



An Introduction to the

NEW JERSEY

**Professional
Development
Initiative
for School Leaders**

A Guide to Getting Started

New Jersey Department of Education
Division of Educational Programs and Assessment
Office of Academic and Professional Standards



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A Guide to Getting Started

William L. Librera, Ed.D.

Commissioner of Education

Richard Ten Eyck

Assistant Commissioner

Educational Programs and Assessment

Jay Doolan, Ed.D.

Director

Academic and Professional Standards

Eileen Aviss-Spedding

Manager

Professional Standards

Wendi Webster O'Dell, Ed.D.

Consultant

Professional Standards

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Secretary, State Board of Education

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BRIAN A. ZYCHOWSKI	Henry Hudson Regional School District

SPECIAL THANKS

PRIMARY RESEARCHER

Eloise Forster, Ed.D.

Director of School Leadership Programs, Foundation for Education Administration

NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

James Murphy, Executive Director

Hank Cram, Ed.D., Director of Professional Development

NEW JERSEY PRINCIPALS AND SUPERVISORS ASSOCIATION

JoAnn Bartoletti, Executive Director

FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Anthony Scannella, Ed.D., Chief Executive Officer

Art Firestone, Director of Innovative Programs

NEW JERSEY STATE ACTION FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROJECT CONSORTIUM

THE GUIDE AT A GLANCE

*T*his guide is intended to serve as an introduction to the new professional learning requirement for school leaders. Following is a brief overview of the four main sections within this guide:

PAGE 1 Section One: This introductory section provides a historical background of the initiative and describes the intent. Focus is placed upon state support regarding quality learning for all school leaders.

PAGE 3 Section Two: This section provides an overview of the building blocks of the professional learning requirement, including the professional standards and professional development propositions to be used for implementation.

PAGE 5 Section Three: This section contains highlights of the three phases of the professional learning process, including a sound step-by-step process that will provide guidance in developing and executing professional growth plans.

PAGE 9 Section Four: The first year of the initiative (the 2004-2005 school year) is a developmental year in which training and preparation for implementation are provided. This section provides a brief overview of the resources and training that will be available throughout the developmental year, including a summary of the professional learning requirement for school leaders as specified in state regulations.

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**STATE SUPPORT
FOR
PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING**

National research about effective instructional leadership speaks to the key function school leaders can play in improving teaching and learning; particularly bringing about significant improvement in student achievement.

New Jersey, and other states, have raised their expectations for principals and superintendents well beyond efficient management and administration skills. The work of schools has never been more complex and demanding and the challenges school leaders face to improve student achievement have never been greater. Through the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), school and district leaders are held responsible for increasing student achievement across the board, while narrowing the achievement gaps among all subgroup populations.

New Jersey policymakers have recognized the need to support a new vision of school administrators as instructional leaders. The state has been working over the past three years to strengthen its school leadership policies through reforms in regulation and statute. With funding and support from a national project administered by the Wallace Foundation, a New Jersey consortium of education policymakers and stakeholders worked collaboratively to provide recommendations that will build strong instructional leadership through policy reforms in the preparation, licensure, development, and conditions of work for school leaders. The project is called the State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP). Based on those recommendations from the SAELP Consortium, in December 2003 the State Board of Education adopted new regulations to strengthen school leadership and align policies to Professional Standards for School Leaders.

In creating this requirement, the State Board of Education recognized that school leaders must be professionally prepared not only at one point in time but continuously throughout their careers. The new professional learning requirement for school leaders (N.J.A.C. 6A:9-16), which goes into effect in September 2004, seeks to build the instructional leadership capabilities of principals, supervisors, and superintendents through a standards-based and job-embedded approach to professional growth.

The requirement also brings school leaders through a collaborative learning process that will support school improvement and student achievement. The process emerges from and meets the learning needs of school leaders. Through this initiative, school leaders will have the opportunity to address individual, school, and district needs with support from their peers through the development and execution of individualized professional growth plans. Much has been written about the isolation of teachers in their classrooms and the need for teachers to form a collaborative community of professional learners in order to significantly shift practice. It is important to recognize that school leaders also benefit from the opportunity to learn from and with their peers. This collaborative model of professional learning and growth allows school leaders to generate and share professional knowledge; to inquire into practice; and examine with peers the results of their efforts to improve teaching and learning.



**NEW JERSEY STATE ACTION FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
PROJECT (SAELP)**

Since May 2000, New Jersey has been part of the SAELP, a national project administered and funded by the Wallace Foundation. As one of fifteen SAELP states, New Jersey has been working to strengthen its school leadership policies through reforms in regulation and statute. The New Jersey SAELP Consortium worked collaboratively to make far reaching recommendations that will build strong instructional leadership through policy reforms in the preparation, licensure, development, and conditions of work for school leaders. Based on recommendations from the SAELP Consortium, the State Board of Education in December 2003 adopted new regulations addressing the reforms needed across the continuum of school leaders practice to strengthen school leadership and align policies to Professional Standards for School Leaders. The professional learning requirement for school leaders was one of the key recommendations from the work of the New Jersey SAELP Consortium and based on that recommendation, the State Board of Education adopted new regulations for professional development for school leaders.

**THE STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING**

In spring 2004, the Commissioner of Education appointed a state advisory committee to help guide the implementation of the new regulations. The committee is comprised of school leaders, a teacher, a school board member and higher education representative. This group will advise the Commissioner on key implementation issues, including needed training, initiative support and resources. As practitioners in the field, committee members will help to assure that the initiative meets the needs of their colleagues.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING REQUIREMENT

The vital building blocks for the requirement are:

- Recommendations from the New Jersey State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP);
- The New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders; and
- The Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Propositions for Quality Professional Development for School Leaders.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

As part of the overall reform of leadership, the State Board of Education has adopted the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards as the New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders. Developed by a national consortium of states including New Jersey, these standards address the knowledge, performances, and dispositions school leaders need to be effective educational leaders. The standards shift the focus of the school leader's job from isolated management toward an improved balance supporting teaching and learning. Through the professional development initiative, school leaders will base their professional learning on the professional standards, acquiring the knowledge, performances and dispositions that will support their individual leadership efforts. In New Jersey, this process clearly centers on teaching and learning and is embedded in policies across the continuum of practice so that school leaders are educated and licensed based upon the tenets within the standards.

THE NEW JERSEY PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Standard One: School administrators shall be educational leaders who promote the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Standard Two: School administrators shall be educational leaders who promote the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Standard Three: School administrators shall be educational leaders who promote the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations and resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment.

Standard Four: School administrators shall be educational leaders who promote the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

**THE BUILDING
BLOCKS OF THE
PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING
REQUIREMENT**

Standard Five: School administrators shall be educational leaders who promote the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.

Standard Six: School administrators shall be educational leaders who promote the success of all students by understanding, responding to and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.

PLEASE NOTE: The New Jersey Professional Standards for School Leaders, including knowledge, performances and disposition indicators are available on the New Jersey Department of Education website at www.nj.gov/njded/profdev/profstand/.



THE ISLLC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSITIONS

The Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Professional Development Propositions are another key underpinning of the initiative. These propositions, reflecting current research on effective professional development provide guidance on both the content and process of quality professional learning. School leaders, in the development and execution of their plan, will want to reference these propositions for quality professional learning.

Proposition One: Quality professional development validates teaching and learning as the central activities of the school.

Proposition Two: Quality professional development engages all school leaders in planful, integrated, career-long learning to improve student achievement.

Proposition Three: Quality professional development promotes collaboration to achieve organizational goals while meeting individual needs.

Proposition Four: Quality professional development models effective learning processes.

Proposition Five: Quality professional development incorporates measures of accountability that direct attention to valued learning outcomes.

THE THREE PHASES OF THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROCESS

THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROCESS: TAKING A STEP BY STEP LOOK

The following is a brief synopsis of the step-by-step process involved in planning, developing, executing, and completing a professional learning plan. Please note that more detailed descriptions and specific resources, such as standards-based assessment tools and plan templates will be included in The New Jersey Professional Learning Guide for School Leaders: A Guidebook for the Developmental Year. The guidebook and specific implementation tools will be distributed to all school leaders during the second stage of trainings and is available on the DOE website.

Phase 1 Contemplation: Steps 1, 2 & 3

STEP ONE: Getting Focused: Assessing your Professional Development Needs, Readiness, and Commitment

The first step in the preparation of the professional growth plan is the determination of professional development needs. In determining those needs, it will be important for school leaders to reflect and judge their current level of skills and knowledge based on the New Jersey Standards for School Leaders. In particular, it will be helpful for school leaders to utilize the tools in the New Jersey Professional Learning Guide for School Leaders which is available on the department website and will be distributed at the next technical assistance session. School leaders should supplement the results of any self-assessment with feedback from teacher and administrator colleagues.

After analyzing the results of the assessments, priority areas can be determined for professional development. Prioritize the list of professional growth areas based on those that have the greatest potential to enhance individual leadership practice and ability to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In preparation for selection of one or more professional development goals, consult with your superintendent -- or your peer review committee for those in positions that require school administrator certification.

STEP TWO: Assessing District/School/Department Needs: Linking Professional Development to Improvement Goals

In preparing a professional growth plan that impacts teaching and learning, it is important for school leaders to consider the needs of their department, school, and/or district. To determine those needs, consider multiple sources such as district and/or school-level goals, student achievement data, district strategic plans, school improvement plans, and state or federally mandated goal setting requirements (i.e. the Quality Assurance Annual Report, Multi-year Equity Plan, the School Report Card, or NCLB and IDEA application goals). Engage in discussions with others in the school, district, or larger community related to needs and expectations for improving programs, schools, teaching, and learning. It may also be helpful to survey colleagues to determine how they are approaching their own professional development goal setting, and to consider how your individual professional development goals might complement those of other school leaders with whom you work. This may lead to opportunities to collaborate and support each other in the development of the professional growth plan.

**THE THREE PHASES OF
THE PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING PROCESS**

After collecting and analyzing these data, identify one or more important areas for program, school and/or district improvement that have the potential to be impacted by your professional learning. Examine and, if necessary, add to the list of your prioritized professional development needs identified in Step 1. Once alignment is determined, you are ready to prepare a draft of your professional growth plan.

STEP THREE: Developing Your Professional Growth Plan

The next step in the process is to develop a draft of your professional growth plan. Prepare a brief explanation about how your goals were selected; how your goals relate to program/school or district needs; what activities you are proposing to engage in to address your goals; how attainment of your goals will ultimately be measured by evidence you will present; and what benchmarks, if any, might be used to measure progress toward multi-year goals. Your plan should also include a tentative timeline showing your proposed activities for each of the years of your professional development cycle* and the anticipated resources that might be required to help complete your plan and accomplish your goals. You should also develop a preliminary list of "evidence types" (i.e. artifacts, work samples, products, documents, data) that will indicate progress toward achieving your professional development goals.

* Principals or supervisors: three year cycle

Chief school administrators: three to five years, depending upon contract with board of education.

**Phase II Collaboration: Steps 4, 5 & 6****STEP FOUR: Consulting With Your Superintendent or designee**

(For those in positions requiring principal or supervisor certification)

If you hold a position that requires principal or supervisor certification, your professional development goals and professional growth plan must be developed in consultation with your superintendent designee. The purpose of the collaboration is to mutually agree on your professional development goals and determine the potential for those goals to enhance leadership practice and your contribution to improving teaching and learning in the district. It is important that both you and your superintendent designee enter these discussions with open minds, a spirit of collegiality and collaboration, and with adequate preparation. Arriving at meaningful consensus on your professional development goals and a plan to achieve them is critically important to the success of the process.

STEP FIVE: Select Your Peer Review Committee

All school leaders in positions that require school administrator, principal, or supervisor certification will utilize a collaborative peer review process to support the creation, implementation, and certification of their professional growth plans. In all cases, the role of this committee is to (1) provide additional feedback and ongoing support related to the development and implementation of your plan; (2) review progress toward attainment of your professional development goals; and (3) determine compliance with state standards and established guidelines.

In general, consider the overall composition of your committee based on the kinds of expertise and experience that will provide you with the greatest amount of

THE THREE PHASES OF THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROCESS

guidance and support. The quality of the individuals you select to comprise your committee is a critical factor since they will potentially affect the effectiveness of the peer review process, the quality of the collaborative experience, and the collegial support you will receive throughout the process. Thus, care should be taken in selecting your committee members to ensure that they can effectively provide the guidance and support you may need.

STEP SIX: Convene and Structure Your Peer Review Committee

At your initial committee meeting, it will be important that you and your committee members begin to develop a common understanding of the collaborative peer review process and the nature and types of support that you need and will expect from them. As with any important meeting, you should be prepared to provide a brief outline of the topics you plan to examine, including a discussion of the types of feedback, assistance, and recommendations that you would like from your committee. Your first meeting should be used to review your professional development goals and your preliminary professional growth plan. In addition, you should solicit feedback regarding how your plan may be improved and implemented. Also, present a list of the types of evidence that may be collected for subsequent review of progress toward completion of your plan and attainment of your goals.

The committee needs to meet at least once to review and provide feedback on your plan. You and your committee may decide to meet and/or communicate on a regular basis to provide ongoing support and feedback regarding implementation of the plan and progress toward attainment of your professional development goals. The extent to which your committee is actively engaged in working with you on your plan will vary based on your personal needs. In any event, you are encouraged to engage in ongoing communications using a variety of methods.

Phase III Implementation: Steps 7, 8 & 9

STEP SEVEN: Collecting and Organizing Evidence of Professional Growth Plan Completion

Plans should be implemented with commitment and dedication. During the implementation process you should be aware of the benchmarks and refinement you use to move toward your goal. For those whose positions require principal or supervisor endorsement, professional growth plans may be periodically reviewed with your superintendent and/or the Peer Review Committees. For those whose positions require the chief school administrator's endorsement, periodic reviews will be conducted by their committees and coordinated by the NJ Association of School Administrators (NJASA). Consider at what points in the implementation of your plan it would be most helpful to conduct reviews of your professional development goals and the plan. These periodic reviews will provide an opportunity for you to present, discuss and obtain feedback related to:

- Evidence of progress toward completion of your plan and goal attainment;
- Revisions to your plan that reflect new information related to your professional development goals, changing job circumstances, or emerging school or district needs.



**THE THREE PHASES OF
THE PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING PROCESS**

The identification, collection, and organization of evidence in support of your goal attainment and plan completion are extremely important. "Evidence" of professional growth plan fulfillment refers to artifacts, products, documents, and data that illustrate the work that you are doing and the outcomes of your professional development.

STEP EIGHT:- Presenting Evidence of Professional Growth

Regulations require documentation of professional learning activities and a narrative detailing attainment of your professional development goals at the end of the professional development cycle to support certification of the completion of your plan. The process for certification of plan completion varies as follows:

- Those in positions requiring school administrator certification are required to provide evidence of completion of their plan to their peer review committee at the end of a three to five year cycle depending upon the individual's contract with the district board of education. The New Jersey Association of School Administrators is responsible for certifying completion of the plan to both the New Jersey Department of Education and the local board of education.
- For those in positions requiring principal and supervisor certification, the plan will be certified by their superintendent through an annual statement of assurance in the QAAR, made to the New Jersey Department of Education at the conclusion of each three year professional development cycle.

STEP NINE: Preparing For Your Next Professional Development Cycle

Professional growth is a continuous process. The completion of a professional growth plan is not an end in itself but a new beginning that provides more opportunities to address new, continuing, or revised personal development goals. As the knowledge base for the education profession and educational leadership continues to expand, and as the responsibilities of being a school leader continually evolve to meet ever-changing school conditions, each professional development cycle brings new opportunities to enhance leadership practice. It is important to re-assess the professional growth plan at the end of each cycle in order to identify and celebrate progress toward attainment of personal, program, school, or district goals. It is equally important to review those goals that are not fully attained to determine the reasons, and to decide if they should continue to be included in the next professional development cycle, in the same or modified form.

Lastly, consider what has been learned from completion of the plan and determine how the school or district has been positively impacted by your professional growth as you will want to build upon successes in the next professional development cycle. With each professional development cycle, you should feel more comfortable with the process of individualized professional goal setting and planning, collaborating with peers, and aligning individual professional development goals with district and school goals for improving the quality of teaching and learning and increasing student achievement.



ONGOING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The first year of the initiative (2004-2005) will be a "developmental year" in which school leaders have the opportunity to gain an understanding of the initiative before creating their first professional development plan in spring 2005. Technical assistance and other resources will support school leaders as they begin to develop their first plans. School leaders will be expected to implement their plans in July 2005. The New Jersey Department of Education and the State Advisory Committee on Professional Development for School Leaders want to ensure that school leaders have the knowledge and tools needed to make professional learning meaningful.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING INITIATIVE

In order to prepare school leaders to meet the professional learning requirement, the Department of Education, in collaboration with the New Jersey Association of School Administrators and the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, will be conducting progressive technical assistance sessions on the initiative throughout the next several months. These sessions will provide a clear road map for school leaders in meeting the new requirement. Each superintendent should identify a team of school leaders who will participate in the technical assistance regarding the initiative. Each team will have the responsibility for providing guidance on the initiative to other administrators within the district.

GUIDANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENTAL YEAR

In addition to this introduction to the initiative, a comprehensive implementation guidebook entitled, "New Jersey Professional Learning Guide for School Leaders: A Guide for the Developmental Year," will be available and distributed to all school leaders. This comprehensive resource is also available on the Department of Education website at <http://www.nj.gov/njded/profdev/pd/leader/>. The guidebook will provide a variety of useful tools including:

- Self-assessment tools;
- A suggested plan framework;
- Model plans;
- A series of model tools to support plan development, such as how-to-sheets, samples, guide questions, and summaries;
- Case studies that will give real life examples of plan development and execution; and
- Additional resources which provide information and research to support district and school leaders as they implement the professional development requirement.



COMPONENTS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DURING THE DEVELOPMENTAL YEAR

COMPONENT ONE: Orientation

The first set of six technical assistance sessions will provide an overview of the initiative and profile how school leaders can begin to think about developing a professional growth plan that meets their needs and a collaborative peer review team to support plan creation and execution. The orientation includes:

- The goals of the initiative;
- A discussion of the use of the Professional Standards for School Leaders in plan creation;
- An overview of a step-by-step approach to plan development and execution;
- A description of the collaborative peer review learning process; and
- A description of future resources and technical assistance.

COMPONENT TWO: Self-Assessment and Plan Design

The second set of technical assistance sessions will begin a focus on the specifics of implementation.

- The use of a self-assessment tool;
- Assessing personal departmental, school, or district needs;
- Identifying connections;
- Developing professional learning goals; and
- Designing a draft of your PD plan.

COMPONENT THREE: Collaboration and Review

The third round of technical assistance sessions is geared to working collaboratively with others as a personal learning tool. Component three will focus on:

- The collaborative process of peer review;
- The selection of a peer review committee;
- Convening and structuring the peer review committee meetings; and
- Ongoing use of the team.

COMPONENT FOUR: Implementation and Documentation

The fourth technical assistance session will provide the support to effectively complete and document plan implementation. Component four will focus on:

- The use of data for the assessment and revision of plans;
- The identification of authentic evidence;
- The collection and presentation of evidence of professional growth;
- The execution and completion of the plan; and
- Problem-solving.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SCHOOL LEADERS**
(N.J.A.C. 16 6A:9-16)

The new regulations call for a standards-based professional development requirement for school leaders that emphasizes the link between individual, school, and district needs in creating and fulfilling multi-year professional development plans which focus on instructional leadership. The professional learning requirement is based on current research of effective professional development which indicates that individual educators benefit from professional learning when they are inquiring collectively with peers about specific issues related to school improvement and teaching and learning. To that end, the requirement calls for school leaders to:

- Develop a multi-year professional learning plan that will enhance their knowledge and skills as instructional leaders;
- Make district and school improvement needs the foundation of their efforts, utilizing district/school data in the development of a plan;
- Get input on their plan from their peers;
- Take advantage of a variety of informal and formal learning opportunities in fulfilling their plan; and
- Demonstrate the new knowledge and skills gained in plan execution through evidence of that learning.

School leaders whose positions require a principal or supervisor endorsement are required to provide evidence of plan completion every three years to the chief school administrator. The initial three-year period extends from September 2004 to September 2007.

School leaders whose positions require a chief school administrator's endorsement are required to provide evidence of completion of their professional growth plan to a peer review team every three to five years, depending upon the chief school administrator's contract with the district board of education.

**SUMMARY OF THE NEW PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS: N.J.A.C. 6A:9-16****6A:9-16.1 General Provisions**

The code applies to all public school districts, charter schools, and non-public schools whose staffs hold positions which require the possession of chief school administrator, principal or supervisor certificates. The initiative goes into effect in September 2004. The plan will be implemented at the conclusion of the developmental year (school year 2004-05) resulting in the implementation of professional growth plans beginning July 1, 2005.

6A:9-16.2 State Advisory Committee

A State Advisory Committee on Professional Development for School Leaders has been established to advise the Commissioner on the implementation of the regulations and to recommend: implementation standards and schedules, guidelines for peer review, frameworks for professional development planning, funding, and evaluation of the initiative. The advisory committee is comprised of eleven members nominated by the professional associations including three principals, three chief school administrators, two supervisors, one teacher, one representative from higher education and a board of education member.

6A:9-16.3 Implementation of the Professional Development Plan

Every school leader is required to develop, implement and complete an individualized professional growth plan that is aligned with the state standards for school leaders and to identify professional goals that address specific district or school needs. The plans will focus on improving teaching and learning and increasing student achievement. Evidence of the plan's completion will be required. Such evidence will include information related to the activities engaged in as part of the plan and a narrative account of the accomplishment of the plan.

6A:9-16.4 Plan Review and Approval Process for Chief School Administrators

Chief school administrators will develop their professional growth plans with the assistance of a peer review committee. The role of the peer review committee will be to provide support, review progress, and recommend certification of the successful completion of the plan. Chief school administrators will provide evidence of completion of their plans to a peer review team every three to five years. The New Jersey Association of School Administrators will coordinate the peer review process, certify completion of the growth plans and provide documentation to the school administrator's board of education.

6A:9-16.5 Plan Review and Approval Process for Principals and Supervisors

Plans for principals and supervisors will be developed in conjunction with the chief school administrator. After identifying goals with the chief school administrator, principals and supervisors will submit their plans to a self-selected peer review committee for review of compliance with state standards and established guidelines. School leaders whose positions require a principal or supervisor certificate will provide evidence of completion of the plan every three years to the chief school administrator. The chief school administrator will certify the development and successful completion of the professional growth plan.

6A:9-16.6 Monitoring

The New Jersey Department of Education will monitor the implementation and evaluate the effectiveness of the regulations and prepare an annual report for the State Board of Education.

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WEBSITE:

<http://www.nj.gov/njded/profdev/pd/leader/>

The department's website will feature useful resources including:

- This introductory guide;
- The comprehensive implementation guide entitled, *The New Jersey Professional Learning Guide for School Leaders: A Guide for the Developmental Year*;
- The Professional Standards for School Leaders;
- Frequently Asked Questions and Answers; and
- Links to useful state and national education websites.

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