



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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August 5, 2014

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons
School Leaders

ROUTE TO: All District Principals, Assistant/Vice Principals, and Teaching Staff Members

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

SUBJECT: AchieveNJ Update

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As the new school year approaches, the New Jersey Department of Education (“the Department”) seeks to support educators preparing to conduct teacher evaluation activities. This memo includes a variety of resources and information based on direct feedback from teachers and leaders across the state who have shared their experiences from 2013-14. We look forward to another strong year supporting educators as you strive to provide the best possible education to all New Jersey students. As always, we invite you to send feedback and questions to educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us.

I. Update on Proposed Changes to AchieveNJ

As [announced last month](#), based on ongoing conversations with educators and stakeholders across the state, the Department intends to offer a review process for educators negatively impacted by Student Growth Objective scores in 2013-14 and to change the weights of various

measures of educator evaluation for 2014-15. The Department will propose the necessary amendments to current regulations to the State Board of Education tomorrow, and we will share more information about this process shortly thereafter. At that time, we will also share updated resources for principal and assistant/vice principal evaluation.

II. Overview of Teacher Evaluation Resources for Start of School

As state officials traveled around New Jersey and conducted focus and advisory group meetings last year, we asked specifically how we could best support districts and educators in preparing to start a successful 2014-15 school year. Administrators and teachers requested that we share timely information with enough notice for districts to incorporate it into back-to-school professional development and training sessions. Therefore, this section describes those resources most relevant to the start of school, including a few new materials developed from direct educator feedback and requests.

A. Starting Stronger: 5 Ways to Improve Educator Evaluation in 2014-15

Based on conversations with educators and the AchieveNJ Advisory Committee (ANJAC), we have created this [2-page “Starting Stronger” document](#) to help districts focus on specific areas of implementation for the coming year. This document outlines strategies to help districts move forward in two essential ways:

1. Continue to shift from a focus on rules and compliance to a culture of continuous improvement and meaningful professional conversations; and
2. Help educators to use these professional conversations and feedback to reflect on the quality of their instruction, the impact that instruction has on student learning, and what they can do to improve outcomes.

This document offers only just a few of the core themes and strategies that districts are employing to improve educator evaluation and support structures, and is intended as a springboard for district and school leaders to prioritize work over the coming months.

B. 2014-15 Teacher Evaluation Requirements and Resources Chart

In order to provide teachers, administrators, and district leaders with a snapshot of major elements of and related resources for teacher evaluation, we have posted this new [2014-15 Teacher Evaluation Requirements and Resources Chart](#).

C. Updated Guidance Documents

The Department is in the process of updating all relevant 2014-15 AchieveNJ materials posted on the [website](#). Please see this updated [AchieveNJ Resource Catalog](#) for a list organized by topic area. Materials that reference the weights of evaluation components are being updated to reflect the intended changes that will be proposed to the State Board. Separate evaluation scoring guidance resources will be provided for 2013-14 and 2014-15, as districts are still finalizing some 2013-14 evaluations.

D. Updated SGO Resources

Over the past several months, the Office of Evaluation has been updating SGO materials based on educator experiences in 2013-14. Several resources are available to guide educators in setting high-quality SGOs and improving the overall SGO process in 2014-15:

- [2014-15 SGO Overview](#): 2-page overview for those unfamiliar with or who want a refresher on SGOs.
- [2014-15 SGO Guidebook](#): Step-by-step guide to the SGO process, updated to include lessons learned from 2013-14.
- **SGO 2.0 Presentation** ([PPT](#) | [PDF](#)): Slides designed by and for use by educators to help improve SGO quality; can be used in faculty or PLC meetings.
- **2014-15 SGO Form** ([PDF](#) | [Word](#)): Updated form to help teachers include rationale for selected standards, identify and record information for student starting points, record mid-year adjustments to SGOs, and reflect on process in annual conferences.
- **SGO Quality Rating Rubric** ([PDF](#) | [Word](#)): Updated rubric with more specific information on assessment quality and using multiple measures of student starting points.
- **Assessment Blueprint and Completion Guide** ([PDF](#) | [Word](#)): Form and guide to help teachers plan, develop, and check high-quality assessments. Use in conjunction with information in SGO 2.0 presentation.

Please remember that **SGOs must be set by all teachers in consultation with their supervisors by October 31, 2014**. In addition, please see [section F](#) below and our [Workshop Page](#) for a reminder about SGO Workshops happening around the state in the coming weeks.

E. School Improvement Panel Guidance

As you know, the [TEACHNJ Act](#) requires that all schools convene a School Improvement Panel (SciP) to provide leadership in the areas of teacher professional development, mentoring, and evaluation. Given the scope and diversity of New Jersey's schools, we recognize the importance of local flexibility in implementing SciPs. At the same time, many educators have requested more guidance and information about the effective use of these panels.

Based on input from educators and other stakeholders across the state who shared their practices, the Department has developed this [SciP Guidance](#) for districts and schools to guide implementation. To share feedback on the contents and usefulness of this resource, as well as any other suggestions, examples, or information from local SciPs, please email TeachPD@doe.state.nj.us.

Later this fall, the Office of Evaluation will offer regional workshops on best practices for SciPs; we will post more details about these sessions in the coming months.

F. Reminder of SGO and Teacher Practice Workshops

SGO Workshops

The Office of Evaluation is leading a series of three-hour, interactive workshops on improving SGOs for 2014-15. Specifically, the workshops focus on the use of high-quality assessments and

a variety of baseline data to set targets.

- Participants will be able to return to their districts and use the presentation and materials to directly train their staff.
- We recommend bringing a team of up to five SGO implementation leaders and teachers who will be responsible for turn-keying the information.
- Teachers are integral to the SGO development process and should be included as part of school/district teams.
- Logistical and registration information is listed below:

Date	Location	Time	Registration
August 11, 2014	Morris Union Jointure Commission New Providence	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Capacity Reached
		12:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Register
August 12, 2014	Stockton College Galloway Township	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Capacity Reached
		12:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Register
August 18, 2014	Kean University Union	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Capacity Reached
		12:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Capacity Reached
August 22, 2014	Change of Location Law and Public Safety Institute- Police, Fire & EMS Academies Mahwah, NJ	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Register
		12:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Register
September 19, 2014	EIRC/LRC-South Mullica Hill	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Register
		12:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Register
September 22, 2014	Raritan Valley Community College Branchburg	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Register
		12:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Register
September 29, 2014	NJPSA Monroe Township	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Register
		12:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Register

Teacher Practice Workshops

This summer, the Office of Evaluation is also conducting free workshops for New Jersey public school educators that focus on key elements of pedagogy: discussion, questioning, and student engagement. The content is not specific to one particular observation instrument or to any particular discipline, but can apply broadly to effective instruction. All teachers can benefit from the workshop, but we especially encourage teacher-leaders, who can turnkey training and provide support to colleagues, to attend. In addition, teachers who have been identified for improvement in these areas will surely benefit from the sessions. Remaining sessions are listed below:

Date	Location	Time	Registration
August 6, 2014	Neptune High School Neptune	8:30 am – 11:30 am	Capacity Reached
		12:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Capacity Reached
August 7, 2014	Lacey Township High School Lanoka Harbor	8:30 am – 11:30 am	Capacity Reached
		12:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Register
August 13, 2014	Morris County Jointure Commission New Providence	8:30 am – 11:30 am	Capacity Reached
		12:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Register
August 14, 2014	Burlington County Special Services School District Westampton	8:30 am – 11:30 am	Capacity Reached
		12:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Capacity Reached
August 15, 2014	Morris County Jointure Commission New Providence	8:30 am – 11:30 am	Register
		12:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Register
August 19, 2014	Somerset County Office of Education Somerville	8:30 am – 11:30 am	Capacity Reached
		12:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Capacity Reached
August 20, 2014	Wall Township Intermediate School Wall Township	8:30 am – 11:30 am	5 Seats Left Register
		12:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Register
August 21, 2014	SRI & ETTC Galloway	8:30 am – 11:30 am	6 Seats Left Register
		12:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Capacity Reached
August 26, 2014	Morris County Jointure Commission New Providence	8:30 am – 11:30 am	Register
		12:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Register

Thank you for your continued collaboration and commitment to New Jersey students and teachers. Enjoy the rest of your summer.

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c: Members, State Board of Education
David Hespe, Acting Commissioner
Senior Staff
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William Firestone
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Executive County Superintendents

Executive Directors of Regional
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