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TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons

FROM: Bari Erlichson, Chief Performance Officer
Assistant Commissioner of Data, Research, Evaluation and Reporting

SUBJECT: Course Roster Summary Report Distribution

On behalf of the New Jersey Department of Education, thank you for your vision, diligence, and hard work as they relate to your NJ SMART data submissions. Together, we have helped New Jersey meet the data assurances that were tied to the 2009 federal State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) investment that brought \$1.3 billion dollars to New Jersey's public schools. Fulfilling these assurances was, and continues to be, challenging work

As of SY11-12, all New Jersey districts began providing Course Roster Data Submissions through NJSMART. This data enabled the Department to link students and teachers for the first time. Today, all LEAs are receiving reports summarizing the data they provided in their SY11-12 Course Roster Data Submission in order to improve this process prior to implementation of new evaluation systems in SY13-14. Roster data will be used to assign growth scores to teachers as one measure in annual evaluations, and the accuracy of student growth scores assigned to teachers depends entirely on the accuracy of course roster data. Therefore, the Department and LEAs must develop quality control routines to verify data accuracy. Instructions for accessing, understanding and using the data are included below.

The completion of the first statewide Course Roster Submission on August 2, 2012 helped New Jersey reach a significant milestone in meeting federal SFSF requirements by creating electronic student transcripts and linking teachers to student achievement data. The secure data link between teachers, courses, and students opens the door to a broad spectrum of local analyses, and we look forward to continuing our work with you to best design and develop reporting tools that help you maximize the value of this body of data as it is collected in future years. The quality of your data allows the department to fulfill our collective federal and public reporting obligations with efficiency and confidence, and provides you with information that can help you better support your students and teachers.

Course Roster Data Submissions

The SY11-12 Course Roster Data Submission, which took place during the summer of 2012, was the largest NJSMART submission to date. In total, over 11 million records were submitted by 98% of LEAs, and 86% of the submitted data was of sufficient quality to perform a teacher-student link. We at the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) have analyzed the data and are confident that all LEAs who participated were successful in completing the submission process. Now, we are asking LEAs to examine the data and take steps to ensure accuracy in future submissions.

This year, from approximately mid-April to the end of June, a ten-week “practice” submission window will occur for NJSMART data submissions. This practice window gives LEAs sufficient time to prepare data, reach out for technical assistance to the NJSMART Help Desk as needed, and ensure the submission meets the appropriate technical quality when the official window opens in the summer. We strongly encourage all LEAs to submit data in the practice window later this spring and to contact the NJSMART Help Desk at 1-800-254-0295 as needed.

All LEAs will provide Course Roster Submission data for SY12-13 in the “official” submission window at the end of this school year. As with all NJSMART submissions, the LEA is responsible for certifying that the data is accurate. Under no circumstances may the data be altered after the final submission deadline.

As we move forward, we encourage you to be specifically mindful of all communicated deadlines, but especially those on the immediate horizon related to the collection of Course data and the calculation of graduation rates for the 2013 High School Graduation Cohort. Despite the success of the first Course/Roster data collection in the spring and summer of 2012, we have gathered feedback from districts and SIS vendors and have made changes to better support you:

- *NJDOE HAS EXTENDED THE COURSE/ROSTER SUBMISSION PERIOD BY ONE MONTH.*

*The Practice Period for the Course Roster Submission will open on April 15, 2013 and will close on June 28, 2013 (Now 10 Weeks). The Official Course/Roster Submission Period will open on July 5, 2013 and will close on **August 2, 2013**.*

- *WE HAVE ADDED EVEN MORE TRAINING AND RESOURCES FOR USERS.*

The NJ SMART Training schedule for each month can be found here:

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/njsmart/training/>

Users and members of the general public can find additional documents and resources here: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/njsmart/download/>

Each NJ SMART user has been provided with pacing guides that share best practices and recommended steps in managing your respective submissions.

- *WE WILL CONTINUE TO MEET WITH YOU AND YOUR PARTNERS TO ENSURE WE ARE MEETING YOUR NEEDS.*

NJDOE staff members continue to leverage county-specific superintendent and curriculum coordinator roundtables to gather feedback and discuss upcoming changes. NJ SMART staff members continue to participate in regional student information system user meetings and host conference calls with your vendors. The NJ SMART Help Desk continues to be accessible 5 days per week and is there to support you.

Links to Educator Evaluation

As stated before, the Department **will not use** SY11-12 course roster data for evaluation purposes. However, in future years, roster data will be used to link teachers to student growth scores as appropriate. Please see [Appendix A](#), which repeats the information from the recent [Educator Evaluation Update](#) (Section I.D.), for more information about calculating and assigning growth scores as well as evaluation data collection and distribution.

The Department will use SY12-13 Course Roster Submission Data and 2012-13 NJ ASK scores to calculate growth scores for all qualifying teachers, and will provide that data to all LEAs in early 2014. Guidance on how teachers' scores will be used in calculating summative evaluation scores for SY13-14 will be provided in forthcoming regulations.

Accessing the Data

The Department has created a project entitled "Course Roster Submission Report" on NJDOE's Homeroom. The Homeroom coordinator for each LEA (including charters) should assign this project to the appropriate staff member.

Understanding the Data

Course Roster Submission Data identifies teachers as either assigned to tested grades and subjects (TGS), or assigned to non-tested grades and subjects (NTGS).

- TGS include fourth- through eighth-grade English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- NTGS include everything else (including third-grade and high school teachers).
- Teachers assigned to TGS will be listed by name for each LEA in this report and will receive [median Student Growth Percentile \(mSGP\)](#) scores starting with SY13-14.
- In the future, more teachers will be classified as TGS than are in this report. To ensure the statistical reliability of the mSGP, the Department has determined that an LEA must attribute at least 20 students with SGPs to a teacher before the Department calculates the mSGP. Therefore, as more years of data become available, more teachers will be eligible to receive mSGPs. For example, a teacher who taught 18 students in both SY11-12 and SY12-13 would not have an mSGP based only on SY11-12 data, but would receive an mSGP score when multiple years of data are available.

Each LEA will receive four files—two Excel spreadsheets and two PDF versions of the spreadsheets.

- Spreadsheet 1: Summary Report. This document contains information about what each LEA reported. Among other information, this spreadsheet includes:
 - **Number of teachers reported in the SY11-12 Staff Submission and number of teachers reported in the SY11-12 Course Roster Submission.** These numbers should not necessarily be equal, but large disparities should trigger conversations at the LEA level.
 - **Number of students with student growth percentiles (SGPs) who were not reported on a teacher’s roster.** This number should be zero. LEAs that have a number larger than zero did not provide enough data in the submission to fully create a teacher-student link, which is especially important in tested grades and subjects. LEAs in this situation should study their data to identify the reason that a successful link could not be created.
 - **Average section size.**
 - **Largest section reported.**
 - **Number of teachers in each area of instruction, as defined by the standardized *School Codes for the Exchange of Data (SCED)*, available via the NJSMART Resources pages:**
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/njsmart/download/course/>
The sum of this number will likely exceed the number of teachers in the LEA, as an educator who teaches more than one subject will be double-counted.
 - **Average course grade reported by the LEA. Reporting of transcript data is required for federal reporting purposes.** The Department considers this data of interest for research purposes only.
- Spreadsheet 2: SGP Report. This document includes the names and qualifying courses taught by teachers who would have received SGPs for SY11-12 had they been calculated by the Department.

Using the Data

In order to provide context and explanations related to this data, we ask that you provide this cover memo to all recipients of the data.

- Chief School Administrators (CSAs) are encouraged to share this data with their staff, including assistant superintendents, directors, supervisors, and principals and to inform teachers whether they are classified in tested grades and subjects or not.
 - CSAs should share this report with their District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) and School Improvement Panels (ScIPs); these committees should use the reports to estimate which teachers will fall into tested grades and subjects and which into NTGS.
 - The Department does not interpret this data as personnel data for the purposes of the TEACHNJ Act. If, for example, a principal wanted to identify lists of

teachers in tested and non-tested grades and subjects in a faculty meeting, he or she may do so as there are no scores or other confidential information included.

- We encourage LEAs to use the summary reports to check the accuracy of your roster data. As part of this process, LEAs should consider developing systems to ensure that data submitted is thoroughly vetted. Nationwide, some LEAs have adopted course roster verification systems, such as the no-cost software offered by Batelle for Kids, as a key element to this work. The following resource from the Data Quality Campaign, entitled: “Effectively Linking Teacher and Student Data,” might be helpful as you examine these processes: http://www.tsdl.org/resources/site1/general/White%20Papers/DQC_TSDL_7-27.pdf.

Providing Feedback to the Department

- If you have comments or questions about this data and its use, please email reportcard@doe.state.nj.us

Thank you for your collaboration on this critical element of educator data collection. We look forward to working together to create the strongest statewide data system possible.

C: Members, State Board of Education

Senior Staff

Executive County Superintendents

Executive Directors for Regional Achievement Centers

Executive County School Business Administrators

NJ LEE Group

Garden State Coalition of Schools

Appendix A: Evaluation Data Distribution: Growth and Course Roster Submissions

Please note: this information is taken from the recent [Educator Evaluation Update](#) sent to all Chief School Administrators (Section I.D.).

As part of the pilot stage of developing new evaluation systems, the Department is in the developmental stage of establishing growth measures for math and language arts teachers across the state. To prepare for statewide implementation of improved evaluations in 2013-14, we are conducting several steps to provide the highest possible quality growth data to all districts. More detail about these processes follows this list:

- All districts began providing Course Roster Submission Data through NJSMART as of SY11-12. This data is used to link individual teachers to students as appropriate. Today, all LEAs received reports summarizing the data they provided in their SY11-12 Course Roster Submission in order to improve this process for subsequent years.
- Using Course Roster Submission data and relevant Student Growth Percentile (SGP) scores from the 2011-12 NJ ASK, the Department calculated [median Student Growth Percentile \(mSGP\) scores](#) for qualifying individual teachers in Cohort 1 (2011-12) evaluation pilot districts. The mSGP scores were sent to the pilot districts earlier this month, and those districts have been asked to examine the data and share questions, concerns, and any other feedback with the Department.
- All districts will provide Course Roster Submission data for SY12-13 at the end of this school year.
- The Department will use SY12-13 Course Roster Submission data and 2012-13 NJ ASK SGP scores to calculate mSGP scores for all qualifying teachers, and will provide that data to all districts in early 2014. Guidance on how teachers' mSGP scores will be used in calculating summative evaluation scores for SY13-14 will be provided in forthcoming regulations.

Measures of Growth for Students and Teachers

While each district is responsible for developing the contours of their new evaluation system, the state has committed to developing measures of student growth based on NJ ASK, where applicable, for students, teachers, schools, and districts. By using growth to calculate student outcomes, the Department recognizes that our students enter each grade level at different starting points with unique challenges. We believe we should focus on constant improvement at every point in the continuum of achievement, rather than merely how many students attain proficiency. This is a recommendation that we have heard continuously from educators, school and district leaders, and national experts, and we are committed to ensuring that achievement measures accurately and fairly account for growth.

New Jersey measures growth for an *individual student* by comparing the change in his or her NJ ASK achievement from one year to the next to that of all other students in the state who had similar historical results (the student's "academic peers"). This change in achievement is reported as Student Growth Percentile (SGP) and indicates how high or low that student's growth was as compared to that of his/her academic peers.

For a school or district, the SGPs for all students are compiled to identify the median Student Growth Percentile (mSGP) for the school or district. The mSGP is a representation of "average" growth for students in the school or district. Half of the students had growth percentiles higher than the median; half had lower. For an *individual teacher*, the score represents the mSGP for all of a given teacher's qualifying students in a school year. To calculate this score, the Department creates an ascending list of SGP scores of the qualifying students for an individual teacher. The median score on this list becomes that teacher's mSGP score.

Course Roster Submissions

Each district is required to use NJSMART to submit information detailing the assignment of students to individual teachers in a given school year. This Course Roster Submission is essential for attributing student growth to teachers, among other uses. After receiving roster data, the Department can link individual teachers to their identified students' SGPs to determine the [mSGP](#).

The quality of the mSGP data that the Department produces depends entirely on the accuracy of Course Roster Submissions by districts at the end of each school year. If students are attributed to a teacher incorrectly, that teacher's mSGP score will be incorrect.

Districts are responsible for ensuring that their data is accurate when submitted to NJSMART. Every year, from approximately mid-May to the end of June, a six-week "practice" submission window occurs for all NJSMART data submissions. This practice window gives districts sufficient time to prepare their data and reach out for technical assistance to the NJSMART Help Desk as needed. This helps to ensure district data meets the appropriate technical quality when the official submission window opens in the summer. We strongly encourage all districts to submit data in the practice window later this spring.

Distribution of Course Roster Submission Data to all Districts

If the new evaluation system had been in place for SY11-12, over 16,500 teachers statewide would have received [mSGP](#) data as one measure for their annual evaluation. Today the Department provided all LEAs with a report summarizing their SY11-12 Course Roster Submission data. Our goal for this exercise is to help all districts better prepare for accurate Course Roster Submissions for SY12-13 and beyond.

Distribution of Growth Data to Pilot Districts

Earlier this year we provided [mSGP](#) data to qualifying districts that participated in the SY11-12 teacher evaluation pilot. This data was only distributed to pilot districts that submitted student-teacher attribution link data through NJSMART, and we are working with all pilot districts to ensure their data submissions are complete and accurate. The purpose of this data distribution is to help pilot districts and the Department to learn more about this student achievement measure as part of the piloting process. The methodology used to provide this mSGP data was employed for the purposes of the pilot, and is not intended to signal the methodology to be used in future years as such policy decisions will be proposed in forthcoming regulations.

Consistent with the objectives of the pilot *the state is not prescribing individual or school-based actions – either consequences or recognition – based on this data*. We have asked pilot districts to identify ways in which the data could inform individual teachers' professional development and to share these ideas – along with any other suggestions, concerns, and feedback – with the Department. If a pilot district chooses to use the data in any manner related to personnel actions, it must be done confidentially per N.J.S.A 18A:6-121(d).

Distribution of Growth Data to All Districts

Beginning with SY13-14, [mSGP](#) data for all qualifying teachers across the state will be provided to all districts not only as part of educator evaluations, but as a useful measure of students' academic progress. The Department will detail the use of mSGP scores in calculating teachers' summative evaluation ratings in forthcoming regulations. Lessons learned from the distribution of this data to our pilot districts will inform decisions, and we will share more information when it is available.