opportunities, share feedback, etc.
  - Consider additional calls/smaller group meetings as necessary to tackle issues as they arise
- Create a plan for the DEAC team to:
  - Identify timelines for implementation
  - Identify roles and responsibilities of all members
  - Learn about the selected teaching practice observation instrument
  - Identify purposes of data, how it will be collected, and how it will be shared
  - Disseminate information, get feedback, respond to challenges and successes

## **2. Communicate and solicit stakeholder support for evaluation activities**

- Send email from superintendent to all district board members and employees about evaluation plans, and consider other meetings/opportunities to convey information
  - Identify expected activities, opportunities for educator feedback, etc.
- Use district events, faculty/board meetings, etc. to share information about evaluation work
- Hold meetings/send communications to teachers and principals to explain details of evaluation plans, expectations for educators
  - Solicit input from members of the DEAC, especially teachers and principals, to encourage support
  - Consider holding some “open” DEAC meetings to allow for a transparent process

## **3. Establish awareness and gain ongoing support from educators and the public through regular communication and events**

- Send emails/letters to all relevant stakeholders explaining evaluation activities, opportunities for engagement/feedback, etc.
- Identify expectations so that all stakeholders (central office, principals, teachers, school board) understand how evaluations will be implemented
- Communicate important elements to students
  - Consider naming a student representative to the DEAC to open communication from students and back to students about evaluations
- Convene forums for the public, parents, students, etc. to explain evaluation details and developments, answer questions, and collect feedback
- Enlist the assistance of parent liaisons and parent-teacher organizations to help communicate the information in different languages, if necessary

## **4. Create and maintain district web page about evaluation**

- On the district’s website, create a web-based repository for all things related to evaluation
  - Include information, updates, FAQs, etc. for district educators, students, and the public about evaluation work
  - Link to NJDOE Educator Evaluation Website:  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/EE4NJ/>
- Continue updating/tailoring general FAQs and other resources
  - Continue to use NJDOE website as resource

## **5. Develop educator feedback loop**

- Create open communication lines to educators for sharing feedback/concerns about evaluation directly with the DEAC
  - Consider email address for questions and answers, other web-based forum
  - Consider regular meetings/forums for educators to openly discuss progress, share questions/comments
- Use existing structures (PLCs, regular faculty/department meetings, etc.) to share information with and gather feedback from groups of educators
- Create/distribute surveys (pre and post, others) for educators to answer questions about evaluation work

- Use initial data from feedback to connect professional learning to the evaluation framework and instructional expectations
  - Involve the district professional development coordinator, teacher mentors, and instructional coaches in the process
- Provide principals with methods for ongoing, positive communication with staff that provides timely information, promotes mutual respect for various points of view, and focuses all educators on the goal of improvement

### **Suggested Resources**

Please note that these resources include comprehensive communications strategies and templates that DEACs might wish to use in forming plans:

1. NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CENTER FOR TEACHER QUALITY
  - **A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO DESIGNING COMPREHENSIVE TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEMS, COMPONENT 2: SECURING AND SUSTAINING STAKEHOLDER INVESTMENT & CULTIVATING A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN:**  
[HTTP://WWW.TQSOURCE.ORG/PRACTICALGUIDE/COMPONENT2.PHP](http://www.tqsource.org/practicalguide/component2.php)
  - **Communication Framework for Measuring Teacher Quality and Effectiveness: Bringing Coherence to the Conversation:**  
<http://www.tqsource.org/publications/NCCTQCommFramework.pdf>
2. GATES FOUNDATION: EMPOWERING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS, STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING REFORMS: [HTTP://WWW.GATESFOUNDATION.ORG/UNITED-STATES/DOCUMENTS/EMPOWERING-EFFECTIVE-TEACHERS-EMPOWERING-STRATEGY.PDF](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/united-states/documents/empowering-effective-teachers-empowering-strategy.pdf)
3. THE NEW TEACHER PROJECT, TEACHER EVALUATION 2.0:  
[HTTP://TNTP.ORG/PUBLICATIONS/ISSUE-ANALYSIS/TEACHER-EVALUATION-2.0/](http://tntp.org/publications/issue-analysis/teacher-evaluation-2.0/)
4. ASPEN INSTITUTE MEANS TO AN END: A GUIDE TO DEVELOPING TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT:  
[HTTP://WWW.ASPENINSTITUTE.ORG/PUBLICATIONS/MEANS-END-GUIDE-DEVELOPING-TEACHER-EVALUATION-SYSTEMS-SUPPORT-GROWTH-DEVELOPMENT](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/means-end-guide-developing-teacher-evaluation-systems-support-growth-development)