



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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August 18, 2015

**TO:** Chief School Administrators  
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 Update

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As the final weeks of summer approach, I know you are busy preparing for a successful start to the 2015-16 school year. At the Department of Education, we seek to support you by providing updated resources and relevant information in time for your back to school training and professional development activities. Therefore, this memo provides updates about evaluation for the coming year, along with an update on our new Achievement Coaches initiative. Please visit the [AchieveNJ Website](#) for all evaluation resources and send any questions and feedback to [educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us). Thank you for all of your efforts in support of teachers and students.

## **I. Important Notices for 2015-16**

### **A. 2015-16 Evaluation Component Weights**

As announced in this [August 5 memo](#), the weights of each component of teacher and principal evaluation will remain the same in 2015-16, with the Student Growth Percentile (SGP) component weighted at 10 percent for all qualifying educators.

### **B. Use of AchieveNJ for New Provisional Teacher Evaluations**

In June 2015, the Department presented a comprehensive package of updates to teacher preparation and certification requirements at proposal level to the State Board of Education. This package is intended to help better support teachers as they prepare to enter the profession and in the first few years in the classroom. Please see this [broadcast memo](#) describing the research, rationale, and educator collaboration that support this proposal.

One key change for school year 2015-16 applies to the evaluation of **new** provisional teachers (those starting in 2015-16) for standard certification. The new regulations would require these new candidates to be evaluated by the building principal using the AchieveNJ system, and to earn ratings of Effective or Highly Effective within two of three consecutive years to be eligible for the standard certificate. Previous requirements stated that provisional teachers holding the Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS) and the Certificate of Eligibility (CE) must be evaluated and recommended by their building principal based on one year of observations in order to earn the standard certificate, which was a separate process from the teacher evaluations under AchieveNJ. Please see the [certification website](#) for more information. Upon adoption of the regulations, the Department will provide additional guidance.

### **C. ScIP Membership Requirements**

Please note that according to the *TEACHNJ Act* regulations, **any teacher serving on the School Improvement Panel (ScIP) as of the 2015-16 school year must have earned a rating of Effective or Highly Effective on the most recent summative evaluation.** Requirements also state that the ScIP teacher member(s) will serve for a full academic year but may not be appointed for more than three consecutive years. Therefore, schools with the same teacher(s) serving since 2013-14 should consider a process for changing the membership for 2016-17. Please consult our [ScIP Guidance](#) document for full requirements and best practices shared by educators.

## **II. Resources and Initiative Updates**

### **A. Best Practices and Resources to Improve the Evaluation Process**

In response to requests from many educators, the Office of Evaluation has collaborated with educators to develop a resource aimed at helping evaluators improve the accuracy and add value to the teacher evaluation process. This tool consists of a [table with embedded resources](#) that provide a framework for addressing some of the challenges inherent in evaluating and supporting teachers.

We intend for this document to evolve over time to provide more targeted and updated resources as they become available.

## **B. Updated Resources**

The [AchieveNJ Website](#) has been updated with current materials for the 2015-16 school year. Please visit the [Document Library](#) for a full list of resources by topic area.

### SGOs

State SGO *requirements* are the same for 2015-16. The Department has improved *guidance and best practices* based on educator feedback over the past several years. Our updated [SGO 2.1 Guidebook](#) – an update to last year’s SGO 2.0 – includes recommendations to improve the development process and value of SGOs. As announced last month, the Office of Evaluation is hosting a new series of free “SGO 2.1” workshops continuing through September. Please visit the [event registration page](#) for more information. In addition, expanded SGO examples and other resources will be posted on our website in the coming months.

## **C. Achievement Coaches Update**

We are pleased to provide an update on the new Achievement Coaches program, launched last school year in an effort to recognize and empower some of New Jersey’s best educators by compensating them to develop and provide high-quality professional development for peers across the state. In July, 150 educators representing 19 districts came together for an intensive, week-long Summer Institute to prepare for their roles as Achievement Coaches. Throughout the week, educators from the three districts selected to develop peer training sessions led the Achievement Coaches through those sessions, covering the following topics:

1. Teacher Practice to Foster Intellectual Engagement
2. Standards-Aligned Assessments
3. Professional Growth Through Evidence-Based Conversations

All participants collaborated to help improve the sessions and make necessary adjustments so that the peer training will work effectively for each local district. The Department is grateful to Princeton School District for hosting the Summer Institute at Princeton High School, and to all of the educators who spent the week working hard to make this innovative model as successful as possible. Educators had the following to say about their week with the Office of Evaluation team:

I feel validated as a teacher, and empowered as an Achievement Coach.  
~Mary Cittadino, Little Egg Harbor

It was one of the best experiences I have ever had in 28 years in education. I look forward to keeping this momentum and energy going.  
~Michele McCaffrey, Mantua

I would love the opportunity to continue this process and work with educators in improving their practices and sharing their knowledge.

~John Davis, Maurice River

Following the Institute, the Achievement Coaches have begun sharing the three sessions with peers at home and in partner districts. Participants are completing surveys to help the Achievement Coaches and the Department make ongoing improvements to the training and the program structure.

All details about this program, including additional educator feedback, photographs, and resources, may be found on the [Achievement Coaches web page](#). We will continue to provide updates on the progress of the training and on plans for the future of the Achievement Coaches initiative in the coming months. We will also share the full session materials when they become available.

Enjoy the end of your summer and best wishes for a successful new school year.

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c: Members, State Board of Education  
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