

The Bridge

ISSUE
13
March
2014

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



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You can learn about how the first self-assessment process under the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act was conducted in every school and district in the article on the NJDOE's first release of anti-bullying grades.

We all know that PARCC is coming and you can acquaint yourself with sample items in the article on resources to prepare for PARCC testing.

For more PARCC preparation, you can view the webinar on NJTRAx Interactive Reports which will be useful for the analysis of test results.

In Updates on AchieveNJ you can learn how to calculate an approximate summative rating using the Summative Evaluation Rating Calculator. Or you can study the user guide to learn more about the non-consequential teacher mSGP scores released to districts last month. You can also find new guidance on evaluating teachers on extended leaves of absence, new resources for District Evaluation Advisory Committees (DEACs), and an invitation to try out the new AchieveNJ website redesign.

Need help with creating Personalized Student Learning Plans? Join one of the two regional workshops being offered in April by the department's Office of Career and Technical Education.

The Department of Education is also hosting two webinars, along with a public comment opportunity, on our statewide science standards.

The NJ Department of Education Releases the First Set of Anti-bullying Grades

This month, parents throughout New Jersey will begin seeing an anti-bullying grade on their school district's website as a result of a new reporting system required by state statute and implemented by the state Department of Education.

A provision in the state's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (N.J.S.A. 18A:17-46) requires the Commissioner of Education to develop a program to grade the efforts of each public school and school district to address bullying in the school environment.

In fulfilling its statutory obligation, the Department of Education (DOE) created a 20-page self-assessment form that each school completed to measure how well it met the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act. Each school's grade is a raw score from 0 to 75 (e.g., 65 of 75).

Each school's self-assessment grade must be posted on the school's website. The grade for the school district is calculated by averaging the grades of each school in the district and must be posted on the district website.

The self-assessment measured adherence to the anti-bullying law from January 5, 2011 to June 30, 2013. Schools were provided with a rubric to rate their performance in eight categories, including programs to prevent harassment, intimidation and bullying; staff training; student curriculum and instruction; proper staffing; and reporting and investigation procedures.

Throughout the process, local school officials have had the opportunity to provide input into the process, receive technical assistance from the DOE, and review their grades. The process included:

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Resources to Support Preparation for State Tests



Developed by the **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)**
(www.state.nj.us/education/assessment/050211parcc.pdf)

On January 22, 2014, PARCC released sample test items on the testing platform students will use when taking the field test later this spring. Previously, items were available only as downloadable printouts. Now, these fully functional sample test questions allow educators and students to experience the new testing format before it becomes fully operational in spring 2015.

Educators are encouraged to try the items across all grade levels in order to develop a true understanding of the assessment's range of rigor, item types and functionalities - from a new take on traditional multiple choice-style questions aided by technology to longer tasks that require students to show their understanding.

In reading and writing, students will have to show they can read and understand complex passages, write persuasively and present findings based on research. In mathematics, students will have to show their work and demonstrate that they understand a concept rather than simply memorizing a formula. They will have to apply mathematics knowledge in real-world problems. To express their understandings, students will have to use computer-based tools such as drag-and-drop, multiple select, text highlighting, and equation builder.

By using the online tutorials that demonstrate how students will navigate the test, educators can learn how to use the computer-based tools and features that make the test more accessible for all students, including those with disabilities and English learners.

(<http://parconline.org/computer-based-samples>)

Navigating PARCC Reporting



A webinar was conducted by the NJ Department of Education on February 19, 2014 to review NJTRAx upgrades, including a new interactive reporting feature that will give educators the ability to create and print real-time technology readiness reports at the school and district levels, based on your current NJTRAx data. The webinar archive can be found at:

<http://tinyurl.com/NJTRAx021914>.



AchieveNJ Updates

User Guide Available for Using Median Student Growth Percentile Data

As reported last month, on February 4 the department gave all districts secure access to median Student Growth Percentile (mSGP) scores for each qualifying teacher from 2012–13. Such data does not apply to 2013–14 evaluations, but was provided for informational and learning purposes. School principals and supervisors were asked to share the confidential mSGP reports individually with each teacher. Administrators were asked to help teachers understand how mSGPs are derived, how 2013–14 scores will factor into the evaluation when available next year, and how mSGP data may be used in conjunction with other measures to identify professional learning opportunities. We strongly encourage teachers who receive mSGP reports to carefully read the detailed User Guide (www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/percentile/mSGPuserguide.pdf) for more information on this data release.

Calculate Your Rating with the Summative Evaluation Rating Calculator

The department has launched a simple “[Calculate Your Rating](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/scoring.shtml)” tool (www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/scoring.shtml) that lets teachers easily determine a summative rating based on potential practice and student growth scores. Official summative ratings are calculated by an educator's district/NJDOE, but this tool can help educators get a sense of how the various components of an individual's evaluation can affect a summative score.



Guidance on Evaluating Teachers with Extended Leaves/Absences

The department recently published guidance on the evaluation of teachers with extended leaves of absence during the school year. This guidance applies to teachers on maternity leave, those hired part-way through a school year, long-term substitutes, and other circumstances. You can access the guidance here: www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/extendedleave.pdf

District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) Resources

The department is committed to providing regular updates that may be useful for DEACs. These will be distributed to districts in a variety of ways, including updates on the [DEAC Corner](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/deac/) (www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/deac/). Here, you will find sample meeting agendas and other useful materials for DEAC use. If any member of a DEAC has questions or feedback for the department – or would like to share sample agendas or resources with other districts – please e-mail educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us. We also encourage educators who are not currently involved in the DEAC to ask their administrators how they may contribute to the success of this committee and to educator evaluation in general.

AchieveNJ Website Improvements

In response to comments from educators, and by using their specific feedback regarding design, the department has recently updated the entire AchieveNJ website. The streamlined site, accessed at www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/, is designed to make key resources and answers to top questions easier to find. If you like the new site or have ideas for ways we can make it even better, please let us know by e-mailing educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us.

Regional Meetings Being Held on Next Generation Science Standards

The New Jersey Department of Education has scheduled two webinars in March about what students in grades K-12 should know and be able to do in the content area of science.

These meetings will inform whether the department will propose adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) to the State Board of Education later this year. These standards were developed through a collaborative effort among 26 states, including New Jersey. The project was managed by Achieve, an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit education reform organization that works with states to raise academic standards and graduation requirements, improve assessments, and strengthen accountability. NGSS is based on the Framework for K-12 Science Education, which was developed by the National Research Council.

Members of New Jersey's education community and the general public are encouraged to participate in the second webinar, which will be held on **Friday, March 21, 2014 from 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.**

People interested in participating must register on the Calendar of Events webpage:

<http://education.state.nj.us/events/all>

Comments can also be sent to the Department of Education via email at: science@doe.state.nj.us

Information about NGSS can be found the following site: <http://www.nextgenscience.org>

The NJ Department of Education Offers Regional Workshops to Learn about Implementing Personalized Student Learning Plans (PSLPs)

The New Jersey Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Education will host two regional half-day professional development workshops for school districts and charter schools interested in implementing Personalized Student Learning Plans (PSLPs). Administrators, teachers and counselors interested in learning about PSLP implementation should attend. The dates, times and locations for the workshops are:

April 1, 2014 – 8:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Camden County Technical School
Gloucester Township Campus
343 Berlin Cross Keys Road
Sicklerville, NJ 08081

April 8, 2014 – 8:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Somerset County Vocational Technical High School
14 Vogt Drive
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

There is limited capacity, so register early. There is no registration fee and prospective attendees should register by visiting the NJDOE website registration page at:

<http://education.state.nj.us/events/month/?month=04&year=2014>

From 2009-2012, 14 middle schools and high schools participated in a pilot program to develop and implement PSLPs. Select schools that participated in the PSLP pilot program will share their successes and challenges of implementation with participants to assist them in understanding how a PSLP program supports students in setting academic and career goals. Participants will also have an opportunity to learn about the New Jersey Career Assistance Navigator (NJCAN), a state-supported, free online career exploration and planning tool that can be helpful in implementing PSLPs.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Career and Technical Education, at 609-633-0665.

First Set of Anti-bullying Grades

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- Development of the self-assessment in consultation with school district representatives from all 21 counties; experts in school climate and anti-bullying strategies from higher education, child advocacy and human service organizations; professional associations; and state agencies.
- Certification by chief school administrators that the self-assessments were completed by the School Safety Teams in each school.
- Approval of the completed self-assessments by the board of education at a public meeting.

- Efforts by the department to ensure that all districts and charter schools submitted completed self-assessments.
- A final review of the grades was provided to school and district officials prior to their release.

Local school boards are encouraged to use the results of the self-assessment to improve anti-bullying efforts. The DOE will use the data to guide the design of professional development and technical assistance for local school staff.

Now that all districts have completed and submitted their data, the department is prepared to work with districts to promote accurate assessments as the program continues in the coming years.

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.

March 2014

March 21, 2014 – EQUIP (Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products) – ELA – Time: 8:30 am – 4:00 pm;
Location: East Windsor

EQUIP (Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products) is an initiative of the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network designed to identify high-quality materials aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The objective of this workshop is to build capacity of educators to align lesson and unit plans with the Common Core State Standards. The purpose of this professional development is to train educators in the use of the EQUIP rubric to align lessons and units to the ELA CCSS. For more information, go to education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=20420

March 27, 2014 – Living Voices – Time: 4:00 – 6:00 pm; Location: Cherry Hill

Experience a revolution in educational theatre. Be transported to a watershed moment in time. Explore the past and find your own place in history. Living Voices brings you dynamic solo performances uniquely combined with film and sound to turn history into a moving, personal journey. Discover the extraordinary impact our own choices have on history. For more information, visit education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=20437

April 2014

April 3, 2014 – Educator's Program - A Forensics Approach to Holocaust Education –

Time: 4:00 – 6:00 pm; Location: Princeton

This professional development workshop will focus on using primary resources to piece together a history, with a special emphasis on the Holocaust. Teachers will learn how to encourage their students to examine documents to uncover historic facts, using a variety of documents from a multitude of sources, including archives, museums, family letters and even Google. For more information, visit education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=20528.

April 7, 2014 – Teaching Ratio and Proportion in Grades 6 and 7 – South –

Time: 8:30 am – 4:00 pm; Location: Galloway

The Common Core State Standards have a strong emphasis on ratio and proportion for grades 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, visit <http://education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=20586>

April 17, 21 or 22, 2014 – T– K-5 Modeling – South – Time: 8:30 am – 3:00 pm;

Location: Various

Modeling is one of the eight Mathematical Practices and is a strong focus of the standards at all grade levels. This session will demonstrate how to effectively use mathematical models to support student understanding of abstract concepts by tying them to more concrete models. Participants will get to see a wide range of topics from grades K-5 and instructional strategies focused on a variety of model types.

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