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February 3, 2015

TO: Chief School Administrators
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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: Release of 2013-14 Evaluation Score Certification Tool

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As explained in the [January 8 memo](#) announcing the release of 2013-14 median Student Growth Percentile (mSGP) scores, the New Jersey Department of Education (“the Department”) is providing an electronic interface to allow districts to certify all 2013-14 evaluation scores with the state. **Districts can access this Evaluation Score Certification Tool starting today and must certify the accuracy of all data by March 13¹ (even if no changes are made).** This memo explains the process for districts to review and certify scores. Please see the [AchieveNJ scoring web page](#) for more information and contact educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us to share any comments and questions.

I. Background and Purpose

As members of the Office of Evaluation team have continued to collaborate with educators and district leaders on implementation of AchieveNJ, we have worked hard to respond to areas of concern with extra support. One request raised by several, and championed in particular by Rich Bozza of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, was for district leaders to be

¹ The Department extended the original deadline from March 3 to March 13 based on requests from educators.

able to review 2013-14 evaluation scores. In response, the Department has created the 2013-14 Evaluation Score Certification Tool – an electronic interface that provides each district with the full list of component and summative (final) evaluation scores that they submitted during the Summer 2014 Evaluation Data submission. The tool also includes the mSGP scores provided by the state for qualifying educators, thereby offering one comprehensive database of all evaluation score information for all eligible staff members in a district. **Importantly, today’s release of the Evaluation Score Certification Tool also constitutes notification to districts of the final summative rating for educators whose 2013-14 evaluations include mSGP.**

Although administrators were asked to certify data accuracy last summer when they initially submitted it, the Department is providing this final opportunity to view and certify 2013-14 staff evaluation records for several reasons:

- **Incorporating mSGP scores into summative ratings:** On January 8, the Department [released mSGP scores](#) to all districts to be reviewed and shared with qualifying educators. The Evaluation Score Certification Tool provides a calculated summative rating for mSGP educators and offers an opportunity for administrators to identify any potential data issues (please see [Procedures for Addressing 2013-14 mSGP Data Issues](#) for more information).
- **Supporting district review of local records and calculations:** The certification process provides districts a final opportunity to ensure that all ratings assigned to educators are accurate.
- **Improving overall state data accuracy:** The certification process helps to ensure all educator evaluation information is provided in a standardized format to comply with state and federal requirements – and that future policy decisions at the state level are based on real evidence.

We strongly encourage all district leaders to carefully review the information in this tool in order to complete the certification process described below by March 13.

II. Understanding the Evaluation Score Certification Tool

The 2013-14 Evaluation Score Certification Tool is accessible to certified NJDOE Homeroom users as explained in [Section III](#) below. Given that this interface contains confidential evaluation scores for individual educators, leaders must ensure that any district personnel accessing the information have the proper permission to do so. Specifically, **evaluation data of a particular employee shall be confidential** in accordance with the *TEACHNJ Act* and *N.J.S.A. 18A:6-120.d and 121.d*. Educator evaluation data should be handled in the secure manner you would treat, handle, and store any part of a confidential personnel record and should not be released to the public. Further, such individual data is exempt from the Open Public Records Act (OPRA).

The Evaluation Score Certification Tool contains the following elements:

1. **District-submitted Evaluation Data:** All data submitted through the NJ SMART Staff Evaluation Submission in the summer of 2014 (see [NJ SMART Staff Evaluation Submission Data Handbook](#)) – this includes evaluation data for teachers, principals and assistant/vice principals (APs/VPs), and other certificated staff (supervisors, non-supervisory coordinators, directors, and educational services providers)

2. **mSGP Scores and All Summative Ratings:** The mSGP scores released to districts on January 8 for all qualifying teachers and principals and APs/VP, as well as those staff members' summative ratings
3. **Notification of Exceptions:** Requirement to correct certain instances where district submissions did not clarify whether a staff member was a teacher, principal/AP/VP, or other certificated staff member
4. **Certification Requirement:** Final certification of all 2013-14 evaluation data after the district has reviewed scores (and, if relevant, made necessary modifications)

Please note that, as with similar processes such as the web-based Application for State School Aid (ASSA), the Evaluation Score Certification Tool will not update NJ SMART data and districts cannot upload the information from the tool to NJ SMART. Rather, districts should ensure the data in this interface matches evaluation score information in local personnel files, which are the official permanent records of an individual educator's scores and final rating in a given school year.

III. Using the Tool to Certify 2013-14 Evaluation Scores

Districts should follow these steps to complete the certification process (**required for all districts**):

1. **Access your district's information.**

If the CSA (or his/her designee) already has a district-level Homeroom account then he/she must be assigned to view the Evaluation Score Certification Tool (ESCT) by the local Homeroom Administrator. Additional user accounts can also be added to view the reports through Homeroom Administration, but leaders must **ensure such individuals are in appropriate roles to ensure the confidentiality of educator evaluation data** as explained in [Section II](#). Authorized Homeroom users can access the report by following these steps:

- Navigate to [NJDOE Homeroom](#) and assign the project to proper users;
- Click the link for the Evaluation Score Certification Tool (ESCT);
- Log into the ESCT portal using your county/district codes and assigned credentials; and
- Enter the Evaluation Score Certification Tool.

2. **Compare local evaluation records to data in the Evaluation Score Certification Tool and make modifications as appropriate.**

Review local evaluation records containing the component and summative scores for each qualifying educator in each school and compare them to the scores listed. The following examples describe when and how districts may need to adjust scores to accurately reflect data found in local personnel files; detailed instructions for each of these processes are included in the [Evaluation Score Certification Tool Technical Manual](#):

- **A district submitted inaccurate data through the initial Summer 2014 NJ SMART Course Roster Submission.** If the district can identify the error and has the correct roster information in hand, the designated NJ SMART user should contact the Office of Evaluation at educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us or (609) 777-3788 for correction instructions. The mSGP score for qualifying educators may be recalculated in these instances and adjusted in the Evaluation Score Certification Tool. If the district is unable to provide the correct roster information, incorrect mSGP scores cannot be used

in an educator's evaluation rating. Please consult the [Procedures for Addressing 2013-14 mSGP Data Issues](#) for full details on handling these situations.

- **A district submitted inaccurate data through the initial Summer 2014 NJ SMART Staff Evaluation Data Submission, due to typographical errors, mistakes in score calculations, or other issues identified after the submission.** The district should adjust all component and summative evaluation scores that are incorrect in the Evaluation Score Certification Tool, and/or in local personnel records where calculation errors have been found, to ensure they match and reflect any modifications made since the summer 2014 submissions.
- **Educators have completed the SGO Review or Administrator Goal Review process, resulting in score adjustments.** These processes are described in detail along with the necessary forms for district completion [here on the AchieveNJ website](#). Districts that need to reflect adjusted evaluation scores based on these review processes should call (609) 777-3788 or e-mail educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us for assistance.

3. Certify and submit your district's information.

After reviewing the data and making any necessary modifications, certify that all data is correct. **All districts must certify 2013-14 evaluation scores by March 13, regardless of whether any changes have been made through this process.** In the event that a district needs to modify more than five percent of the records originally submitted through the Summer 2014 Staff Evaluation Data submission, the Superintendent/CSA will need to provide a brief explanation for the modifications. If a district has adjusted mSGP data, a similar explanation is required. Please be prepared to explain why alterations were necessary and share any steps that were taken to ensure there is evidence documenting that the new scores are final, correct, and have been shared with the staff member. The purpose of these explanations is for the Department to consider future guidance and supports to districts in implementing AchieveNJ and collecting data through NJ SMART.

Thank you for your collaboration on this important effort to ensure all educators have accurate scores for the 2013-14 AchieveNJ evaluation cycle.

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c: Members, State Board of Education
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