



## **Christie Administration Advances Regulations to Implement Statewide Educator Evaluation Systems Provided for in Landmark Tenure Reform Law**

**Statewide Implementation of the New System - AchieveNJ - Will Begin in the 2013-2014 School Year**

**For Immediate Release**

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**Date:** March 6, 2013

**Trenton, NJ** – Taking another critical step to implement the Christie Administration's bold education reform agenda and ensure all New Jersey schools have the most effective educators as possible, the Department of Education today proposed regulations outlining the requirements of the new statewide educator evaluation systems, known as AchieveNJ. Upon State Board approval, the proposed regulations will allow the statewide adoption of this new evaluation system to take effect in the 2013-2014 school year. The statewide evaluations system is provided for in the Administration's historic tenure reform law, the Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey (TEACHNJ) Act, which was passed unanimously by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Christie on August 6, 2012.

"We are committed to developing an educator evaluation system that honors our educators' achievements and ensures that they have the tools they need to continuously improve and help all of our students succeed," said Commissioner Cerf. "Achieve NJ is based on three years of research, piloting, and engagement with thousands of educators, and we believe the proposed regulations reflect the professionalism of our educators and ultimately will contribute to improved learning outcomes for students."

TEACHNJ requires the new evaluation system to include four annual rating categories – Highly Effective, Effective, Partially Effective and Ineffective – based on multiple measures of student learning and instructional practice. The proposed regulations define the specific components of those measures for all districts across the state. Districts are required to submit their evaluation systems to the Commissioner for review and approval on an annual basis and are not subject to collective bargaining. The Commissioner will annually establish parameters, including specific component weights, for approving the systems.

AchieveNJ is structured around several guiding principles:

- Educator effectiveness can and should be measured to ensure our students have the best teachers in the classroom.
- Evaluations should always be based on multiple measures that include both learning outcomes and effective practice.
- To avoid penalizing teachers who work with our highest-needs students, evaluation criteria should be based on student progress and not absolute performance.
- Timely feedback and quality professional development, tied to evaluations, are essential to help educators continuously improve.
- Evaluation and support systems should be developed with significant input from educators.
- Tenure and other forms of recognition should be based on effectiveness.

"The regulations proposed today are among the most important rules the State Board of Education will consider this year. Therefore, it is paramount that we fulfill our obligation to fully evaluate the proposal through our multi-level review process, which includes two opportunities for public testimony and ample time to receive comments," said Arcelio Aponte, State Board President. "I look forward to working with my fellow State Board members, Commissioner Cerf, Department staff, educators, advocates and parents to ensure the final rules will achieve the desired goal of every classroom being led by an effective teacher with improved outcomes for all students."

Consistent with TEACHNJ's focus on multiple measures, teachers and principals will be evaluated on the basis of both evidence of improved student learning and observations of instructional practice.

### Student Learning

Student learning will be evaluated through a variety of measures, including both traditional assessments and portfolios of student work, and will never be based on a single test score alone. Teacher evaluations will be assessed on two different student growth indicators – Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs), which are based on the NJ ASK test, and Student Growth Objectives (SGOs), which educators set with approval from their supervisors, and track over the course of a school year. For example, an SGO for a 2nd Grade Reading teacher might be to have 80% of students increase one proficiency level in reading as measured by the Text Reading and

Comprehension (TRC) Assessment. Similarly, principals will be measured on school-wide SGP scores, the aggregate SGO scores of teachers in their schools, and Administrator Goals, which are measurable goals of school-based student performance that the principal sets with his or her superintendent – such as graduation rates or scores on AP courses.

#### Instructional Practice

Observations of instructional practice will be conducted according to teacher and principal evaluation instruments selected by districts. Observations of teachers will be conducted by principals or other supervisors who have been appropriately trained on the evaluation instrument, and all teachers will have at least three observations. New teachers and those in need of extra support will also benefit from multiple observers. In evaluating a principal's instructional practice, observations will be conducted by the superintendent or his designee and may include a school walk-through, observations of staff or parent meetings, or observations of assemblies.

Principals will also be evaluated on an Evaluation Leadership Rubric as an additional measure of practice. The Leadership Rubric measures how well the principal implements the new teacher evaluation system in his or her school and is intended to foster collaboration throughout schools and districts.

#### Relative Weights of Evidence of Student Learning & Instructional Practice

The TEACHNJ Act delegates to the Department of Education and Commissioner the authority to set the standards for evaluation systems, including the relative weights given to the components of educator evaluations. For teachers, the proposed regulations differentiate between teachers of tested and non-tested grades and subjects. Each year, the Department will post the weights for the next school year by April 15. For the 2013-2014 school year, the following weights will apply:

- Teachers in Tested Grades and Subjects:
  - 35 percent based on Student Growth Percentile (SGP) data.
  - 15 percent based on Student Growth Objective (SGO) data from 1 or 2 teacher-set SGOs.
  - 50 percent based on classroom observations.
- Teachers of Non-tested Grades and Subjects:
  - 85 percent based on classroom observations.
  - 15 percent based on SGO data from two teacher-set SGOs.

Teachers in tested grades include 4th-8th grade Language Arts Literacy (LAL) and/or Mathematics teachers, a group that constitutes approximately 20% of teachers across the state. In order to ensure fairness in attributing student learning to any given teacher, students must be enrolled in a teacher's class for at least 60 percent of the year and a teacher must have SGP scores for at least 20 students. Because 3rd grade is the first testing year of NJ ASK, there is no baseline data to create an SGP for students and teachers in that grade level. When available, multiple years of data, will be used.

- Principals, Vice-Principals (VPs), and Assistant Principals (APs):
  - 30 percent of a principal's overall evaluation rating is based on the observations of a principal's on-the-job performance by the superintendent, or his designee.
  - 20 percent is based on a state-developed leadership rubric measuring how well a principal implements the new evaluation system.
  - 50 percent is based on various measures of student achievement, which depend on the type of school the principal leads and the availability of SGP data:
    - 10 percent is calculated by taking the average of teacher SGOs.
    - 40 percent is a combination of the school-wide SGP score and the Principal Goal score. The balance of these weights depends on whether a school leader is identified as a Multi-Grade SGP Principal, a Single-Grade SGP Principal, or a Non-SGP Principal.

Additional information on and detailed definitions of the weights and measures are outlined in the guide released by the Department today: <http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/intro/guide.pdf>

The Department will continue to learn from implementation successes and challenges, research, best practices and feedback from educators and may propose additional regulatory changes as appropriate in future years.

#### Professional Growth & Tenure

The primary goal of these new evaluation systems is to create professional development opportunities that are uniquely tailored to educators. This will occur both during the school year, through more frequent feedback from observations and tracking of student learning data, and through the traditional summary conference at the end of the year which will serve to inform the educator's next individual professional development plan.

As in the past, each educator will participate in a summary conference at the end of the school year to discuss his or her evaluation rating. Additionally, any educator rated Partially Effective or Ineffective will develop, in conjunction with his or her supervisor, a Corrective Action Plan to provide additional targeted support to address areas of need.

Educator evaluations will also be used to inform employment status as it relates to tenure. For the first time in New Jersey, the process of earning and maintaining tenure will be linked to educator effectiveness, rather than time served. In accordance with the TEACHNJ Act, any teachers, principals, assistant principals, or vice-principals hired after August 6, 2012 must be employed for four years and receive a rating of Effective or Highly Effective in two of three evaluations in order to earn tenure. Further, upon acquiring tenure, educators who fail to achieve a rating of Effective or Highly Effective over multiple consecutive years will be in jeopardy of losing their tenure.

#### Educator Involvement

Teachers and principals have engaged directly in all steps of the planning and implementation of AchieveNJ. The decisions outlined today were largely developed collaboratively with educators over a two-year pilot program across the state. In addition to the Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC), which has guided state evaluation policy development, all districts across the state have formed local advisory committees and all schools have formed School Improvement Panels as required by law. These groups are intended to ensure educators have a voice in shaping and conducting evaluations in their schools.

#### Continued Outreach

To communicate details of AchieveNJ for the 2013-14 school year, the Department announced a series of regional presentations and launched an updated website, which includes a host of resources for school communities about the evaluation system:

AchieveNJ website: <http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/>  
AchieveNJ Overview PPT: [http://www.nj.gov/education/news/2013/0306tnj\\_a.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/education/news/2013/0306tnj_a.pdf)  
AchieveNJ Guide: <http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/intro/guide.pdf>  
AchieveNJ for Teachers: <http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/intro/1PagerTeachers.pdf>  
AchieveNJ for Principals: <http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/intro/1PagerPrincipals.pdf>  
FAQs: [http://www.nj.gov/education/genfo/faq/faq\\_eval.shtml](http://www.nj.gov/education/genfo/faq/faq_eval.shtml)

The regional presentations will be held on the following dates:

March 13th - 3:30pm -5:30pm ([Register](#))  
Toms River High School North  
1245 Old Freehold Road  
Toms River, NJ 08753

March 15th - 10:00am- 12pm ([Register](#)) and 1:00pm - 4:00pm ([Register](#))  
Morris County Fire Fighters & Police Academy  
500 West Hanover Avenue  
Parsippany, NJ 07054

March 19th - 8:30am - 3:30pm ([Register](#))  
Rutgers Camden  
303 Cooper Street  
Camden, NJ 08102

March 21st - 2 Sessions: 1:00pm to 3:00pm ([Register](#)) and 4:00pm to 6:00pm ([Register](#))  
New Jersey Supervisors & Principals Association  
12 Centre Drive  
Monroe Township, NJ 08831

April 10th - 9:30am - 11:30am ([Register](#))  
Ocean City High School  
501 Atlantic Avenue  
Ocean City, NJ 08226

April 11th - 1:00 -3:00pm ([Register](#)) and 4:00 - 6:00pm ([Register](#))  
Teaneck High School  
100 Elizabeth Avenue  
Teaneck, NJ 07666