

The Reflective Practice Protocol for Cooperating Teachers

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)

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 Cooperating Teachers, the subject of the guidance that follows.

A Tale of Two Teachers

Tabatha is in her seventh year of teaching and has consistently received effective and highly effective ratings. Tabatha is passionate about the impact that teachers can have on the future of the profession, so she has decided to mentor a clinical intern. Tabatha will spend her school year coaching and mentoring, ensuring that the clinical intern exemplifies best practices that will benefit Tabatha’s current students as well as the clinical intern’s future students. She will work with the clinical intern for an entire school year.¹

Down the hall from Tabatha, 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. Tabatha wants feedback regarding her coaching of the clinical intern, while Joe needs feedback regarding his own practice. The option outlined in this guidance recognizes the unique needs of these professionals and allows Tabatha to opt-in to feedback that will assist her in developing as a coach of prospective teachers. This will allow Tabatha the ability to work toward her ultimate goal of having a greater impact on the future of the profession.

Overview

With recent regulatory changes, Tabatha’s recognition as a Highly Effective tenured teacher on her last summative rating will give her options. First, Tabatha 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 video and reflect on her own teaching, as outlined in the [Reflective Practice Protocol](#), or she can video and reflect on her role as a cooperating teacher, as outlined in the following guidance.

As a cooperating teacher, Tabatha will guide and mentor a clinical intern throughout the school year. Tabatha will support the clinical intern’s lessons, determine strengths and areas of improvement, and provide feedback and advice. She will model how highly effective teachers use data and student surveys to inform instruction, and how they reflect on feedback from supervisors to adjust methodologies and improve performance.

¹ Proposed regulatory changes state that prospective teachers will complete a one-year clinical internship (formally known as student teaching) beginning in the 2017-18 school year.

She will arrange for opportunities for the clinical intern to communicate with parents, visit colleagues' classrooms and make well-informed instructional decisions. Thus, to recognize the complexity of Tabatha's role as a cooperating teacher, her Reflective Conference can be based on her work with the clinical intern throughout the school year.

Conclusion

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 Cooperating Teachers, can now choose to receive feedback and support in the work they do with clinical interns. It is the hope that this flexibility will ensure that New Jersey's most effective teachers are taking on the crucial role of coaching and mentoring their future colleagues, as there is no role that is more critical than building high-level capacity within the profession.

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 opt to take on a clinical intern in the following 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 cooperating teachers is similar to the [Reflective Practice Protocol](#). However, the focus of the Reflective Practice Protocol for Cooperating Teachers is not on the cooperating teacher's own practice, but instead on his or her work with the clinical intern. In this option, the cooperating teacher provides documentation and analysis of his or her work with the clinical intern in order to demonstrate excellent practice by coaching a teacher in preparation.
- 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 teacher 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*.

Required Components

Each of the following components is *required* for participating in the Reflective Practice Protocol for Cooperating Teachers and informs the Reflective Conference that will be a *substitute* for one traditional observation. Each component provides information about the methods that the cooperating teacher uses to coach the clinical intern. The specifics of the required activities should be agreed upon before embarking on this evaluation option.

- **Video Capture** – The cooperating teacher reflects on video of a lesson(s) or segments of lessons taught by the clinical intern, focusing on identified areas for improvement, strategies used to coach the clinical intern and results from the cooperating teacher's coaching.
- **Student Performance** – The cooperating teacher reflects on student progress toward academic goals, and discusses strategies used to coach the clinical intern in using student performance data to drive instruction and how this impacted the intern's practice.
- **Traditional Observation** – Cooperating teacher reflects on information collected from at least one non-evaluative co-observation that the cooperating teacher and administrator conduct for the intern and how this information helped further coach the intern.
- **Student Voice** – The cooperating teacher reflects on feedback provided to clinical intern by students through student survey or focus group, and discusses strategies that he or she used to coach clinical intern based on this feedback.

Optional Components

The following components are *optional* for participating in the Reflective Practice Protocol. These options provide additional peer and administrator feedback that a teacher can use to further learn about and improve his or her practice.

- **Collaborative Peer** – The cooperating teacher reflects on information collected from at least one non-evaluative peer or team observation that the clinical intern conducts and how the information gathered by the clinical intern helped further coach the intern.
- **District or School Walkthrough** – The cooperating teacher reflects on information collected from the clinical intern's use of aggregate information, its relationship to individual practice and how this information helped further coach the intern.

Reflective Practice Protocol Rubric for Cooperating Teachers

	Exemplary	Adequate	Approaching	Needs Further Examination
Video Capture Lessons	Cooperating Teacher provides thoughtful information concerning clinical intern's pedagogical strengths and areas of focus according to the teacher practice instrument. He/she recognizes the changes made in clinical intern's instruction due to his/her coaching and highlights the impact of those changes, along with any further adjustments needed.	Cooperating Teacher provides thoughtful information concerning clinical intern's pedagogical areas of strengths and areas of need according to the teacher practice instrument. He/she highlights some changes in clinical intern's instruction due to his/her coaching but should monitor the impact more.	Cooperating Teacher provides basic insights concerning clinical intern's pedagogical areas of strength and needed focus according to the teacher practice instrument. Further work should be done connecting observation and coaching to clinical intern's change in practice and impact.	Cooperating Teacher provides basic information concerning video capture observations but hasn't connected those observations to coaching or clinical intern's instructional change.
Student Performance	Cooperating Teacher uses data to provide insights about clinical intern's progress toward academic goals and his/her impact toward reaching these goals while hypothesizing clinical intern's causes for student success and strategies for addressing areas of need.	Cooperating Teacher provides insights about clinical intern's progress toward academic goals and his/her impact toward reaching these goals while hypothesizing clinical intern's causes for student success and strategies for addressing areas of need.	Cooperating Teacher provides insights on clinical intern's progress toward academic goals while hypothesizing causes for student success, but does not connect his/her coaching to clinical intern's causes for student success.	Cooperating Teacher provides a list of clinical intern's progress with no connection to clinical intern's academic goals or his/her contributions to clinical intern's causes for student success.
Traditional Classroom Observations	Cooperating Teacher reflects on clinical intern's classroom co-observation and identifies high-level and targeted coaching that was provided in response to key areas of strength and need.	Cooperating Teacher reflects on clinical intern's classroom co-observation and identifies adequate coaching that was provided in response to key areas of strength and need.	Cooperating Teacher reflects on clinical intern's classroom co-observation, identifying clinical intern's key areas of strength and need.	Cooperating Teacher reflects on clinical intern's classroom co-observation, but does not accurately identify areas of strength and need or does not provide coaching in response to areas of need.
Student Voice	Cooperating Teacher reflects on how he/she coached clinical intern to consistently and effectively utilize student survey and student survey results to drive instruction.	Cooperating Teacher reflects on how he/she coached clinical intern to utilize student survey and student survey results to drive instruction.	Cooperating Teacher reflects on how he/she coached clinical intern to administer a student survey and reflect on the survey results.	Cooperating Teacher reflects on how he/she explained the benefits of utilizing student surveys with clinical intern.
Connected Reflection of All Sources	Using all information sources, Cooperating Teacher reflects on a well-informed and developed strategy that was used to build on strengths and address needs in practice of clinical intern.	Using information sources, Cooperating Teacher reflects on an adequate strategy that was used to build on strengths and address needs in practice of clinical intern.	Using information sources, Cooperating Teacher is able to identify the appropriate strengths and needs in practice of clinical intern.	Cooperating teacher is unable to reflect on information sources and/or identify strengths and needs in practice of clinical intern.