

The Bridge

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A monthly newsletter for educators from the
New Jersey Department of Education



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The holiday season is now upon us. There is a crisp chill in the air. The first marking period is over. As you continue into the school year, the Department would like to keep you apprised of any new or changing information. For example, did you know that the General Education Development (GED) system has been modified? Read on to learn more about the changes.

In response to proposed regulations to the State Board to increase the bar for entry to the teaching profession in New Jersey, the Department has posted Frequently Asked Questions which you will find included.

The Department continues to provide updates on AchieveNJ. Additional information is included in this newsletter as well as information on Professional Development Planning for Teachers.

As teachers across the state implement the Common Core State Standards, the Department has launched a new website, the New Jersey Educator Resource Exchange Website, to provide tools and instructional materials to educators at all grades.

In case you were unaware, the New Jersey Career Assistance Navigator (www.NJCAN.org) is a website available to all districts and students in the state of New Jersey. Website users can create a talent and interest profile by registering on the site and completing activities that allow for self-reflection and increased college/career knowledge. Read on to find out more.

Congratulations goes to Robert O'Donnell, an outstanding Jersey City educator, who received an unrestricted \$25,000 Milken Educator Award at a surprise school-wide assembly on October 9, 2013. Robert teaches sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade science at Christa McAuliffe School #28 in the Jersey City School District.

Speaking of outstanding educators, there is a call for nominations for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST).

And don't forget to check out the Professional Development information.

New Adult Education Assessment Providers

New Jersey has offered the General Education Development (GED) test since 1959 as a route to our State-issued high school diploma. The GED has been offered under the auspices of the American Council for Education (ACE), a federal non-profit. Until recently, ACE / GED has been the sole provider of the GED test used to award the State-issued high school diploma. In 2010, ACE partnered with Pearson to form a for-profit entity, Pearson VUE, to offer the GED, to align the GED with the Common Core standards, and to computerize the test.

The Pearson VUE GED test was scheduled to have a significant cost increase this year. Nationally and in New Jersey, public concern over the impact of the price increase on test takers led to the entry of other test vendors into the market. In August, the Department issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for test vendors to assess applicants for the state-issued high school diploma. Our intention was to:

- Offer applicants several testing options at different prices;
- Ensure testing opportunities in all regions of the state;
- Continue a lower cost, paper testing option for a transitional period; and
- Transition the test to the Common Core by 2016.

Our RFQ panel found all three RFQ responders to be qualified as New Jersey test vendors:

1. Pearson VUE
2. Educational Testing Service (ETS)
3. McGraw Hill

In December, the State Board approved of these vendors. These three vendors will increase choices for applicants and will serve to lower the cost for applicants from the raised fee of the Pearson VUE GED test. Moving forward, the Department will continue to qualify new vendors as they come forward.

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Professional Development Planning for Teachers

Individual Professional Development Plans (PDPs) linked to evaluation outcomes are required for all teaching staff members. In addition, all staff members rated Ineffective or Partially Effective on their last annual summative evaluation are required to complete a Corrective Action Plan (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.

The teacher and supervisor should work together to develop the teacher's PDP or CAP using the [New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers](http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/profstand)

(www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/profstand), [New Jersey's Definition of Professional Development](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/regs/pddef.pdf)

(www.nj.gov/education/profdev/regs/pddef.pdf), and the [New Jersey Standards for Professional Learning](http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/regs/pddef.pdf)

(www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/regs/pddef.pdf). Teachers and supervisors should distinguish between learning goals teachers create for their students (e.g., Student Growth Objectives) and PDP or CAP learning goals, which are designed for teachers' growth and improvement.

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](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ipdp/TeacherPDPDocs.pdf)

(www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ipdp/TeacherPDPDocs.pdf) 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](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ipdp/TeacherCAPDocs.doc) (www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ipdp/TeacherCAPDocs.doc) 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: www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ipdp/.



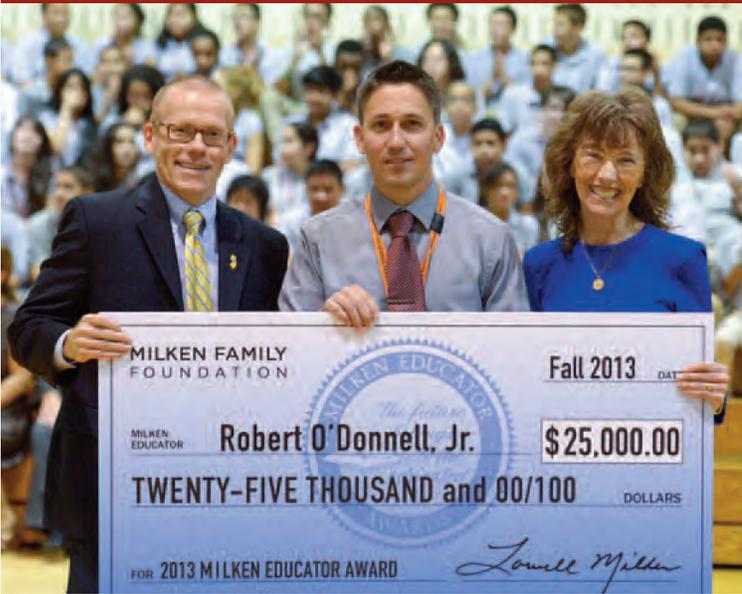
The Department is continuing to develop additional sample PDPs and CAPs as well as guidance for administrator, school, and district professional development plans. To share ideas or sample PDPs or CAPs from your district (in any format), please remove any confidential or personal information and send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

Please visit the Department's [Professional Development website](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev) (www.nj.gov/education/profdev) for more details on new professional development regulations, including the following resources:

- [Overview of Revised Professional Development Regulations](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/regs/pdoverview.pdf) (www.nj.gov/education/profdev/regs/pdoverview.pdf)
- [Frequently Asked Questions About New Regulations](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/regs/faq.pdf) (www.nj.gov/education/profdev/regs/faq.pdf)
- [Overview of Teacher PDP and CAP Requirements](http://www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ipdp/TeacherPDPandCAPOverview.pdf) (www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ipdp/TeacherPDPandCAPOverview.pdf)

Educator Preparation

In June 2013, the Department proposed regulations to the State Board to increase the bar for entry to the teaching profession in New Jersey. Last month, we posted answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](http://www.nj.gov/education/genfo/faq/TeacherPrepRegs.pdf) (www.nj.gov/education/genfo/faq/TeacherPrepRegs.pdf) we've received over the past few months. Please review these FAQs for more information.



MILKEN NATIONAL EDUCATOR FEATURE

Robert O'Donnell, an outstanding Jersey City educator, received an unrestricted \$25,000 Milken Educator Award, www.MilkenEducatorAwards.org, at a surprise school-wide assembly on October 9, 2013. The prestigious award, one of only 40 presented this year nationally and the only one in New Jersey recognizes, the exceptional work of this educator as a model for the state and nation.

Robert teaches sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade science at Christa McAuliffe School #28 in the Jersey City School District. His students get hands-on science experience as they work to transform an abandoned local reservoir into an urban oasis and environmental learning center, educating the wider community in the process. Through his commitment to increasing scientific literacy, [Project Reservoir](http://projectreservoir.weebly.com/) (projectreservoir.weebly.com/) has become a nationally recognized program that has helped boost achievement at Christa McAuliffe School-PS 28, where about 75% of students are Hispanic and about 83% are considered economically disadvantaged.

Robert's classroom is a respectful, caring, collaborative place where he conveys high expectations of all. With a door always open to students and parents, he maintains a classroom website that has had more than 19,000 hits and a YouTube channel of past projects with more than 23,500 views. Former students return often to benefit from Robert's continued mentoring. He is known for his sensitivity to students at risk, many of whom go on to become successful college students.

Robert's dedication to science education has resulted in improved test scores: more than 83% of his eighth-graders pass the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge science exam each year, outperforming the state average. During the 2012-13 school year, his students won more than \$56,000 in savings bonds from science competitions. Robert, who has taught for 11 years and holds an M.A. in the teaching of physics, also coaches volleyball, basketball and track and his teams have won numerous district championships.

He is also a generous mentor to student teachers and to peers throughout the district who want to make Project Reservoir part of their science programs. He collaborates with other educators and conducts presentations to colleagues on educational technology and hands-on science instruction. He is coordinator of PS 28's science fair and has represented the school for events at the national level, including in 2013 when Project Reservoir students were finalists in the U.S. Army's eCYBERMISSION, Siemens We Can Change the World, and the Lexus Eco Challenge. In 2012, Project Reservoir won a Grand Prize in the Disney Planet Challenge and in 2010, the school was named a finalist for an Intel Schools of Distinction Award for its STEM activities. As one administrator put it, Robert O'Donnell "serves as a model of excellence for the teaching profession."

Through educator recognition programs, such as the Milken National Educator Awards Program, the New Jersey Department of Education gives well-deserved public attention to the contributions of our state's highly effective teachers. The Department wants to recognize those that are making a difference by providing quality teaching and learning experiences for all students.

There are so many wonderful teachers in New Jersey and we need your help in identifying them. We need teachers, parents and community members to reach out to school and district officials to suggest deserving educators to nominate an Exemplary Elementary Educator (grades pre-K to 5) in February 2014, when the online nomination process starts. The goal of this program is to identify exemplary educators for use on various committees, taskforces and also special recognition programs. Your recommendations will identify individuals who are valued by their school and community and who may ultimately receive prestigious national recognition. This program alternates between elementary and secondary every year.

We also strongly encourage every school and district to participate in recognition programs, such as the Exemplary Educator Recognition Program, as it is an investment that will pay dividends for years to come.

For more detailed information on all the Department's recognition programs, please visit: www.state.nj.us/education/educators/rpr/recognition

AchieveNJ Updates

The Department is publishing broadcast memos every few weeks with more information about the new evaluation and support system. Please visit www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/memos.shtml to read these memos and other communications materials for educators.

The November 19 broadcast memo announced the publication of the [Final Report of the Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee \(EPAC\)](#) (www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/FinalEPACReport.pdf). 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.

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. Please refer to the November 19 memo for a list of committee members.

For more information on all components of evaluation, please visit the Department's [AchieveNJ](#) (www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/) website.

New Adult Education

(continued from p. 1)

The Department currently authorizes 32 test centers for the GED through Memoranda of Understanding. Each center will be able to use any / all of three tests. ETS & McGraw Hill will offer both paper-based and computerized testing through 2016. Pearson VUE will offer computer based testing with paper-based testing offered only as an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Each approved test has subsections which must be passed in order to earn the state diploma: writing, reading, math, science, and social studies. Applicants can retake the entire test or individual subtests.

The new tests will begin January 2014. By 2016, tests will align with the Common Core.

For more information, please visit the Department's adult education website at www.state.nj.us/education/students/adulted/. Please direct any questions to adulted_info@doe.state.nj.us

NJCAN - Helping Students Today Meet The Challenges Of Tomorrow

When students know their values, strengths, and abilities, they are better poised to make meaningful choices about their future. They also need to fully understand the available college and career choices in our ever-changing global society. This is no small task for either students or educators. Luckily, NJCAN is here to help. The New Jersey Career Assistance Navigator (www.NJCAN.org) is a website available to all districts and students in the state of New Jersey. Students who attend schools that are registered on NJCAN can take a variety of assessments that allow for self-reflection and increased college and career knowledge. In addition, those students have the added benefit of creating a virtual portfolio which allows them to track and save their progress over time. This portfolio can be a valuable tool when students begin the college application process.

NJCAN gives educators the ability to better know their students and to help ignite their students' passion. This outreach can be a huge motivator for a variety of learners. Teachers can also use the site's resources to design units around career readiness. Many of the learning activities are accompanied by downloadable worksheets that meet standard 9.3 as well as other standards. An added value is the capability to track student progress and to assist students in making choices that will be the most beneficial to their post secondary lives. This site could also be used by counselors or child study teams.

We may not know what the future holds for our youth, but NJCAN is an opportunity to teach them how to make informed decisions. When students know where they are going, they get there more easily. Using NJCAN provides targeted information which empowers students to set and reach goals. It helps students and teachers work together to create a stronger tomorrow. To register your school for an account on NJCAN, please email pslp@doe.state.nj.us.

**News,
Upcoming Events &
Professional Development
Opportunities**



Be sure to check the online upcoming [events calendar \(http://education.state.nj.us/events/\)](http://education.state.nj.us/events/) for opportunities available throughout the year.

December 2013

December 12, 2013 – FOSTER CHILDREN'S DAY – Designated as “Foster Children’s Day” in New Jersey to recognize the unique needs and experiences of foster children and to provide an opportunity for state and local government, private organizations and the general public to engage in charitable efforts which acknowledge that these foster children are important and loved. State and local government, private organizations and all citizens of New Jersey are requested to celebrate “Foster Children’s Day” through suitable activities, programs and exercises. For additional resources on foster youth, go to www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/edservices/stability/ or www.state.nj.us/njfofosteradopt/.

December 16, 2013 - TEACHING RATIO AND PROPORTION IN GRADES 6 AND 7 (NORTH) – Time: 8:30 am – 3:00 pm;
Location: Raritan Valley Community College, 118 Lamington Road, Conference Center (Rooms A & B), Branchburg, NJ 08876
The Common Core State Standards have a strong emphasis on ratio and proportion for grade 6 and 7. Participants will be presented with sample lessons and instructional methods to use in the classroom, which promote a stronger knowledge base in the concepts of ratio and proportion for students. For more information, go to education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=20204

December 16, 2013 - PARCC TECHNOLOGY READINESS REGIONAL MEETING (CENTRAL) – Time: 10:00 am – 1:00 pm;
Location: NJ Forensic Science Technology Center at Hamilton (Horizon Technology Center), 1200 Negron Drive, Hamilton, NJ 08691

The regional meetings will provide a review of the latest PARCC Technology Guidelines, review NJTRAx, and help LEAs/Test Sites plan next steps for PARCC testing. For more information, visit education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=20192.

January 2013

January 15 & February 25 (TWO DAYS); January 16 & February 27; OR January 17 & February 26 - POWERFUL INTERACTIONS: USING INTENTIONAL TEACHING IN THE INCLUSIVE PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM – Time: 9:30 am – 3:00 pm; Location: Various
Conference Play is often described as “children’s work.” For children to become proficient at learning through and extending their play, educators need to be good play partners and know how to scaffold children’s play experiences. During this two-part training, participants will receive information on the importance of creating Powerful Interactions for promoting learning, prompting teacher reflection, and promoting intentional teaching. For more information, visit education.state.nj.us/events/month/?month=01&year=2014

January 17, 2014 - DIVERSITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY – NORTH – Time: 9:30 am – 2:30 pm; Location: Public Service Electric & Gas Training and Development Center, 234 Pierson Road, Edison, NJ 08837

This workshop will explore the role and impact of diversity in education, pertaining to attitudes, relationships, instructional materials and classroom practices. Participants will engage in readings and hands-on activities that stimulate dialogue and foster understanding and appreciation of diverse groups and how to support and maximize their educational experiences. For more information, go to education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=20086

January 21-25, 2014 - TEEN CANCER AWARENESS WEEK – (the third week in January each year) is designated as “Teen Cancer Awareness Week” in the State of New Jersey in order to promote awareness about teen cancers and the unique medical and social needs of teens with cancer. Visit the New Jersey Office of Cancer Control and Prevention at www.nj.bov/health/ccpl for more information.

EATING DISORDER MONTH – January is designated as “Eating Disorders Awareness Month” in New Jersey in order to increase public awareness of eating disorders and the need to expand research for treatment and a cure, broaden access to treatment, and promote healthful eating habits and a healthy body image. For more information, go to www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/.

State Emergency Information – Call 211

In the event of a statewide emergency such as Hurricane Sandy, district personnel and parents can call the state's emergency response line at 211 for up-to-date information. In addition to the information line, there is a Web site with current information at www.nj211.org

NEW JERSEY EDUCATOR RESOURCE EXCHANGE WEBSITE LAUNCHED

On November 18, 2013, the NJDOE released the New Jersey Educator Resource Exchange (www.njcore.org), a website that provides instructional materials aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS).

The New Jersey Educator Resource Exchange website will allow a user to navigate these standards, search for and download instructional resources, create a library of resources for later use, and establish a "resource feed" that will notify the user when new resources unique to their role are added to the site. New Jersey educators will be able to rate each of these resources, allowing for an educator to quickly scan and find resources that others have found to be high-quality and useful in their classroom. Access to the website is free for all users and requires only a quick registration. Currently we have over 2,000 users registered and over 2,000 resources submitted.

Educators will need their State Staff Member Identification Number (SMID) in order to gain access to the added functionality. Please contact your NJSMART district contact person for your SMID number.

For more information or problems please contact info@njcore.org. We look forward to seeing you on the site.

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thebridge@doe.state.nj.us

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<http://education.state.nj.us/feature/>

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CALL FOR NOMINATIONS – Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST)

If you know any great elementary (grades K-12) mathematics and/or science teachers, please nominate them for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). Awardees serve as models for their colleagues, inspiration to their communities, and leaders in the improvement of mathematics and science education. PAEMST awards are the nation's highest honors for teachers of mathematics and science, including computer science. Since 1983, more than 4,200 teachers have been recognized for their contributions in the classroom and to their profession.

Presidential awardees receive a citation signed by the President of the United States, a trip for two to Washington D.C., professional development opportunities, and a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation.

So, if you know any great elementary (grades K-6) math and/or science teachers, please nominate them to join this prestigious network of professionals. The nomination form and additional info about the award can be found at www.paemst.org.

- **WHO CAN NOMINATE?** Administrators, teachers, parents, or students may nominate exceptional math & science teachers
NOMINATION DEADLINE: April 1, 2014
- **WHO CAN APPLY?** Elementary school teachers (grades K-6) who have been nominated are eligible to apply
APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 1, 2014