

Christie Administration Announces 24 Districts to Receive Funding to Participate in Educator Evaluation Pilot Programs

***\$1.4 Million in Total Funds to be Used to Develop and Implement Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems in 2012-2013 School Year***

**For Immediate Release**

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**Trenton, NJ** - The Department of Education today announced that 24 districts have been selected to participate in either the second year of the Christie Administration's teacher evaluation pilot program or the first year of the principal evaluation pilot program during the 2012-2013 school year. Of the 70 districts that applied to participate in total, 10 districts were selected to receive a total of \$1 million in the first round of grant funds for the teacher evaluation pilot and 14 districts were selected to receive a total of \$400,000 for the principal evaluation pilot, all pending final review procedures.

Educators in these districts will work collaboratively with the Department to develop new educator evaluation systems for rollout across the state to help teachers and principals continuously improve their practice.

"In New Jersey, we are incredibly fortunate to have one of the most talented teaching forces in the country, and we owe every educator the feedback and support they need to continually improve upon their practice," said Acting Commissioner Chris Cerf. "We are taking a thoughtful and measured approach to make sure that we get this new evaluation system right. The work of educators in our pilot districts have already provided important information and will continue to guide us as we move to implement the new system across the state in the 2013-2014 school year. Meaningful evaluations will give us another powerful tool to ensure our children have the most effective teacher possible at the front of every classroom and that we move closer to our goal of preparing all of our students for college and careers."

Throughout the first year of the teacher evaluation pilot, educators in the eleven pilot districts and 19 SIG (School Improvement Grant) schools have helped the Department develop and refine aspects of the new teacher evaluation system in preparation for the roll out to all districts in 2013-14. Educators and administrators provided feedback on the impact the new evaluation system is having on their teaching practice, schools and districts. Examples of the feedback include:

- Teachers indicate that they receive more meaningful feedback on their practice than ever before and that they appreciate having a seat at the table to help collaboratively develop the new evaluation system;
- Stakeholder engagement is critical throughout implementation of a new evaluation system;
- District stakeholder committee meetings that are open to additional staff members help build a culture of trust, transparency, and two-way communication; and
- Quality and in-depth training is critical to teacher understanding, administrator familiarity with technology, accuracy and reliability of ratings, and quality feedback.

In order to increase the number of districts participating in the second cohort of the teacher evaluation pilot, the Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO) released to Title I districts will be reissued this week. Although 9 eligible districts applied in the first round, only one earned the minimum score necessary to receive funding. The Department will provide technical assistance to all eligible districts, including those that previously applied and did not qualify, in order to strengthen the applicant pool.

To ensure that as many districts as possible are participating in the pilot, the Department intends to engage the 21 districts that earned at least the minimum score but were not selected to receive funding. These districts are invited to join the 2012-13 pilot, participate in the state-level Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC), receive support and guidance from DOE's evaluation implementation team, and contribute to the forthcoming third-party evaluation of the pilot. Additionally, the eleven districts that received funding in the first year of the teacher evaluation pilot program have been invited to continue collaborating with the Department in the second year and will split \$200,000 to continue the implementation of their evaluation systems if they accept.

*Principal Evaluation Pilot Program*

Furthering the goal of ensuring all students are served by highly effective educators, the Department is launching a new principal evaluation pilot program this year. An improved principal evaluation system will help district administrators better measure principal effectiveness and provide meaningful feedback to help all principals continuously improve. Teacher and principal evaluations will focus on the growth and development of all

educators within a school and will utilize both measures of effective practice and student outcomes.

“The goal of any pilot program is to gain information on the successes and challenges faced with implementation efforts. By working closely with our pilot districts and educators, we will be able to provide better guidance to other districts throughout the state,” said Acting Commissioner Cerf. “Educators and administrators have expressed having more meaningful and constructive conversations about their practice than ever before, and having an evaluation system that facilitates this dialogue, among both teachers and principals, will ultimately result in better outcomes for our students.”

During the 2012-13 pilot year, the state Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC) will expand to collaborate on both teacher and principal evaluation pilot activities. All participating pilot districts – whether piloting teacher or principal evaluations, or both – will convene district-level advisory committees that will meet to guide implementation and to build the necessary links between the systems for evaluating both principals and teachers. In addition, significant attention will be spent on training both principals and district administrators on the evaluation system so that all stakeholders share a common language and set of expectations.

“In order to most effectively prepare for the statewide implementation of the new teacher and principal evaluation systems, we must listen to the educators on the ground,” said Tim Matheney, the new Director of Evaluation at the Department of Education and 2011-2012 EPAC member as the Principal of South Brunswick High School. “We are eager to learn from the experiences of school districts and appreciate the hard work and collaboration that pilot districts put forth as partners so we can meet our common goal of ensuring New Jersey’s students have the tools they need to succeed.”

In addition to working with the advisory committees to gain internal feedback, the Department partnered with Rutgers University on an external evaluation of the teacher evaluation pilot. The first interim report can be found [here](#) and a final report will be produced by the end of the calendar year.

In preparation for state-wide implementation in the 2013-2014 school year, every district across the state will need to complete a series of steps defined by the Department of Education during the 2012-2013 school year. Among others, this includes the selection and field testing of a teaching practice evaluation instrument, the training of teachers and evaluators on that instrument, and the development of a local district stakeholder advisory group. The Department has identified both state and federal funding that can be used to support this work.

Additional details on and FAQs about all evaluation reform work can be found at <http://nj.gov/education/EE4NJ/>.

The 10 districts identified in the first round to participate in Year Two of the teacher evaluation pilot program are:

<b>District</b>	<b>County</b>
Bordentown Regional	Burlington
Collingswood Borough*	Camden
Cranford Township	Union
Haddonfield Borough	Camden
Lenape Valley Regional**	Sussex
Middlesex County Vocational	Middlesex
Piscataway Township	Middlesex
Rockaway Township	Morris
Teaneck	Bergen
Woodbury City	Gloucester

\*Lead district for a consortium. Other districts in the consortium are Audubon School District and Merchantville School District.

\*\*Lead district for a consortium. The other district in the consortium is Stanhope.

The 14 districts identified to participate in Year 1 of the principal evaluation pilot program are:

<b>District</b>	<b>County</b>
Alexandria Township***	Hunterdon
Bergenfield	Bergen
Edison Township	Middlesex
Elizabeth	Union
Lawrence Township	Mercer
Monmouth County	

Vocational	Monmouth
Morris	Morris
Newark	Essex
North Brunswick Township	Middlesex
Paterson	Passaic
Pemberton Township	Burlington
Rockaway Township	Morris
Spotswood	Middlesex
Stafford Township	Ocean

\*\*\*Lead district for a consortium. The other participant in the consortium is North Hunterdon-Voorhees RHS.