



State of New Jersey  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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October 7, 2014

**TO:** Chief School Administrators  
Charter School Lead Persons  
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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I hope your school year is off to a great start. I am writing today to share information about updated regulations and state support and resources for AchieveNJ implementation. Please review the information below and visit the [AchieveNJ website](#) for all evaluation-related information. As always I invite you to send any comments or questions to [educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us).

**I. Reminder for 8<sup>th</sup>-Grade Math Teachers to Set Two Student Growth Objectives**

Last week, Assistant Commissioner Bari Erlichson sent a memo explaining the transition from NJASK to PARCC assessments and the implications for 8<sup>th</sup>-grade math. As Dr. Erlichson explained, starting this year, 8th-grade Algebra I students will take the PARCC Algebra I test in lieu of the grade-level PARCC test. Until we have at least one year of PARCC data, we will not calculate Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) between 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math. Therefore, **the state will not provide student, educator, or schoolwide SGPs for 2014-2015 for 8<sup>th</sup>-grade math.**

In order to account for this, **all 2014-2015 8<sup>th</sup>-grade math teachers must set two Student Growth Objectives (SGOs) by October 31.** If any district anticipates problems meeting this requirement for 8<sup>th</sup>-grade math teachers, the Department will consider very limited waivers to address individual circumstances. Districts should file such waivers as soon as possible and can contact [educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us) for guidance.

## II. Adoption of Updates to Evaluation Regulations

On October 1, the State Board of Education adopted updates to evaluation regulations originally proposed in April. As previously announced, the updates are intended to make the rules clearer and less burdensome through various clarification amendments (definitions, grammatical adjustments, etc.) and the following requirement changes, which are effective for the 2014-15 school year:

- Slightly delay the deadline for setting Student Growth Objectives (SGOs) and administrator goals, changing it from October 15 to October 31. **Note: As this deadline approaches, please be sure administrators and teachers are finalizing and recording SGOs for the 2014-15 school year. Several resources to support this work are available on our [SGO web page](#).**
- Amend the SGO personnel file procedure so SGOs are filed at the end of the year, not at multiple intervals to ease burden (note: SGOs remain part of the personal evaluation record that is confidential by law).
- Adjust the February 15 deadline for adjusting the SGOs of teachers of second semester courses or who start teaching later in the year to address unique issues such as block scheduling in high schools.
- Remove the December 1 deadline for completion of at least one co-observation to give districts more flexibility with implementation (note: two co-observations are still required at some point in the school year).
- Allow tenured teachers who agree to the process and who are not on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to conduct pre-conferences via written communication (including electronic) to give districts more flexibility.
- Amend written requirements of the observation report so districts can use electronic versions to save time.
- Clarify that a teacher present for less than 40 percent of the total school days in an academic year must receive at least two observations to earn a teacher practice score. For more information on evaluating teachers with extended absences, please see this [updated guidance](#).

## III. School Improvement Panel (ScIP) Workshops

As announced last month, the Office of Evaluation is conducting a series of fall ScIP workshops focused on the effective use of data to inform decision-making and collaborative planning to integrate promising practices from around the state. We strongly encourage local ScIP members to consider attending these sessions, which will include information-sharing as well as questions from the Department to attendees to better understand useful supports for ScIP activities. The chart below includes new sessions added to the original list in response to demand.

| Date              | Location  | Time          | Registration             |
|-------------------|---|---------------|--------------------------|
| October 16, 2014  | NJPSA<br><a href="#">Monroe Township</a>                                  | 10 am – 12 pm | Capacity Reached         |
|                   |   | 1 pm – 3 pm   | <a href="#">Register</a> |
| October 21, 2014  | Bergen Community College<br><a href="#">Paramus Campus</a>                | 10 am – 12 pm | Capacity Reached         |
|                   |   | 1 pm – 3 pm   | <a href="#">Register</a> |
| October 30, 2014  | Berkeley Township Elementary School<br><a href="#">Bayville</a>           | 10 am – 12 pm | <a href="#">Register</a> |
|                   |   | 1 pm – 3 pm   | <a href="#">Register</a> |
| November 5, 2014  | Collingswood Community Center<br><a href="#">Collingswood</a>             | 10 am – 12 pm | <a href="#">Register</a> |
|                   |   | 1 pm – 3 pm   | <a href="#">Register</a> |
| November 13, 2014 | Cumberland County Technical Education Center<br><a href="#">Bridgeton</a> | 10 am – 12 pm | <a href="#">Register</a> |
|                   |   | 1 pm – 3 pm   | <a href="#">Register</a> |

Please visit the [Events and Forums web page](#) for more details.

#### IV. Change in Leadership of Office of Evaluation

As announced at the State Board meeting on October 1, Timothy Matheney, the Director of the Office of the Evaluation for over two years, has been promoted to a new role as Chief Intervention Officer for the Department. As many of you know, Tim has been instrumental in collaborating with educators across the state to develop and continue to improve AchieveNJ. Having come to us directly from the principalship at South Brunswick High School, Tim always remained grounded in the educator perspective. I know he will continue to guide evaluation activities in his new role working directly with districts.

Carl Blanchard, a 2010-11 Somerset County Teacher of the Year who has served as the Policy Director for the Office of Evaluation for two years, will serve as Interim Director of the office for the coming months. I have utmost confidence in Carl's ability to lead our important work together to support implementation and continue to improve state policies and procedures.

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c: Members, State Board of Education  
David Hespe, Acting Commissioner  
Senior Staff  
Diane Shoener  
William Firestone  
Todd Kent  
Linda Reddy

Executive County Superintendents  
Executive Directors of Regional  
Achievement Centers  
Executive County Business Officials  
Garden State Coalition of Schools  
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