



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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November 19, 2013

**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 Updates and Professional Development Plans for Teachers

**IN THIS MEMO:**

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In an ongoing effort to provide resources and support for implementation of AchieveNJ, the Department of Education (“the Department”) continues to develop guidance and resources about educator evaluation. This memo includes updates on the evaluation system and resources to support related professional development planning for teachers. Please share this information directly with all educators in your district.

As always, we encourage you to visit the AchieveNJ Website and FAQ page and to send any questions and feedback to [educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us).

## I. AchieveNJ Updates

### A. Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee Report

Throughout the teacher and principal evaluation pilot program, the state Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC) served a vital role guiding the development of statewide policies being implemented this year. Thanks to the dedication of over 100 individuals from around the state who came together monthly to share their feedback and recommendations, AchieveNJ represents the voices and experiences of New Jersey educators. Their recommendations shaped the evolution of state policies – from expanding the pilots and providing a capacity-building year in SY12-13 to requiring multiple observers for all new teachers in SY13-14.

We have now published the [Final EPAC Report](#) representing the work of this group since 2011. The report emphasizes the experiences and lessons learned from the second year of the teacher evaluation pilot and the 2012-13 principal evaluation pilot based on interviews, surveys, and discussions with EPAC participants and pilot district staff. The report includes five sections:

1. Background and context for evaluation reform in New Jersey;
2. Description of ways in which policy decisions for AchieveNJ were informed by the pilot program and the EPAC;
3. Practical advice for districts in implementing AchieveNJ;
4. Lessons learned from principal pilot districts; and
5. Perspective on opportunities and challenges that districts will face during the first few years of implementing AchieveNJ.

As districts continue to implement new evaluations this year, educators should review Section 3 in particular to learn more about pilot experiences with and practical advice about various issues. Strategies for planning and executing all of the components of the new system, communicating major elements to educators and the community, and using evaluation data to inform professional learning are offered directly from New Jersey educators. We will continue to use this information to refine state resources and guidance.

In addition, Sections 3 and 4 of the report share encouraging data resulting from the pilots. As pilot district experience shows, there is a learning curve as educators employ AchieveNJ for the first time. However, pilot districts demonstrated that the process becomes easier with time as educators use new evaluation elements to better support educator practice and student achievement. The following examples address some common concerns about new evaluations:

- **Capacity to Conduct Observations:** The ability to conduct all required observations increased significantly over the course of the pilot. Unlike the rest of New Jersey's school districts, pilot districts did not have the benefit of a capacity-building year to choose and train in an observation instrument. Districts that participated in Cohort 1 of the pilot could not learn from schools that successfully accomplished the transition to more observations before them. Therefore, they struggled to meet the goal of three observations per teacher. However, in Year 2, most districts met their goals, increasing

from an average of 1.3 to 3.0 observations per teacher. Further, Cohort 2 pilot districts learned from their Cohort 1 colleagues and put structures in place to facilitate the observation process. After training on the instrument at the beginning of the year, these districts were able to complete an average of 3.3 observations per teacher in their first year of implementation— slightly more than the number required statewide for AchieveNJ this year.

- **Relevance of standardized test scores:** Although limited Student Growth Percentile (SGP) data was available for use in the pilot, SY11-12 SGPs were provided to Cohort 1 pilot districts for analysis along with teacher practice ratings from that year. SGP ratings showed a positive correlation to the teacher practice ratings for the same educators. The outlier scores (where either the SGP or teacher practice rating was significantly lower or higher than the other) provided opportunities for pilot districts to examine the root cause and identify potential issues with observers or data inaccuracies.
- **Combating the “widget effect”:** Districts in the second year of piloting showed a greater teacher practice rating distribution than those in the first year. With time, greater understanding of the observation framework, and more practice, observers increased their ability to identify nuances in teacher practice, and as a result, to differentiate ratings. This increased differentiation allows districts to better identify teachers who need targeted support and to recognize those highly effective educators whose expertise can be shared.

We are extremely grateful to all of the pilot participants and the EPAC members who led the way in developing new state evaluation structures. I hope you will take some time to review the report, reflect on how far we have come over the past several years, and continue your essential collaboration as we refine policies in the years to come.

## **B. AchieveNJ Advisory Committee**

Now that we have moved past the pilot stage and all New Jersey districts are implementing AchieveNJ, we are convening a new AchieveNJ Advisory Committee, whose role is to:

- Provide feedback to the Department on matters pertaining to the evaluation and support system;
- Collect and share information regarding implementation of AchieveNJ; and
- Offer solutions and make recommendations based on information gathered from local school districts, national research, and data provided by the Department.

As with the EPAC, the new committee includes teachers, principals, central office administrators, and representatives of professional associations and higher education. Several members of the EPAC will continue their service on the committee, joining new educators and stakeholders. Committee members applied and were selected based on breadth of experience in education, evidence of professionalism, and solution-based thinking. Please see attached [Appendix A](#) for a list of members of the 2013-14 AchieveNJ Advisory Committee.

As we have stated from the start, new evaluation and support structures will continue to improve as we learn more about successes and challenges each year. Staff members from the Office of Evaluation continue to work across the state, providing presentations, interactive workshops, and other supports to schools and districts. Through regular meetings, the AchieveNJ Advisory Committee will offer another vital source of feedback and guidance to ensure that any changes to evaluation policy represent the best interests of educators and students.

### C. Official Waiver Process

As you know evaluation regulations were adopted on September 11, 2013 and became effective on October 5<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, districts seeking a waiver for some component(s) of the regulations can now apply through the official State Board process. To do this, the district should complete the form found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sboe/ew/> and submit it to the county office.

**Please note: Districts that applied for and received flexibility for some component(s) of the regulations from the Office of Evaluation this summer do not need to follow the process explained above.** Instead, these districts will be contacted by the Office of Evaluation with more instructions about an expedited process. Any district with an approved flexibility request that is not contacted by November 22, 2013 should email [educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us).

## II. Professional Development Plans for Teachers

### A. Requirements

For many years, districts have engaged in professional development planning and activities to improve educator performance and student achievement. Individual Professional Development Plans (PDPs) have been mandated for over 10 years, and Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) have been used by school leaders throughout the state to address specific performance deficiencies. One of the major themes of the TEACHNJ Act is to support educator improvement by more closely aligning evaluation results with plans for professional development, including PDPs and CAPs.

TEACHNJ/N.J.A.C. 6A:10-2.5 mandates the following:

- PDPs linked to evaluation outcomes are required for all teaching staff members.
- All staff members rated Ineffective or Partially Effective on their last annual summative evaluation are required to complete a CAP.
  - This CAP takes the place of the individual PDP until the next annual summary conference. The activities in the CAP become the priorities for the staff member's professional learning while the CAP is in effect.
  - **Please note:** In addition to the CAP required for designated evaluation ratings, a supervisor may employ a CAP at any time to address opportunities for an educator to improve.

- **As part of the PDP and in addition to the CAP**, staff members are required to fulfill all other professional development requirements in statute or regulation (e.g., training on blood-borne pathogens or suicide prevention).

The teacher and supervisor should work together to develop the teacher's PDP or CAP using the [New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers](#), [New Jersey's Definition of Professional Development](#), and the [New Jersey Standards for Professional Learning](#).

New professional development regulations adopted by the State Board on June 5, 2013 offer additional information on professional development plans. Please visit the Department's [Professional Development website](#) for details on the new regulations, including the following resources:

- [Overview of Revised Professional Development Regulations](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions About New Regulations](#)
- [Overview of Teacher PDP and CAP Requirements](#)

## **B. Optional Templates and Sample Plans**

In an effort to support districts, the Department is providing **optional templates** that outline the requirements of each type of plan, with instructions for developing the plan and sample populated plans. **Districts may choose to use or modify these templates or may create PDPs and CAPs of their own that fulfill all statutory requirements.**

- This **optional [Individual Teacher PDP Template and Sample PDP](#)** is provided to guide teachers and supervisors in fulfilling annual professional development requirements. At least one area identified for development must derive from the teacher's most recent summative performance evaluation.
- This **optional [CAP Template and Sample CAP](#)** is intended to help supervisors and staff members create meaningful, practical, and supportive CAPs linked to performance areas in need of improvement.

Word and PDF versions of these materials, as well as separate, fillable blank templates, are available for download at: <http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ipdp/>.

The **sample PDP and CAP are developed for fictional teachers for illustrative purposes only** to help clarify questions that may arise when teachers and supervisors are developing teacher plans, such as:

- How detailed should the plan be?
- What constitutes evidence that suggests an area for improvement?
- How are professional learning goals aligned to areas identified for improvement?
- What information is appropriate to include in a progress review?
- How is the number of professional learning hours determined?

The Department is continuing to develop additional sample PDPs and CAPs as well as guidance for administrator, school, and district professional development plans. To share ideas or sample PDPs or CAPs from your district (in any format), please remove any confidential or personal information and send them to [teachpd@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:teachpd@doe.state.nj.us).

Thank you for your ongoing collaboration and for your dedication to educators and students in New Jersey.

PS/TM/JP/E:\Communications\Memos\111913 Achievenj Update And PD Plans.Doc

Attachment

c: Members, State Board of Education  
Christopher Cerf, Commissioner  
Senior Staff  
Diane Shoener  
Marie Barry  
Kristen Brown  
Karen Campbell  
Jeff Hauger  
Robert Higgins  
Jessani Gordon  
Mary Jane Kurabinski  
Timothy Matheney  
Peggy McDonald  
Cathy Pine  
Megan Snow  
Ellen Wolock  
Amy Ruck  
Nancy Besant  
Jill Regen  
William Firestone  
Todd Kent  
Linda Reddy  
Joel Zarrow  
CCCS Staff  
Executive County Superintendents  
Executive Directors of Regional Achievement Centers  
Executive County School Business Administrators  
Garden State Coalition of Schools  
NJ LEE Group

## Appendix A: Members of the 2013-14 AchieveNJ Advisory Committee

Name	Position	Organization
Kathleen Assini**	Teacher, High School Social Studies	Delsea Regional School District
Marie Blistan <sup>¥</sup>	Vice President	New Jersey Education Association (NJEA)
Frank Borelli	Director of Professional Development	New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA)
Diane Cummins**	Assistant Superintendent	Clearview Regional School District
Susan Dalrymple (NJEA)	Teacher, High School English	Phillipsburg School District
Vincent DeLucia	Educator in Residence	New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA)
Erin Devaney*	Teacher, Elementary School	Elizabeth Public Schools
Jay Doolan	CEO, Foundation for Educational Administration	New Jersey Principal and Supervisors Association (NJPSA)
Victoria Duff <sup>+¥</sup>	Consultant	Learning Forward
Linda Eno <sup>¥</sup>	Principal	Monmouth County Vocational and Technical Schools
Margaret Freeman*	Teacher, High School English	Jersey City Public Schools
Corie Gaylord	Assistant Principal	Montgomery Township School District
Rachel Goldberg <sup>¥</sup>	Director of Staff Development	Elizabeth Public Schools
Michael Gorman	Superintendent	Pemberton Township Schools
Beverly Green	Principal	Logan Township School District
John Hahola (NJPSA)	Assistant Principal	North Hunterdon Regional High School
Daniel Hart	Professor of Childhood Studies and Psychology	Rutgers University- Camden
David Heras	Supervisor of ELA/Social Studies	Franklin Township Public Schools
Joanne Kerekes	Assistant Superintendent	South Brunswick School District
Danielle Kovach**	Teacher, Elementary Special Education	Hopatcong Borough Schools
Jim Lukach	Executive Director	New Jersey School Counselor Association (NJSCA)
Pete Mazzagatti <sup>*¥</sup>	Supervisor for Humanities	Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional School District
Elizabeth Morgan <sup>*+¥</sup>	Supervisor of English	Gloucester Township Public Schools
Laura Morana <sup>¥</sup>	Interim Executive County Superintendent	Mercer County Office of Education
Kristin O'Neil <sup>¥</sup>	Chief Academic Officer	West Deptford School District
David Pinkus*	Teacher, High School Physics	Monmouth County Vocational and Technical Schools
Gino Priolo	Principal	Haddonfield Public Schools

Name	Position	Organization
Judith Rattner <sup>¥</sup> (NJASA)	Superintendent	Berkeley Heights Public Schools
Monika Shealey	Dean of Education	Rowan University
Sharon Sherman <sup>¥</sup>	Dean of Education	Rider University
Thomas Storer <sup>¥</sup>	Assistant Principal	Black Horse Pike Regional School District
Dorothy Strickland <sup>¥</sup>	Member	State Board of Education
Lisa Tanikawa-Brown*	Teacher, Elementary ESL/bilingual	East Windsor Regional Schools

\* County Teacher of the Year

\*\* State Teacher of the Year

+ National Board Certified Teacher

<sup>¥</sup> Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC) member