

The Reflective Practice Protocol for Highly Effective Teachers Pursuing National Board Certification or Recertification

Rationale

In May 2016, The New Jersey Department of Education Office of Evaluation proposed a set of adjustments to processes associated with educator evaluation under AchieveNJ, which will take effect during the 2016-17 school year. These changes include more flexibility in evaluating teachers rated highly effective as shown in the rule below:

“If a tenured teacher was rated highly effective on his or her most recent summative evaluation, one of the two required observations may be an observation of a Commissioner-approved activity other than a classroom lesson. The Department shall post annually to its website a list of Commissioner-approved activities that may be observed in accordance with this rule.” (NJAC 6A:10-4.4.3.i)¹

As stated above, each year, the Commissioner will publish approved activities for an optional differentiated evaluation of teachers rated highly effective the prior year. One such option is the Reflective Practice Protocol for teachers who are pursuing National Board Certification, which is the subject of the guidance that follows

A Tale of Two Teachers

Stacy is in her tenth year of teaching and has consistently received effective and highly effective ratings. This year, Stacy will begin a journey to further distinguish herself as a professional with proven knowledge and methods in student learning and achievement. Stacy will pursue National Board Certification² and thus will spend the entire school year engaging in rigorous analysis and reflection of her practice.

Down the hall from Stacy, Joe is a brand new teacher who is in his fourth month of teaching. Joe is proficient in designing standards-aligned activities but continues to struggle with classroom management. Joe works with his grade-level leader and supervisor to improve his skills in this area.

In order to support and develop both of these teachers, it is important to recognize that their school years will look vastly different. Stacy needs feedback regarding an intense year of reflection of her instructional practice, while Joe needs considerably different feedback designed to meet his individualized needs. The option outlined in this guidance recognizes the unique needs of these professionals and allows Stacy to opt-in to feedback that recognizes and appreciates the intensity of the National Board process while continuing to support her in developing as a Highly Effective practitioner.

Overview

With recent regulatory changes, Stacy’s recognition as a Highly Effective tenured teacher on her last summative rating will give her options. First, Stacy can choose the traditional format of evaluation where her summative score will be a combination of at least two twenty-minute observations and her student achievement rating (SGO/mSGP). Or, she can elect to replace one of her traditional observations with a Reflective Conference. If she decides to participate in a Reflective Conference, she can reflect on her practice through the use of video, assessment, observation and student voice data, as outlined in the [Reflective Practice Protocol](#), or she can reflect on her experiences pursuing National Board Certification, as outlined in the following guidance.

¹ Proposed regulations pending adoption by the State Board of Education in late fall for use in the 2016-17 school year.

² For research outlining the impact of National Board Certification, visit <http://www.nbpts.org/advancing-education-research>

Parameters

- This protocol is available as an option for tenured teachers who have been rated Highly Effective on their most recent summative rating and who choose to pursue National Board Certification for the current school year.
- Participation in this protocol is optional and based upon mutual agreement of the participating teacher and his or her direct supervisor.
- The protocol for Highly Effective teachers pursuing National Board Certification is similar to the [Reflective Practice Protocol](#). However, in this option, the educator provides documentation and analysis of his or her work in relation to the National Board Certification process.
- One traditional classroom observation will be replaced by a Reflective Practice Conference between the teacher and supervisor.
- The Reflective Practice Conference will be based on the educator's reflection in several required components. Administrators are responsible for conducting and scoring the conference based on available evidence.
- As where multiple traditional observations are used to provide a practice score, districts must use the Reflective Practice Conference plus any traditional observations to produce a practice rating that contributes to a 1.0 to 4.0 summative score. Additional guidance regarding scoring can be found in the [Reflective Practice Protocol](#) in the section titled *Determining a Practice Score and Summative Rating for Highly Effective Teachers*³.

Required Components

Each of the following components is *required* for participating in the Reflective Practice Protocol for teachers who are pursuing National Board Certification. However, the requirements outlined below are intended to provide flexibility and autonomy to Highly Effective teachers and their supervisors. Therefore, supervisors and educators may choose to focus more heavily on certain components. The specifics of the required activities should be agreed upon before embarking on this evaluation option.

- **Video Capture** – reflect on video of a lesson(s) or segments of lessons determined by the teacher.
- **Student Performance** – reflect on student progress toward academic goals.
- **Traditional Observation** – reflect on information collected from at least one unannounced evaluator-conducted classroom observation.
- **Student Voice** – reflect on feedback from students either through student survey or focus group.

Optional Components

The following components are *optional* for participation. These opportunities provide additional peer and administrator feedback that a teacher can use to further learn about and improve his or her practice.

- **Collaborative Peer**– reflection on peer or team observations that are not evaluative in nature.
- **District or School Walkthrough**– reflection on aggregate information and its relationship to individual practice.

³ The administrator's score of the Reflective Practice Conference is used specifically for the teacher's district evaluation. This score has no bearing on the score the teacher will receive from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards based on the required portfolio and NBPTS rubrics.

Depth of Focus

The requirements outlined in this guidance are intended to provide flexibility and autonomy to Highly Effective teachers and their supervisors. Therefore, the depth at which teachers focus on the requirements is at the discretion of the supervisor and teacher. Supervisors are encouraged to work with teachers to allow them the opportunity to reflect on their work in the National Board Certification process. For example, the table below provides suggested approaches for determining the depth of focus for the required components.

National Board Certification	Reflective Practice Protocol
Teacher chooses to complete all components of National Board Certification.	Teacher completes all requirements of the Reflective Practice Protocol, but is permitted to focus more heavily on comparable areas within the National Board Certification components.
Teacher chooses to pursue Component 2 only of National Board Certification, and thus will focus heavily on assessing and reflecting their students' performance.	Teacher completes all requirements of the Reflective Practice Protocol, but is permitted to focus more heavily on the Student Performance component since this aligns with the work that will be done through the National Board process.
Teacher chooses to pursue Component 3 only of National Board Certification, and thus will focus heavily on utilizing video to reflect on their instructional practices.	Teacher completes all requirements of the Reflective Practice Protocol, but is permitted to focus more heavily on the Video component since this aligns with the work that will be done through the National Board process.

Summary

Teachers have varying levels of expertise and need, and evaluation models should reflect this diversity. Highly Effective teachers now have options in how they will be evaluated. One such group, Highly Effective teachers pursuing National Board Certification, can now choose to receive feedback and support in the work they are engaging in throughout this experience. It is the hope that this flexibility will ensure that New Jersey's most effective teachers are continuing to develop and hone their practices, as there is nothing in schools more critical to student success than great teachers.

Optional Reflective Practice Protocol Rubric for Highly Effective Teachers Pursuing National Board Certification or Recertification⁴

	Exemplary	Adequate	Approaching	Needs Further Examination
Video Capture Lessons	Teacher provides thoughtful information concerning pedagogical strengths and areas of focus according to the teacher practice instrument. S/he recognizes the changes made in instruction and highlights the impact of those changes, along with any further adjustments needed.	Teacher provides thoughtful information concerning pedagogical areas of strengths and areas of need according to the teacher practice instrument. S/he highlights some changes in instruction but should monitor the impact more.	Teacher provides basic insights concerning pedagogical areas of strength and needed focus according to the teacher practice instrument. Further work should be done connecting observation to change in practice and impact.	Teacher provides basic information concerning video capture observations but hasn't connected those observations to instructional change, or to the teacher practice instrument.
Student Performance	Teacher provides insights about student progress toward academic goals while hypothesizing causes for student success and strategies for addressing areas of need.	Teacher provides insights on student progress toward academic goals while hypothesizing causes for student success, but does not outline strategies for areas of need.	Teacher provides insights on student progress toward academic goals but does not hypothesize causes for student success.	Teacher provides a list of student grades with no connection to academic goals.
Classroom Observations	Teacher connects insights from the classroom observation to their observations of practice with a focus on how progress has been made in key areas of strength and weakness.	Teacher connects insights from the administrator-conducted observation to observations of practice with a focus on how progress has been made in areas of focus.	Teacher connects insights from the administrator-conducted observation to observations, but lacks delineation between areas of strengths and weakness.	Teacher doesn't connect observation from the administrator-conducted observation to observation of practice.
Student Surveys	Teacher highlights areas of strength and need from a student survey and provides ideas for addressing areas of strength and strategies for addressing areas of need.	Teacher highlights areas of strength and focus from a sample of students that completed a survey and provides a hypothesis for areas of strength.	Teacher highlights areas of strength and focus from a sample of students that completed a survey.	Teacher provides a summary of student survey results without highlighting areas of strength or need.
Connected Reflection of All Sources	Teacher and administrator identify areas of strength and need and agree to specific strategies that build on strengths and address needs. A plan is developed for teacher to monitor progress and discuss at the next reflective check-in, post-conference, or summative conference.	Teacher and administrator identify BOTH prevalent areas of strength and needed focus from all sources.	Teacher and administrator identify only prevalent areas of weakness gathered from a minimal amount of sources.	Teacher and administrator haven't integrated all information gathered from sources of reflection to identify prevalent areas of strength and needed focus.

⁴ For additional guidance and optional approaches regarding the scoring of the Reflective Conference, visit page 22 of the [Reflective Practice Protocol](#).

