

Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee

EPAC

Final Report  
2013



State of New Jersey  
Department of Education

## Contents

Letter from Commissioner Cerf .....	2
Introduction .....	3
Part One: Educator Evaluation Reform in New Jersey: Background, Timeline, and Educator Involvement ....	4
1.1 Rationale for Evaluation Reform.....	4
1.2 Timeline of Events and Involvement of Educators .....	4
Part Two: How Educators Shaped Evaluation Policy in New Jersey .....	6
2.1 Involving Educators in Shaping New Evaluations .....	6
2.2 Explanation of EPAC Recommendations.....	7
2.3 Other Decisions.....	13
2.4 Summary .....	14
Part Three: Practical Advice from Pilot Districts for Teacher Evaluation .....	15
3.1 Planning for Success.....	15
3.2 Communicating with Transparency and Consistency .....	17
3.3 Conducting Thorough Training and Thoughtful Implementation.....	21
3.4 Promoting Data-Driven Decision-Making .....	27
Part Four: Principal Evaluation Pilot .....	34
4.1 Background .....	34
4.2 Policy Decisions in Principal Evaluation .....	35
4.3 Practical Advice from Pilot Districts for Principal Evaluation.....	38
Part Five: Looking Ahead: Challenges and Opportunities for AchieveNJ.....	41
Conclusion.....	42
Appendices.....	44
Appendix A: Glossary and Acronyms .....	44
Appendix B: Teacher Pilot Districts Years 1 and 2 .....	47
Appendix C: Principal Pilot Districts.....	48
Appendix D: AchieveNJ: Resources Guide .....	49
Appendix E: Sample Teacher Evaluation Schedule for AchieveNJ Implementation.....	51
Appendix F: Teacher Observation Data by Cohort, Observer, and Teacher.....	53
Appendix G: Appointed Members of the EPAC .....	54

## Letter from Commissioner Cerf

On behalf of the New Jersey Department of Education, I would like to thank the members of the Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee – as well as the thousands of educators across our evaluation pilot districts – for their collaboration over the past three years. As the lessons captured in this report reveal, our work together has been critically important in developing sound policies for statewide implementation of improved evaluations. As we work to better connect all elements of an educator’s professional lifecycle, we know that the information we glean from more meaningful evaluations will serve as a vital link.

As evaluation reform continues across the country, New Jersey is leading by example by involving those most impacted – teachers and school leaders – in the development of more meaningful evaluations and support structures. Ultimately, we all share the same goal: ensuring that every student in our state has access to a high-quality education – and that every educator is given timely and meaningful feedback and opportunities for growth. Thanks to the hard work of our pilot participants and this advisory group, we know a lot more about the successes and challenges of improving evaluations in classrooms, schools, and districts.

When analyzing the findings outlined in this report, we should consider the context of the work. Following the 2011 recommendations of our Educator Effectiveness Task Force, we set forth on a careful and deliberative path. The unanimously-passed, bipartisan TEACHNJ Act, signed by Governor Christie on August 6, 2012, captured the initial recommendations of our evaluation pilot program and codified improvements to antiquated systems of the past. The regulations we proposed in March of 2013 elaborated on the requirements of the law; we responded to hundreds of comments and incorporated educator feedback into the final regulations, which were adopted in September. Over the past nine months, we have engaged in a concerted effort to communicate information about AchieveNJ (our new evaluation and support system) and to work with districts to support implementation of the new system across the state. Please visit our extensive website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/> to access all of the materials and resources we have published and to learn more about the opportunities before us.

The policies incorporated in AchieveNJ reflect the input of educators and the best interests of students. Grounded in research and practical experience, AchieveNJ aims to provide rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluations linked to professional growth opportunities. With a focus on educator practice and student learning, the system is intended to help educators better understand the impact of their instructional practices on student growth. AchieveNJ is also designed as a system of continuous improvement; our ongoing dialogue with educators and other stakeholders will allow the system to grow with the needs of the state.

All New Jersey students deserve effective educators who can help prepare them for success in college and careers. All New Jersey educators deserve clear, high expectations as well as opportunities to grow as professionals. I am proud of the work we have done to date, and confident that New Jersey educators will continue to rise to the occasion to help all students succeed.

Sincerely,

Christopher D. Cerf  
Commissioner of Education

## Introduction

This report represents the work of New Jersey’s Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC) from 2011-2013. The EPAC [Interim Report](#), published in February 2013, summarized the establishment of the EPAC, key lessons learned from the 2011-12 teacher evaluation pilot, and recommendations for statewide roll-out of a more effective educator evaluation system. This final report emphasizes the experiences and lessons learned from the second year of the teacher evaluation pilot and the 2012-13 principal evaluation pilot based on interviews, surveys, and discussions with EPAC participants and pilot district staff.<sup>1</sup> The writing and recommendations within are the result of a collaborative effort between representatives of the EPAC and the New Jersey Department of Education (“the Department”). While this report attempts to capture EPAC’s work as thoroughly and fairly as possible, any particular recommendation or viewpoint expressed does not necessarily represent the opinion of all members of the committee.

The report includes five sections:

- Part One outlines the background and context for evaluation reform in New Jersey.
- Part Two describes how policy decisions for AchieveNJ, New Jersey’s educator evaluation system, were informed by the pilot program and the EPAC.
- Part Three provides practical advice for districts in implementing AchieveNJ.
- Part Four focuses on the lessons learned from New Jersey’s principal pilot districts.
- Part Five provides perspective on the opportunities and challenges that districts will face during the first few years of implementing AchieveNJ.

---

<sup>1</sup> Some quotations and data are kept anonymous to protect the confidentiality of the districts and educators involved.

# Part One: Educator Evaluation Reform in New Jersey: Background, Timeline, and Educator Involvement

## 1.1 Rationale for Evaluation Reform

New Jersey, like the majority of states across the country, has taken on the challenge of developing an evaluation system that more fairly and accurately measures educator performance. This work stemmed from a growing body of research and national education priorities that emphasize the importance of teacher quality on student achievement – and the inadequacy of old evaluation systems. The findings of [The Widget Effect](#),<sup>2</sup> a 2009 study of evaluation policies and practices in 12 school districts across four states, found most teachers were rated good or excellent in their evaluations, despite the fact that significant student achievement gaps and poor graduation rates persist. Evaluation reforms seek to provide schools with effective systems that encourage all teachers to engage in a cycle of continuous improvement.

At the national level, the Obama administration’s education reform agenda identifies improving educator effectiveness as a key priority. Both Race to the Top and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility process, for example, have required state commitments to reforming evaluation systems.

Like all states undertaking this work, New Jersey’s previous state evaluation policies did not clearly differentiate performance among educators, ensure adequate feedback and opportunities for professional development, or produce quality data to inform staffing decisions. Therefore, improving educator evaluation was critical to both the state’s \$38 million Race to the Top III award and the approved ESEA waiver. A shared commitment among educators, policymakers, and legislators to improving New Jersey’s evaluation procedures was also codified in the 2012 TEACHNJ Act, which is described later in this section. For a list of key terms and acronyms used in this report, please view the Glossary in [Appendix A](#).

## 1.2 Timeline of Events and Involvement of Educators

As the first key step in New Jersey’s evaluation reform effort, Governor Chris Christie created the Educator Effectiveness Task Force (EETF) by Executive Order in September of 2010. The EETF was composed of nine members with a range of education experience. The group was charged with developing recommendations to guide the creation of an evaluation system that utilizes both student achievement and educator practice. In March 2011, the [EETF presented its report](#)<sup>3</sup> with a series of recommendations.

Informed by the guidance of the EETF, the Department launched a teacher evaluation pilot grant program with ten districts (Teacher Pilot 1) in 2011. At the onset of this initiative, Commissioner Chris Cerf convened the Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC) to help inform the development of improved educator evaluations for statewide rollout. The EPAC initially represented broad professional experience and educational perspectives. The appointees included teachers, principals, superintendents, and representatives of educational associations, parent groups, and higher education. The initial group of appointees was joined by representatives of each pilot district early in School Year (SY) 11-12. This committee met monthly and made a series of recommendations based on the first year of pilot experiences and current research in evaluation. The [EPAC Interim Report](#), published in February 2013, documents these recommendations and other findings from the first year of the pilot program. In addition, the Department contracted with the Rutgers University Graduate School of Education (RUGSE)

---

<sup>2</sup> [www.widgeteffect.org](http://www.widgeteffect.org)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.state.nj.us/education/educators/effectiveness.pdf>

for an external evaluation of the pilot. The [RUGSE Year 1 Report](#) also explores various elements of the SY11-12 pilot.

The most important recommendation from the EPAC that came mid-way through the first pilot year was to extend the pilot into SY12-13 and implement improved evaluations across the state in SY13-14. Heeding this advice, the Department agreed to expand the pilot program to include another year of teacher evaluation piloting (Teacher Pilot 2) and to add a principal evaluation component (Principal Pilot). This extra year provided the EPAC and the Department more information with which to make recommendations and policy decisions. In addition, SY12-13 became a capacity building year for all other districts in the state. Districts were instructed to use this year to select and begin training on teacher and principal observation instruments and to become familiar with other components of the evaluation system.

The EPAC continued to meet monthly during SY12-13 and expanded to include representatives from the additional pilot districts. One-hundred educators from around the state came together monthly at EPAC meetings to share their experiences with the Department. These meetings were crucial in informing the Department’s decisions and guidance for all of New Jersey’s school districts. Figure 1.1 provides a snapshot of the scope of the involvement of EPAC and the educators involved in the pilot program.<sup>4</sup> A more detailed list of the districts involved in pilot activities can be found in [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix C](#).

*Figure 1.1: Scope of educator involvement in evaluation pilots.*

Venue/Group of Educators	Number
EPAC meetings	15
EPAC members	~100
Pilot districts and consortia <sup>5</sup>	30
Pilot schools	219
Pilot teachers	7, 354
Pilot Principals and Assistant/Vice Principals	276

The remainder of this report describes the interaction between pilot districts, the EPAC, and the Department, and the policy decisions and recommendations that this partnership produced.

---

<sup>4</sup> The numbers in the table reflect all the educators who were present in teacher and principal pilot districts. These numbers do not include educators in Newark Public Schools. Newark participated informally in the evaluation pilot program but shared information with the Department.

<sup>5</sup> Three pilots consisted of multiple districts that shared training and resources.

## Part Two: How Educators Shaped Evaluation Policy in New Jersey

### 2.1 Involving Educators in Shaping New Evaluations

On August 6, 2012, the [TEACHNJ Act](#) was signed into law by Governor Christie. The law, sponsored by Senate Education Committee Chair Teresa Ruiz and supported by a unanimous legislative vote, is the result of more than two years of collaboration. Through legislative hearings, research conducted by the New Jersey Educator Effectiveness Task Force, and the input of many stakeholders, the law lays out new processes for earning and maintaining tenure that are linked to improved evaluation systems. The New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA), and New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) were among the stakeholder groups that supported the passage of the TEACHNJ Act. Unlike many other states across the country, New Jersey's tenure and evaluation legislation was informed by the experience and recommendations of educators in the state.

In March 2013, the Department proposed a [series of regulations](#) that elaborate on evaluation requirements and launched a statewide outreach initiative to explain the new system, AchieveNJ, to educators across the state. The Department gathered feedback from educators and other stakeholders during the official comment and response period and made related adjustments to the regulations that were adopted by the State Board in September. The policies reflected in AchieveNJ, like the bill they support, were developed through a deliberative process of collaboration and research.

Most notably, many of the evaluation policies were informed by substantial input from the EPAC and New Jersey's 30 pilot districts. These districts implemented components of a new system between 2011 and 2013. The recommendations of pilot district educators shaped the evolution of AchieveNJ, from expanding the pilots and providing a capacity-building year in SY12-13, to prescribing multiple observers for new teachers in SY13-14. The table in Figure 2.1 below provides a summary of the key decisions made regarding teacher evaluation.<sup>6</sup> Following this table, Part 2.2 of this report describes in detail how these decisions were made.

**Figure 2.1: Key decisions informed by EPAC and the evaluation pilot program.**

Decision	Description	Benefit
1	Adopt a second year of pilots and provide a capacity-building year for all other school districts in 2012-13.	Expand the pilot program to gather more information before full implementation. Provide a year for districts to choose, train in, and pilot an observation instrument, and build collaboration through District Evaluation Advisory Committees (DEACs) and School Improvement Panels (ScIPs). Provide time to prepare for and train in Student Growth Objectives (SGOs).
2	Simplify the evaluation rubric in the first year of full implementation by requiring the fewest number of components allowed by law.	Enable districts to focus on one measure of teacher practice and one measure of student achievement in the form of SGOs.

<sup>6</sup> Decisions surrounding principal evaluation are described in [Part Four](#) of this report. An annotated guide to all available resources explaining AchieveNJ can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Decision	Description	Benefit
3	Convene a DEAC in every district.	Help ensure stakeholder involvement in planning, providing feedback, enhancing communication, and generally ensuring collaboration in district evaluation activities.
4	Provide choice from a wide variety of high quality observation instruments.	Avoid limiting districts to one state-mandated instrument while providing quality assurance.
5	Provide district flexibility in the implementation of evaluation training but require it to be completed before evaluations begin.	Enable districts to decide how training can best be structured to account for local circumstances. Help ensure observers and teachers share similar understandings of effective instruction and increase the value and accuracy of the observation process.
6	Provide a balanced number and length of observations by requiring all teachers to receive at least 3. Tenured teachers may receive shorter observations.	Improve the quality and quantity of data gathered during the observation process. Ensure teachers receive more performance appraisals. Enable administrators to dedicate more time to supporting new and struggling teachers.
7	Support teachers with frequent pre- and post-observation conferences.	Provide more meaningful feedback and support. Increase professional dialogue between teachers and administrators.
8	Balance announced and unannounced observations.	Enable observers to more accurately assess a teacher's performance while requiring post-conferences for each observation so that useful feedback is provided to teachers.
9	Support new teachers with multiple observers.	Encourage a collaborative approach in the observation process and provide feedback from multiple perspectives.
10	Continually improve rater accuracy using double scoring.	Improve the quality of observations and the type of feedback teachers receive. Provide a professional development opportunity for observers to work together and improve their skills.
11	Acknowledge the learning curve with SGOs.	Weight SGOs at 15% of a teacher's evaluation for the first year to allow districts to become familiar with the SGO process at a lower relative weighting.
12	Provide support and communications to districts in implementing new evaluations.	Offer detailed resources, guidance, and face-to-face communications from the Department to support districts in SGO work and other elements of AchieveNJ.

## 2.2 Explanation of EPAC Recommendations

### Recommendation 1: Adopt a Second Pilot/Capacity-Building Year

Most significant of the EPAC's recommendations was to use SY12-13 to learn more from an expanded pilot program while providing all other districts in New Jersey with a capacity-building year. This recommendation was acted on by the Department and codified in the [TEACHNJ Act](#). Extending the pilot program by an additional year allowed the Department to include more districts in the teacher pilot and add a principal evaluation component. The extra information gathered from a second pilot year was critical to many of the policy decisions outlined in this section.



Additionally, during this year, districts were required to select a state-approved evaluation instrument, conduct teacher and administrator training, and begin to test their evaluation instrument. Districts used SY12-13 to convene required district and school-level advisory committees. Further, the extra year provided time for districts to learn about SGOs and prepare for their implementation in SY13-14.

**Recommendation 2: Simplify the Evaluation Rubric in the First Year**

In the second year of evaluation pilot work, districts were asked to include five measures of teacher effectiveness; classroom observations; another measure of teacher practice, such as student surveys (see side box); Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) for teachers in tested grades and subjects; Student Growth Objectives (SGOs); and a school-wide student performance measure. As the year progressed, it became clear that many districts found it challenging to include all five components. Few districts were able to implement another measure of teacher practice and fewer still had a quality school-wide measure. This can be seen in Figure 2.2 below.

**Student Surveys**

Pemberton Township School District used the [Tripod Survey](#) to solicit student input on teacher performance. Data analysis showed that the survey results were positively correlated with observation and SGP scores, indicating that the survey is a valuable measure of teacher effectiveness. District leaders noted that the surveys provided important additional data about each classroom’s learning environment, which can help drive differentiated professional development and feedback for teachers.

Although the Department is committed to considering the possibility of additional evaluation components in future years, the pilot experience showed that it would be unwise to ask all districts in New Jersey to adopt these measures in the first year. Therefore, the Department chose to include the minimum number of measures allowable under the TEACHNJ Act in the first year of implementation; observations; SGOs; and SGPs for those teacher’s eligible. This will allow districts to focus on mastering the use of their chosen observation instrument and developing quality SGOs.

*Figure 2.2: Percent of districts implementing multiple measures in teacher evaluation.*

Focus of Measure	Measure	Teacher Pilot 1	Teacher Pilot 2	Total
Teacher Practice	Observations	100%	100%	100%
	Other Measure	55%	23%	38%
Student Achievement	Student Growth Percentile (SGP)	100% of districts will incorporate SGP data once the state provides it.		
	Student Growth Objective (SGO)	64%	85%	75%
	School-wide Measure	9%	8%	8%

**Recommendation 3: Convene a District Evaluation Advisory Committee**

As part of the pilot, districts were required to convene District Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committees (DEPACs).<sup>7</sup> The value of these groups, with their broad-based and diverse membership, became clear to the Department during the first year of piloting. Most districts agreed that their DEPAC was instrumental in keeping all stakeholders informed during implementation. Districts noted that having teachers and administrators work closely together to problem solve and make recommendations had

<sup>7</sup> DEPAC (and DEAC) membership requirements include; the superintendent; a special education administrator; a parent; a member of the district board of education; central office administrators overseeing the teacher evaluation process; administrators conducting evaluations; and representatives of teachers from each school level in the district.

great benefit; it increased the transparency of the evaluation process and increased buy-in from the staff in general. Based on this feedback, the TEACHNJ Act required all districts to convene a District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) in SY12-13. In regulations, the Department required all districts to utilize these committees until SY16-17, after which time they will be optional.

In addition to the district advisory group, the TEACHNJ Act mandated that as of February 2013, every school building must convene a School Improvement Panel (ScIP) consisting of at least the principal, an assistant/vice principal, and a teacher. The ScIP oversees implementation of evaluation, professional development, and mentoring at the school level, as explained in this [overview](#) on the AchieveNJ website. Although not a direct recommendation of the EPAC, this additional committee at the school level provides further opportunities for educators to provide input on evaluation and support structures.

#### **Recommendation 4: Provide Choice from a Wide Variety of High Quality Observation Instruments**

Some states have developed or adopted statewide educator practice instruments (more commonly known as observation instruments). Others have allowed districts to choose any instrument. When the Department asked the EPAC for a recommendation for New Jersey, the participants chose a third way: provide a list of rigorous instruments based on current professional standards and let districts choose from this list. The EPAC also recommended that if a district opts for an instrument not on the list or develops its own, it may apply to the Department to have it included. The Department adopted these recommendations, and the lists of [teacher practice instruments](#) and approved [principal practice instruments](#) continue to be updated as districts and providers apply for inclusion.

#### **Recommendation 5: Provide Flexibility for District Training Implementation**

While allowing districts to choose from a number of observation instruments provides more local discretion, this presents challenges to the state in standardizing expectations for training. Significant variation in training was observed in the first year of the pilot. According to the [RUGSE Year 1 Report](#)<sup>8</sup>, districts conducted between 3–12 hours of training for teachers, 13–37 hours for administrators, and used a wide variety of training methods. Training and monitoring procedures are discussed in more detail in [Part Three](#) of this report. Further, the number of hours devoted to training does not necessarily guarantee quality. Requiring a minimum number of hours may turn training into a compliance activity that rather than a thoughtful and thorough training process.

For these reasons, EPAC participants advised that rather than regulating the specific time and method of training, it should mandate that training occur and be of a high quality. The EPAC recommended the superintendent, as the leader of the district, should certify through a statement of assurance that training had occurred and was thorough. The results of these recommendations are that under AchieveNJ, educators must be trained thoroughly on the evaluation system (including the observation instrument), and the superintendent must certify that this has occurred. To ensure accurate observations and appropriate feedback, this training must occur prior to any observations being conducted for the purposes of evaluation.

#### **Recommendation 6: Provide a Balanced Number and Length of Observations**

Research clearly suggests that more frequent observations provide a more accurate picture of teaching<sup>9</sup>. Regular post-observation conferences also mean that teachers receive frequent feedback and support. Acknowledging this research, the Department required districts in Teacher Pilot 1 to provide all teachers with two or three formal observations and two informal observations where no paperwork or conference was required. In Year 2, pilot districts were asked to conduct between three and five shorter observations, depending on a teacher’s tenure status and whether they taught a “core” (Language Arts

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/resources/RUGSE11-12.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.metproject.org/downloads/MET\\_Ensuring\\_Fair\\_and\\_Reliable\\_Measures\\_Practitioner\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.metproject.org/downloads/MET_Ensuring_Fair_and_Reliable_Measures_Practitioner_Brief.pdf)

Literacy (LAL), math, social studies, and science) or “non-core” (all others) subject. When the observation plans for Year 2 were reviewed at an EPAC meeting, several members voiced concern that this differentiated approach between core and non-core teachers would be difficult to adopt and viewed by many as inequitable. After monitoring the first few months of Teacher Pilot 2 implementation and engaging in deeper conversations with educators, the Department decided not to mandate different numbers of observations for teachers of different subjects in AchieveNJ.

Throughout the pilot program districts struggled to conduct more observations than they had in previous years. Midway through Year 2, EPAC participants were asked to discuss how many observations of what length should be required for tenured and non-tenured teachers. There was general agreement that non-tenured teachers have more long observations than tenured teachers. However, EPAC’s recommendations varied for the number of observations teachers should receive. In summary, EPAC groups recommended that first- and second-year teachers receive three to five observations, those in their third and fourth years receive three to four, and tenured teachers receive two to three. Finally, it was recommended that teachers on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) have four to five observations or more.

In addition to these recommendations, the Department carefully considered concerns about administrative capacity shared by EPAC members and other educators. Based on this feedback and current research, the Department developed a flexible approach, summarized in Figure 2.3 below. As stated, these are minimums. The Department recognizes that districts may choose to complete more observations, increase their length, and add walk-throughs to the schedule as they see fit.

**Figure 2.3: Required minimum number and length of observations and conferences in AchieveNJ.**

Teacher Categories		Minimum Number of Observations Required	Conferences Required
<b>Non-tenured</b>	Years 1–2	<b>3</b> (2 long, 1 short)	Post-observation conferences for all observations. Pre-conferences for at least one announced observation.
	Years 3–4	<b>3</b> (1 long, 2 short)	
<b>Tenured</b>	Effective Highly Effective	<b>3</b> (3 short)	
<b>Corrective Action Plan</b>		<b>4</b> (long or short at district discretion)	

**Recommendation 7: Support Teachers with Frequent Pre- and Post-Observation Conferences**

Prior to AchieveNJ, administrators were required to conference with teachers following observations of non-tenured staff only. No pre-conferences were required for non-tenured teachers, and neither conferences nor actual observations were required for tenured teachers prior to the TEACHNJ Act. Even though many districts voluntarily adopted pre- and post-conferences for their teachers, all teachers in New Jersey should have these discussions with their administrators. Providing opportunities for professional discussion and growth is a clear recommendation of the Educator Effectiveness Task Force and a primary intent of the law. Pre- and post-conferences offer opportunities to do this and were required for all pilot district teachers during both pilot years.

Based on their experiences in pilot schools, EPAC members were asked about conferencing requirements for AchieveNJ. Their responses underscored the importance of these conversations. EPAC educators widely regarded post-conferences as valuable but cautioned that conducting these for every observation may create capacity issues in some schools. Additionally, they agreed that pre-conferences provide an important opportunity for teachers and administrators to discuss expectations for the forthcoming observation.

Using this input, the Department chose to adopt a balanced approach for observation conferences. This approach balances the value of the conferences for a teacher’s professional growth with the demands that conferences place on an administrator’s time. Therefore, in AchieveNJ, administrators must hold a post-observation conference for each of the minimum number of observations for every teacher (See Figure 2.3 on page 10). However, for tenured teachers rated Effective or Highly Effective, if the teacher agrees, the administrator may conduct the conference by written communication. Additionally, administrators must conduct a pre-conference with the teacher before at least one announced observation.

#### **Recommendation 8: Balance Announced and Unannounced Observations**

A combination of unannounced and announced observations was required for pilot districts. This practice enabled observers to develop a more accurate picture of a teacher’s work throughout the year. EPAC participants overwhelmingly supported the continuation of this practice in AchieveNJ. They also stressed the importance of having post-conferences after unannounced observations as well after announced observations. This provides for frequent dialogue between teacher and administrator and the potential for increased support and guidance. Thus, AchieveNJ requires that every teacher have at least one announced and one unannounced observation within the three required observations with post-conferences after each. The third required observation may be announced or unannounced at the district’s discretion.

#### **Recommendation 9: Support New Teachers with Multiple Observers**

EPAC members expressed overwhelming support for a requirement that teachers have more than one administrator observe them over the course of the year. This EPAC recommendation echoed research that suggests multiple trained observers lead to increased accuracy in assessing teacher performance.<sup>10</sup> Having more than one observer also benefits teachers. Not only do multiple observers increase the accuracy of a teacher’s observation rating, having another set of eyes in the classroom with a different perspective is likely to increase the professional support that a teacher receives.

For these reasons, AchieveNJ requires all non-tenured teachers and tenured teachers with Ineffective or Partially Effective ratings to have multiple observers over the course of the year. However, recognizing that school districts face a challenge in implementing more observations, the Department chose to provide some flexibility in the observation protocol for tenured teachers who are rated Effective or Highly Effective. In these cases, multiple trained observers are recommended but not required.

#### **Recommendation 10: Continually Improve Rater Accuracy by Using Co-observations**

Teacher Pilot 1 districts reported great merit conducting co-observations in which two observers watch and score the same lesson. This potentially increased the accuracy of the rating provided to the teacher. In addition, it allowed the raters to check their accuracy and fine-tune their understanding of the observation instrument and the evidence that counts for each of its components. The Department responded to this finding by asking all Teacher Pilot 2 districts to conduct at least one co-observation for certain teachers. In addition, the Department also required that at least one observation be conducted by an “external” observer from another building or district. Midway through the second year, the EPAC was asked to recommend an approach for using co-observations for the purpose of improving rater accuracy. Overwhelmingly, the committee members agreed that co-observations should be required. In addition, they noted that co-observation was a more valuable practice than using an external observer. In large part, this latter finding was due to logistical considerations – administrators found it challenging to schedule inter-building observations and noted that it would not be possible in one-administrator or one-building districts.

---

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.metproject.org/>

Hearing these recommendations and concerns, the Department is not requiring external observers be used by districts. The Department is requiring that all observers conduct at least two co-observations for the purpose of strengthening rater accuracy and the reliability of ratings between observers. The Department also adopted another EPAC recommendation that a co-observation in which two scores are generated not be counted as two separate observations; this prevents one unsuccessful lesson from counting twice against a teacher.

District leadership must make a clear decision about how these co-observations will be used for the teacher’s evaluation. One possible approach is for the district to assign a primary observer whose rating will count for that particular lesson. If the primary and secondary observer cannot agree on a particular rating, the primary observer makes the final decision. Other approaches include having observers discuss the evidence and agree on ratings based on that evidence, or by taking an average of both ratings and sharing this with the teacher. Whichever system a district adopts, it must be clearly communicated to both teachers and observers.

**Recommendation 11: Acknowledge the Learning Curve with SGOs**

Pilot districts were given a choice of how to weight various components of the evaluation system, as shown in Figure 2.4 below. Districts predominantly chose to weight SGO components towards the higher end of the range provided, with several choosing 45 percent. This district-decision was meant to provide a student performance measure of equal weight for both tested and non-tested teachers.

However, recognizing that the development and implementation of SGOs will take additional time for many districts, the Department decided that for the first year of full implementation SGOs should be weighted more moderately – at 15 percent. This will give districts a chance to become more comfortable with the SGO process and work towards developing quality objectives before requiring that in the future they count for a more substantial portion of a teacher’s evaluation.

*Figure 2.4: Component weights chosen by districts for teachers in Teacher Pilot 2.*

Focus of Measure	Measure	Tested Grades and Subjects		Non-Tested Grades and Subjects	
		Allowable Weights	Median Weights Used	Allowable Weights	Median Weights Used
Teacher Practice	Observation	40-45%	45%	45-80%	48%
	Other Measure	5-10%	5%	5-10%	5%
Student Achievement	Student Growth Percentile (SGP)	35-45%	35%		
	Student Growth Objective (SGO)	0-10%	10%	10-45%	25%
	School-wide Measure	5-10%	7%	5-10%	5%

**Recommendation 12: Provide Support and Communications to Districts in Implementing New Evaluations**

The [EPAC Interim Report](#) recommended that the Department provide clear guidance in the form of a ‘how to’ publication and support for rigorous professional development to help districts produce measures of student achievement in non-tested grades and subjects. This was an area of notable concern to EPAC members for at least the first year of the pilot, and many members felt it was not adequately addressed. However, after first proposing educator evaluation regulations to the State Board of Education in March 2013, including the decision to weight SGOs at 15 percent, the Department

published detailed guidance on SGO development in the form of an [SGO Guidebook](#) in April. In the summer of 2013, the Department conducted SGO workshops across the state, developed a series of SGO training modules and presentations and a set of annotated SGO exemplars that districts can use to directly train their staff. These can all be found on the [AchieveNJ website](#).

SGOs are a new concept for many teachers and administrators. The Department has provided support and training to organizations such as the NJEA, NJPSA, and other groups who conduct SGO workshops. In addition, the Department has stated its commitment to provide training and support during statewide implementation in the form of workshops, visits from its implementation team, and online resources. Practical guidelines for providing training in SGOs in districts can be found in [Part Three](#) of this report.

## 2.3 Other Decisions

Some decisions regarding AchieveNJ were made before the EPAC was convened. These decisions were informed by research and input from technical experts and stakeholder groups. Two of these decisions are described below.

### Use Student Growth Percentiles as One Measure of Teacher Performance

One of the most discussed aspects of AchieveNJ is the use of Student Growth Percentile (SGP) data. After the proposal of AchieveNJ in March 2013, heightened media attention encouraged academics and interested observers to debate the use of SGP as an indicator of teacher and principal performance. A description of why SGPs were chosen can be found in the box “Why SGPs?”

As with all evaluation measures, when viewed in isolation, SGP scores paint an incomplete picture of an educator’s performance. However, as a component of a multidimensional evaluation system, student growth on standardized tests is a valuable measure of teacher effectiveness.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the use of standardized tests as one measure of educator effectiveness is required by the U.S. Department of Education in those states that receive Race to the Top<sup>12</sup> funding and those that have an ESEA flexibility waiver,<sup>13</sup> both of which apply to New Jersey. Due to this federal priority and the inherent value in using SGPs as one measure of educator effectiveness, the use of this measure in evaluation was included in the TEACHNJ Act. Even though many educators around the state, including those participating in EPAC, have concerns about the equity and validity using SGP for evaluative purposes, first year pilot data suggests that there is substantial benefit to using these data to provide professional support and improve teacher practice. This is discussed more in [Section 3.4](#) of this report. Additionally, many misconceptions about SGPs have led to greater

#### Why SGPs?

The Department chose to use the SGP methodology for a number of reasons:

**Useful to Educators:** Because SGPs can be aggregated in a number of ways, they are a useful and ready measure for educators. They can be used at a student-level to:

- make decisions about needed student supports;
- characterize groups of students who are part of a support program such as tutoring;
- compare program implementation across grade levels; and
- characterize districts.

**Conceptually straightforward:** While the calculation is sophisticated, at its simplest level, SGPs describe a student’s growth from one year to the next relative to students with a similar starting point.

**Integrate with NJ’s Assessment System:** SGPs can account for variations in mean scale score gains or losses over time in each grade level and subject area.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.metproject.org/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.state.nj.us/education/news/2010/0601rttt.htm>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/map/nj.html>



anxiety among educators. Some of these misconceptions are addressed in Figure 3.5 on page 27 of this report.

### **Evaluation of Other Teaching Staff**

The TEACHNJ Act places a particular emphasis on the evaluation of teachers, principals, assistant principals, and vice principals. Therefore, the Department focused much of its attention on policies affecting these educators. However, during SY12-13, the Department worked closely with various professional groups who were willing to collaborate to develop guidance for the evaluation of their members. Typically, these groups developed an educator practice instrument that reflected the specific roles of each group of educators. In addition, within these guidelines, some groups encouraged their members to develop SGOs to remain consistent with their classroom-based teaching colleagues.

At the time of publication, the New Jersey School Counselors Association, the New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the New Jersey Association of School Librarians, and the Athletic Trainers Society of New Jersey had all shared evaluation guidance for their members. This guidance can be found on the websites of these organizations. The Department has also published a [page on the AchieveNJ website](#) with more information about evaluation for these educators.

## **2.4 Summary**

The New Jersey Department of Education made complex evaluation policy decisions based on collaboration and lessons learned in the field. In a state with over 590 school districts, an incredible diversity of schools, students, and teachers, troubling socioeconomic inequality, and a significant student achievement gap, finding a universal solution for educator evaluation is challenging. However, by listening to the wisdom of districts engaged in the daily work of teaching students and evaluating staff, recognizing the value of current research, and bringing educators together to discuss both, the Department has taken a step in the right direction. Certain elements of the system are comparable across districts but other elements provide flexibility to meet the needs of each local context. Most importantly, all of New Jersey's educators will have the opportunity to be evaluated, supported, and recognized for the work they do with students every day.

## Part Three: Practical Advice from Pilot Districts for Teacher Evaluation

Given that pilot districts used components of the new teacher evaluation system for one or two years prior to statewide implementation, they are well-positioned to provide recommendations for other districts in New Jersey. The following section provides their practical advice, along with guidance and resources that may be helpful for district leaders and teachers.

### 3.1 Planning for Success

#### **Create a Plan**

**Districts should create a detailed plan for evaluation implementation.** “The district MUST have a clear plan on paper. They must prioritize it and realize that the time must be put into it or [the initiative] will flop,” urged one pilot district leader. The project manager of another district commented that a detailed plan allowed his district to schedule training in manageable sessions and that this, “reduced stress, anxiety, and prevented burn-out.” Many pilot districts effectively utilized their DEACs in planning for the year. One principal noted his DEAC was “critical in devising a plan that had buy-in from all the important stakeholders.” This had the additional advantage of involving leaders who were then well-situated to ensure the district plan was communicated throughout the district.

Creating a calendar of training events and observations and clearly defining the roles of the SCIP and DEAC are valuable activities for school leaders who are trying to integrate components of the new evaluation system. A sample schedule is provided in [Appendix E](#). Pilot districts used a variety of planning strategies, several of which are described below.

#### **Integrate Initiatives**

**Districts must share an integrated vision connecting the multiple initiatives that they are implementing.** School districts face the challenge of implementing several initiatives, including but not limited to evaluation, within a narrow window of time. Without careful planning, there is a risk that none of the initiatives will be implemented well. An important component of this plan is the purposeful communication district leaders have with their staff. Pilot districts helped teams understand underlying themes and unifying elements across district, state, and national initiatives, as exemplified by the following remarks from district educators:

- “This movement is much greater than New Jersey, and the accountability for all of us is now a reality.”
- “All of the components of education reform are focused on increasing student achievement.”
- “The evaluation system is the vehicle through which the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and PD [professional development] are aligned to enhance the practice of teaching and student learning.”

Recognizing the connections between initiatives is important at all levels of a school district. Districts must incorporate specific steps into their implementation plan to make sure that everyone sees the big picture. The following suggestions reflect various strategies that pilot districts used:

#### **Planning for Success**

*“The district MUST have a clear plan on paper. They must prioritize it and realize that the time must be put into it or [the initiative] will flop.” ~Pilot District Leader*

1. Create a plan
2. Integrate initiatives
3. Develop a detailed observation training plan and schedule
4. Provide thorough training and support for SGOs
5. Create an assessment inventory for SGOs



- Make sure the DEAC understands the connections between initiatives, enabling members to communicate this message clearly to staff in each building.
- Make presentations and documents available for faculty meetings so that everyone has access to the same information.
- Use Connected Action Roadmap<sup>14</sup> training to demonstrate connectivity.
- Send DEAC members and other lead staff to external presentations similar to [those offered by the Department](#) during the spring of 2013.

However district leaders choose to communicate an integrated vision, they should demonstrate how education reform initiatives are interrelated and embed that message into evaluation implementation.

### ***Develop a Detailed Classroom Observation Training Plan and Schedule***

**To promote effective implementation of an observation instrument, districts must ensure that all staff members – teachers and administrators – receive adequate training on the tool and process.** Pilot districts faced tight timelines to choose and conduct training on an observation instrument before performing observations. However, with the delay of full implementation of AchieveNJ by a year, all non-pilot districts had SY12-13 to complete training before conducting observations in SY13-14, as required by the TEACHNJ Act. Even though districts were required to complete the majority of training before the beginning of SY13-14, districts must ensure new staff members are trained on an ongoing basis. Additionally, districts should budget additional training time for administrators whose observation ratings are inconsistent or inaccurate in order to ensure inter-rater reliability.

Observation schedules are critical for organizing an increased number of observations. Pilot districts stressed the importance of creating a schedule prior to the start of the school year “to ensure that administrators have a balanced workload.” One district used a spreadsheet to create the observation schedule, “using different colored cells to indicate the time frame in which observations should take place.” A schedule of this type has the added advantage of pointing out gaps in observation coverage. For some districts, the plan may indicate that extra staff needs to be hired. Rather than hiring administrators, some districts hired new personnel or reassigned existing staff to address administrative tasks. This freed up time for principals, vice principals, and supervisors to concentrate on evaluating and supporting teachers. Careful planning and scheduling resulted in most pilot districts completing more than three observations per teacher in SY12-13. This is discussed further in [Section 3.3](#).

### ***Provide Thorough Training and Support for SGOs***

**Thoughtful and thorough training and support are essential for districts to effectively implement SGOs.** Pilot districts emphasized the need to schedule time for educators to learn about and develop SGOs at the beginning of the school year; many districts included this in their top three recommendations. Specifically, districts recommended using professional development days in September to train and provide time for people in similar roles “to develop and debrief about appropriate levels of performance for the SGO development process.” This initial training can be followed up in faculty meetings and possibly another professional development day in October.

When planning for SGO training and implementation, districts must determine a) the instructional period included in the SGOs, and b) when SGO data needs to be available. There are two primary options that districts may take:

1. Abbreviate the SGO period so that all observation and SGO ratings are available for annual conferences at which summative ratings can be discussed, or

---

<sup>14</sup> The Connected Action Roadmap is a professional development program offered by the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association. It connects Common Core State Standards, student learning, professional learning, and teacher and leader effectiveness to the work of professional learning communities.  
[http://fea.njpsa.org/documents/pdf/2012conf/CAR\\_fall\\_conf\\_2012.pdf](http://fea.njpsa.org/documents/pdf/2012conf/CAR_fall_conf_2012.pdf)

2. Hold annual conferences before SGO data has been collected and then schedule additional conferences with teachers if their SGO scores negatively affect summative ratings.

There are opportunities and challenges to each approach. The first approach is convenient for scheduling conferences and allows teachers and their administrators to discuss both observation and SGO results, encouraging a richer discussion about the teacher's future goals and professional development plans. However, the SGO period is abbreviated and includes only a portion of the teacher's year. This problem is solved by using the second approach, which is itself limited in that a final SGO rating is not available during the annual conference.

No matter the approach, valuable professional discussions around SGOs can occur throughout the year. In fact, with more frequent observations under AchieveNJ, administrators can build in time to discuss a teacher's SGO progress during each post-observation conference. Frequent conversations around SGOs have the potential to improve the value of the SGO process and help teacher attain their goals.

### ***Create an Assessment Inventory for SGOs***

**Finally, districts will find it useful to create an inventory of assessments currently used throughout the district for planning SGO work.** Existing assessments may be appropriate for SGOs. If such assessments are aligned to standards and are fair and accurate measures of student learning, teachers might use them for SGOs with little or no modification. Having an inventory of currently used assessments that meet these criteria will allow principals to plan the appropriate amount of time for assessment development. A simple [SGO assessment inventory](#) form can be found on the AchieveNJ website. In addition, if time allows, districts could perform a gap analysis on the alignment of local curricula to state standards. This is a practical example of how districts may begin to integrate educator evaluation with the adoption of CCSS.

Planning ahead in the ways noted above is critical to success in AchieveNJ implementation. Of equal importance is the strength of the communications system within a district. This is discussed in the following section.

## **3.2 Communicating with Transparency and Consistency**

In districts of all sizes, transparent and consistent communication is a crucial aspect of successful evaluation implementation. By ensuring that teachers, administrators, central staff, and board members are well-informed and share a common understanding, districts can generate trust, collaboration, and a shared sense of responsibility. The following pages describe several components of effective communication learned from pilot districts.

### **Effectively Utilize the District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC)**

Providing coordination to educator evaluation, the District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC)<sup>15</sup> can be a valuable communication vehicle. Pilot districts used their DEACs in a variety of ways that added value to the process. Because of the multiple benefits of these committees in the pilot districts, the requirement that all districts convene such a committee in the first few years of full implementation was included in the TEACHNJ Act.

#### ***Possible Roles of the DEAC***

- **DEACs form a bridge between administrators and teachers and provide effective two-way communication.** One pilot district described the feedback given by DEAC members as having "great credibility" in the eyes of administrators and the superintendent. Information disseminated through the DEAC to the staff is equally important. One principal noted, "This

---

<sup>15</sup> Pilot districts referred to the DEAC as the District Evaluation *Pilot* Advisory Committee (DEPAC) to denote its pilot status. The word "pilot" was removed once the committee was included in the TEACHNJ Act for all districts.

group plays a critical role in turn-keying information for an acceptable transition with the teachers.” In many districts, teacher committee members became the “linchpins in their respective school buildings,” providing crucial support and information to other staff.

- **DEACs provide a consistent message for training and implementation.** One project manager observed that his district’s DEAC “created one voice for the pilot project,” and was used as a “clearinghouse to vet all the information and data.” In another district, DEAC members were trained in the new observation instrument and then turn-keyed “the exact training throughout the district and in each individual building.” DEAC members also can act as ambassadors to share the benefits of effective educator evaluation.
- **DEACs provide useful “think tanks” to address complex problems.** Diverse and balanced committee membership allows the DEAC to provide a variety of perspectives when making recommendations. Comments from pilot district staff such as “all decisions were consensus-based,” and “decisions were made with everyone’s best interests in mind,” show that the DEAC can be a powerful vehicle for gathering and addressing complex issues.
- **A DEACs decision-making role must be carefully considered.** In some cases, DEACs were allowed to make important and far-reaching decisions regarding evaluation. In others, the DEAC played only an advisory role. Ultimately, the decision of how best to use a DEAC rests squarely on the superintendent’s shoulders. The following recommendations and the “Four Tips for a Successful DEAC” box may help guide superintendents in this work.

#### **Four Practical Tips for a Successful DEAC**

1. Set agendas ahead of time and share them with members before the meeting.
2. Develop a decision-making process.
3. Decide in advance when decisions are recommendations and when they are binding.
4. Create a handbook of decisions by stakeholders.

~Linda Eno, Principal/Project Manager,  
Monmouth County Vocational and Technical  
School

#### ***Recommendations for Developing a Strong DEAC***

Pilot districts provided a wealth of information regarding the best use and structure of DEACs. Listed below are the key takeaways:

- Build a DEAC that represents all stakeholder groups in the district;
- Train all DEAC members in each aspect of the evaluation system including the observation instrument, Student Growth Objectives, and Student Growth Percentiles;
- Use DEAC members to coordinate a training plan for staff in the district;
- Use the DEAC as a clearinghouse for all evaluation-related information to maintain a consistent message;
- Use a variety of communication tools for maximum impact, such as a district newsletter, website, and presentations at board and community meetings;
- Divide the DEAC into subgroups that can specialize in various aspects of the evaluation system and become a valuable resource for the district;
- Make DEAC meetings open to all;
- Meet on a regular schedule; and
- Publish meeting presentations, handouts, and minutes.

#### **Identify an Individual to Manage the District’s Evaluation Communications**

Pilot districts were required to identify a staff member to manage communications and coordinate the scope of evaluation communications. This individual was able to keep abreast of information coming

from the Department and ensure the DEAC and educational community were apprised of important decisions and deadlines. Districts that maximized their communications managers found this role to be extremely useful to help the flow of information across the schools and district.

If broad and systematic communication is not prioritized by district leadership, frustrations are likely to arise. For example, one project manager reported passing information to his central office but was “unsure of what was communicated to the board.” Practically speaking, the method by which information is gathered from staff in school buildings and sent out from the DEAC and central office is important. A communications manager with the right skill set and whose role is valued by district leadership can facilitate this process. If districts do not currently have an employee in this role, district leadership might consider using a teacher who shows interest and aptitude in this area, a human resources employee, or another volunteer who:

1. Is in a position where he/she regularly shares information with a large audience within the school/district;
2. Has access to district website and email distribution lists to share updates and information about the evaluation system;
3. Has capacity to lead an effort to gather input about the evaluation system and potential improvements;
4. Can participate in feedback sessions across the district where those not involved with DEAC can share experiences; and
5. Can liaise with members of each SciP in the district to coordinate information.

### **Develop a Variety of Communication Strategies**

Pilot districts used several methods to communicate with their schools and wider community, as described below.

#### ***Websites***

**Websites are relatively simple, low-cost communication tools that have an extensive reach.** Many pilot districts created web pages dedicated to educator evaluation. Districts might consider sites that:

- Provide a variety of resources including presentations about evaluation, detailed information about the district’s evaluation rubric and instruments, agendas and minutes for DEAC meetings, external resources, and letters to the staff and community regarding evaluation;
- Highlight the connections between educator evaluation and the implementation of Common Core State Standards; and
- Compile questions from teachers and stakeholders (see “Frequently Asked Questions” box). Districts may consider initially populating an FAQ page using some questions and answers found on the Department’s [AchieveNJ website](#).

**Answering Frequently Asked Questions**  
Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional School District created a process to answer questions on an ongoing basis. Teachers, leaders, and community members enter questions on their website. The communications manager and DEAC discuss and craft responses. Answers are then included in posted Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that everyone can access. In addition, the district distributes information through videos designed to answer specific questions.

#### ***Newsletters and Emails***

**Electronic communications to educators are another low-cost option for districts.** Pilot districts used electronic communications widely to ensure information reached those who needed it. Some districts produced variations of a newsletter for different audiences, such as one for teachers, another for principals, and another for parents. This tailored approach to communication does not require much

additional time and increases the likelihood that the intended audience will read the message. Also, the Department has produced and continues to update a series of publications on every aspect of AchieveNJ, in addition to regular [memos and other communications](#) to educators. Districts might consider including these in their communication campaigns. These documents can be found on the Department's [AchieveNJ website](#).

### ***Gathering Information***

**To have productive two-way communication, districts must deliver information well and gather authentic feedback from stakeholders.** The ability for DEAC members to provide detailed feedback to decision makers is limited by the number of members on the committee. The DEAC and communications manager should plan to implement effective information-gathering methods. These can range from collecting note cards from participants at the end of a presentation to using school-based focus groups or leadership teams. Districts may also consider sending out electronic surveys, collecting questions via the website, and building an FAQ page based on the Department's [AchieveNJ FAQ](#).

### **Communicate Directly with Specific Groups**

While effective two-way communication regarding AchieveNJ is vital for teachers and administrators, pilot districts noted that it was also important to partner with school boards and local education associations.

### ***School Boards***

School boards are critical partners in successful implementation of any initiative. Pilot districts varied in the emphasis they placed on educating school board members. However, the importance of this was clear to at least one project manager who stated that school boards need to understand “the complexity, the capacity issues, and the implication to staff morale.” This thinking led the district to adopt the following communication strategy that might be replicated by other school districts:

- 1) Deliver evaluation presentations to the school board;
- 2) Invite board members to be part of the DEAC so they can share information with the board;
- 3) Recommend board members attend external training sessions on evaluation, e.g., those given by NJDOE and NJSBA; and
- 4) Make presentations to Board of Education subcommittees.

### ***Education Associations***

Local teacher associations can also be valuable partners in implementing AchieveNJ. Several pilot districts demonstrated the value of collaboration between administrators and association representatives. One teacher who served on the EPAC for two years and is a key member of her district's implementation team is also heavily involved in her association. She says, “I, as the association president, played a key role in helping to communicate decisions and information to staff and would highly encourage that type of collaborative relationship for all districts.”

### **Effectively Use the School Improvement Panel (SciP)**

The TEACHNJ Act requires all schools to have a SciP, which can potentially play an important role as they gather information at the school level, pass this information to the DEAC, and return information back to the school community. SciPs monitor the integrity with which AchieveNJ is implemented, how well new teachers are mentored, and the quality of professional development opportunities afforded to staff. Members are well-positioned to form a communications conduit between central office and school buildings.

## Summary

Effective communication is one of the cornerstones of evaluation implementation. When districts approached communication strategically, they built buy-in, reduced uncertainty about the changes, and minimized staff resistance. Using a communications manager and a well-organized DEAC will allow any policies and procedures to be communicated consistently, transparently, and broadly.

## 3.3 Conducting Thorough Training and Thoughtful Implementation

Training will form an integral part of any implementation plan for evaluation. Equally important are the checks put in place to monitor how well the skills educators were trained in persist throughout the school year.

Districts should strive to use AchieveNJ to recognize excellent educators and provide support to help everyone improve. To do so, training of staff must be thorough and ongoing and the quality of implementation must be monitored carefully. According to the TEACHNJ Act, the training shown in Figure 3.1 is the minimum that must occur. Also, mentor teachers should support new teachers as they become acquainted with the evaluation system and the ScIP must ensure that first-year teachers adequately receive this support.

*Figure 3.1: Minimum training requirements under the TEACHNJ Act.*

Staff Member	Training Requirements
All Teaching Staff Members	<b>Must be trained on all components</b> of the evaluation rubric.
All Observers	<b>Must be trained</b> in the practice instrument <b>before observing</b> for the purpose of evaluation.
	<b>Must participate in 2 “co-observations”</b> (at least 1 before December 1). Co-observers will use the double observation to calibrate teacher practice instruments and promote accuracy in scoring.
	Must <b>annually participate in refresher training</b> for the purpose of increasing accuracy and consistency among observers.
Superintendents/Chief School Administrators (CSAs)	<b>Must make a statement of assurance</b> each year that observers have been trained and can apply the educator practice instruments accurately and consistently.

### Introduction to AchieveNJ

Districts can introduce their staff to the evaluation system using presentations and written materials provided by the Department. Most pilot districts shared these materials with their staff over the past year. Many district personnel also attended regional presentations conducted by the Department in the spring of 2013 to better understand the requirements of AchieveNJ. Resources for training in each component of the evaluation rubric can be found on the AchieveNJ website. These include an [overview presentation of AchieveNJ](#) and various documents highlighting key information for educator groups and specific processes. A list of these and other resources can be found in [Appendix D](#). Examples of how districts tackled training on each component of the evaluation rubric as well suggested methods of training are outlined in the following sections.

### Initial Training on the Observation Instrument

The goals for observation instrument training are very similar for both teachers and observers, with administrators having a few extra. This is shown in Figure 3.2 below.



**Figure 3.2: Goals for training in the observation instrument for teacher and administrators**

Goals for Teacher Training
Identify how evaluation and professional development are two parts of one continuous learning cycle
Better understand what effective teaching looks like in practice
Understand the observation tool, e.g. different levels of proficiency for different standards
Understand the observation process
Understand what counts as evidence
Identify links to other parts of the evaluation system, e.g. SGOs, and other initiatives
Goals for Administrator Training Include All the Above, Plus
Develop inter-rater reliability and norming
Understand how to capture evidence
Learn strategies to share feedback with teachers to help improve their practice

There are three primary ways pilot districts approached initial training:

1. Districts employed consultants or experts for a short time (2-3 days total in some cases) to train a large number of district personnel altogether.
2. Districts used video training to provide practice on specific domains or elements of an instrument in the presence of a knowledgeable facilitator.
3. Some districts utilized turn-key trainings, where a small group of school and district leaders receive in-depth training by experts and then train other teachers and leaders across the district.

Districts who adopted the third approach noted several benefits including improved collaboration, a consistent message among teachers and administrators, and a shared understanding of the whole evaluation process. Turn-key training using local staff was used widely as an alternative to hiring external consultants. Middlesex County Vocational School’s approach (see “Turn-key Training” box) is typical of the one taken by many pilot districts. Districts that used turn-key training successfully provided ongoing support for their trainers. One district developed specialized trainers who focused on one domain of the observation instrument. Teachers would be trained on each domain by each of these specialists. In another district, turn-key trainers were not expected to have all the answers to the questions that teachers might ask. Instead, when

**Turn-key Training**

*“Training was accomplished at the building level using DEAC members from each building, supplementing as necessary with central office administrators. A second cohort of teacher-leaders received intensive training as turn-key instructors to form a robust cadre of individuals at each building to ensure that questions and concerns with the instrument were addressed quickly and uniformly across the district.”*

~Paul Munz, Assistant Superintendent/Project Manager, Middlesex County Vocation and Technical School

questions arose, the trainers documented them and sent them back to the DEAC for clarification. The DEAC then provided an accurate answer that was delivered throughout the district by the trainers.

When using external consultants for the initial training that will later be turn-keyed or for all of a district's training, districts cautioned that the quality of training be carefully monitored. Some districts had poor experiences with trainers who provided inadequate training and left staff feeling poorly served. One project manager recommends that districts "secure the best possible trainer you can." Conducting interviews with prospective trainers or inviting them to run a sample training session, similar to a mini-lesson for teacher interviews, are two ways to improve success in this important step of evaluation implementation.

### **Follow-Up Training and Monitoring Observer Accuracy**

In addition to conducting initial training, districts should provide ongoing training to promote continuous improvement. Throughout the year, districts should:

- Train new teachers and observers;
- Re-train observers who are not normed; and
- Conduct follow-up training to support calibration or address areas of need highlighted by evaluation and student achievement data.

Even after thoroughly training administrators, districts should monitor the accuracy of the ratings they give teachers. Having administrators occasionally rate the same lesson is a simple but highly effective

accuracy check. One district notes, "The most effective practice was videotaping teachers, scoring independently, and coming together to discuss scores." Whether using video or real-time observations, at least one double-scored lesson for each administrator should occur early in the year, followed by at least one more later in the year. This allows districts to identify potential problems early and provide any necessary follow-up training and support.

Ideally, districts should conduct more than the AchieveNJ required two co-observations throughout the year. This will help districts provide the most accurate ratings to teachers. One district continues to use the University of Washington's 5D rater accuracy tool during their training and re-calibration process. They find that this is a useful way to ensure accuracy. See the "Follow-Up Training for Administrators" box for more information about this.

#### **Follow-up Training for Administrators**

Bergenfield School District partnered with the University of Washington to train and calibrate administrators on the [5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning](#) (5D Assessment).

In trainings, administrators rated video lessons and compared their scores to experts' ratings. This helped ensure rater accuracy and inter-rater reliability.

Administrators complete the online 5D Assessment annually which tells administrators how they compare to other district staff and raters across the country.

The results determine professional development needs for each administrator.

### **Strategies to Complete More Observations**

District leaders expressed concerns that it would be difficult to conduct more observations due to time constraints and other priorities that must be addressed in schools. The pilot district experience suggests that careful planning, task reprioritization, and reallocation of human resources can help districts meet the requirement of three observations per teacher (see [Section 3.1](#)).

Unlike the rest of New Jersey's school districts, pilot districts did not have the benefit of a capacity-building year to choose and train in an observation instrument. Districts that participated in Year 1 of the pilot were pioneers and thus could not learn from schools that successfully accomplished the transition to more observations before them. Therefore, they struggled to meet the goal of three observations per teacher. However, in Year 2, most districts met their goals, increasing from an average of 1.3 to 3.0 observations per teacher. Some districts tripled or quadrupled the number of observations



(see Figure 3.3). Teacher Pilot 2 districts did even better. They learned from their Teacher Pilot 1 colleagues and put structures in place to facilitate the observation process. After training on the instrument at the beginning of the year, these districts were able to complete an average of 3.3 observations per teacher. More detailed information on observation numbers can be found in [Appendix F](#).

**Figure 3.3: Average number of observations per teacher conducted in Teacher Pilot 1 and 2 pilot districts.**

Average Observations Completed Per Teacher				
Cohort One			Cohort Two	
District	2011-12	2012-13	District	2012-13
A	1	N/A	I	3.5
B	N/A	2.1	J	3.9
C	N/A	3.9	K	3.5
D	1.0	4.1	L	2.5
E	1.6	2.6	M	3.0
F	1.2	3.3	N	3.4
G	1	N/A	O	3.0
H	1.7	2.1		
<b>Teacher Pilot 1 Average</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>Teacher Pilot 2 Average</b>	<b>3.3</b>

In addition to careful planning and resource allocation, increased experience helped reduce the time required for individual observations. Pilot districts shared that the observation process became less time-intensive as observers became more familiar with the instrument. As one Danielson user stated, “When I first started, it was probably close to a three-hour process per observation. I narrowed this down to 1.5 to 2 hours total. It took about a month or two, maybe 15 to 20 observations” to decrease the amount of time spent per observation. Similarly, a McREL user said, “In Year 1, it took forever! The first few [observations] were rough. They took HOURS. But now, it’s not so bad.” Another observer

explained, “Once you know [the rubric] well, you can go with your first inclination and move on, especially when attaching evidence statements to an evaluative component.”

**Integration Opportunity**

One project manager noted that SGOs have required teachers to “develop assessments that are aligned to standards, a process that includes unpacking the standards and developing multiple ways to demonstrate mastery.” High quality SGOs have the potential to improve teaching practice and student achievement. Developing SGOs can be a powerful professional learning experience that encourages teachers to align the curriculum to standards including the CCSS, focus on key content and skills, become more fluent in choosing and developing high quality assessments, and monitor and adjust teaching strategy to allow students to meet ambitious yet attainable goals.

**Delivering Effective Training on Student Growth Objectives (SGOs)**

Developing SGOs can be an extremely valuable professional learning experience for teachers and administrators alike. As one teacher in a pilot district remarked, “Most people who have walked out of our SGO work sessions have felt that they are doing some of the best work that is being done in the district. One project manager noted, “SGO training needs to be provided not only to teachers but to administrators.” This is crucial to maintain the integrity of the SGO process and to ensure that teachers are provided the necessary support and guidance, as well as a fair and accurate SGO rating at the end of the year. If districts conduct their

initial training in mixed groups of teachers and administrators together, both groups will develop a common understanding of this new process. Pilot districts often conducted initial training in large groups and set aside meeting time or PD days to conduct detailed work in professional learning communities (PLCs) or other smaller groups. In addition, the Department’s evaluation implementation team has continued to provide dedicated SGO training workshops around the state in SY13-14.

Although it is useful to include SGO examples during trainings, districts should ensure the sample SGOs are high-quality. One district cautioned against using SGO examples from other states; in some cases, the examples met requirements of the other state but did not align with New Jersey’s process. This could create confusion. Using [New Jersey-specific SGO exemplars](#) will help increase the quality of SGOs.

Pilot districts followed Department guidelines and resources for SGOs in SY12-13. The Department substantially expanded these support tools, and all districts were able to access SGO education and training resources on the [Department’s website](#). These will be expanded as the Department learns from SGO implementation across the state and the SGO process evolves in SY14-15 and beyond.

### **Monitoring SGOs**

The first year implementing SGOs will go more smoothly if districts monitor their teachers’ progress throughout the year. The increase in the number of required observations and post-conferences provide more built-in opportunities to discuss progress on SGOs. An optional mid-year check-in can be combined with a post-observation conference if the observation schedule is carefully planned (see box “Discussing Progress on SGOs”). At the mid-year point and with superintendent approval, adjustments may be made to the scoring plan initially approved by the principal. These adjustments may be made if events beyond the teacher’s control (such as a significant change in the teacher’s student population or extended school closure) will make it difficult to meet the goal.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Discussing Progress on SGOs</b></p> <p>With thoughtful planning, administrators can combine post-observation conferences with SGO check-in conferences to discuss potential instructional strategies and changes in practice. A suggestion of how to schedule observations and conferences can be found in sample schedule in <a href="#">Appendix E</a>.</p>
---

### **Improving SGOs Over Time**

The Department recognizes that developing student goals as outlined in the SGO process will require a significant shift in some teachers’ thinking about instruction and assessment. As such, the first year of SGO implementation may be one of the most challenging aspects of AchieveNJ for districts. Pilot districts faced a number of obstacles to successfully completing SGOs in SY12-13. These included shortened timelines, simultaneous training on and use of a new observation instrument, more required observations, and a lack of clear guidance. These obstacles have been reduced for other New Jersey districts who were able to use SY12-13 as a capacity-building year and have been provided with more robust SGO guidance and resources.

In Teacher Pilot 2, of the 1,100 teachers who received a rating for their SGOs, 93 percent of them either met or exceeded their goals. This is shown in Figure 3.4 (a “3” rating indicates that the goal was fully achieved and a “4” indicates that the goal was exceeded. Scores of “1” and “2” reflect goals that were inadequately or partially met). While there is a small chance that these teachers attained or exceeded ambitious objectives, districts that find a similar skewed distribution in their SGO data should also consider that setting of low targets and/or lack of familiarity with the SGO process may have caused this.

### **Low Targets**

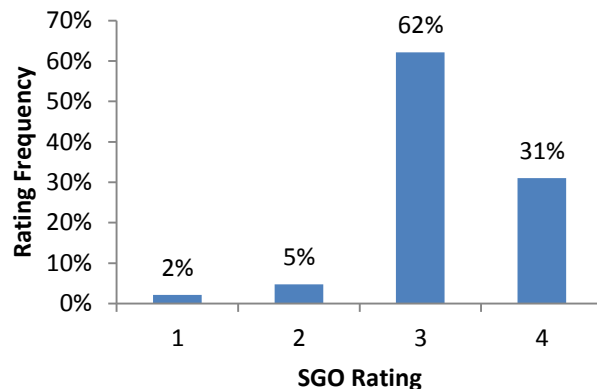
Educators have expressed concern that teachers and principals will be tempted to set SGO targets too low in order to earn higher scores in evaluation ratings for both. This is one interpretation of the pilot data and may have occurred in some districts. Districts should ensure that safeguards are in place to reduce this possibility as much as possible.

### **Lack of Familiarity with the Process**

Districts often see higher ratings when they introduce new evaluation systems or processes. This data pattern emerged with the adoption of a new teacher practice observation instrument. In the first year of using a new instrument, 86 percent of Cohort 2 teachers received 3s or 4s in their teacher practice ratings (see Figure 3.6 below).

However, ratings for teachers in Cohort 1 in the *second year* of implementation – after teachers and observers had more practice with the observation framework and rubric – were more widely distributed. In the same way, the SGO data in Figure 3.4 may be the result of a lack of familiarity with the SGO process and how to accurately set and assess student goals.

**Figure 3.4: Distribution of SGO ratings in Teacher Pilot 2.**



When educators become familiar with the SGO process, the quality of the goals is likely to increase, and it will become easier to achieve the balance between setting targets that are ambitious yet attainable. This improvement is supported by recent research<sup>16</sup> that demonstrates that the more years a teacher uses SGOs, the better the quality and attainment of SGOs for that teacher. In addition, student achievement also increases with the quality of the teacher’s goals. The Department will continue to examine best practices from across the country and to work with New Jersey’s educators over the next year and beyond to provide support and guidance for SGO development.

### **Delivering Effective Training on Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs)**

According to the TEACHNJ Act, all staff must be trained on Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs). This measure comprises 30 percent of the final evaluation score for teachers whose students take the NJ ASK in grades 4-8 in math and/or LAL. Information about SGPs can be found in several documents published by the Department including a [presentation](#), a [written overview](#), and a [video](#). Districts should share these resources with their staff. Additionally, some educators may be interested in why New Jersey has adopted the SGP approach rather than another methodology. While there are similarities between different systems, the Department believes the advantages to the SGP approach make this the best choice for New Jersey. This is described in more detail in [Part Two](#) of this report.

When discussing SGPs with educators, certain concerns are likely to surface. Many of these concerns arise through a misunderstanding of what SGPs are and how they are derived. Addressing these misconceptions may help districts alleviate some anxiety teachers feel about this measure. Some key points that administrators may discuss with teachers are described in Figure 3.5 below.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.ctacusa.com/PDFs/MoreThanMoney-report.pdf>

Figure 3.5: Addressing misconceptions about SGPs.

Educator Misconception	Reality
SGPs are based on how well my student scores on standardized tests.	SGPs actually measure how much a student <b>improves on his or her NJ ASK score from the previous year as compared to students across the state</b> who had the same previous score.
SGPs will pit me against other teachers.	Students are not compared with others in the class or in the school but with <b>students around the state</b> who have a similar score.
I teach special education students and my rating will suffer because they just won't do as well on tests.	Student growth is being measured. In the classroom of an effective teacher, these students, like all students, can learn and grow. <sup>17</sup>
SGPs require more testing of my students.	Students that receive an SGP already take the NJ ASK, the assessment that is used to determine the SGP. When New Jersey transitions to PARCC, those assessments will be used instead of the NJ ASK.
SGPs don't effectively measure my performance.	When combined with other measures of student learning (namely, SGOs) and teacher practice, SGPs can help provide a clearer picture of how effectively an educator teaches.
I have a few students who just don't try on standardized tests and this will hurt my SGP rating.	Teachers will only receive an SGP rating if more than 20 of his or her separate students take the NJ ASK. Also, the median – not the mean – SGP score is used. Both of these factors mean that a few students who do very poorly are unlikely to alter the SGP rating a teacher receives.
Because my SGP scores don't arrive until the following year, the results won't help me improve my teaching.	Administrators can still have productive discussion with teachers about SGP scores even if they arrive during the next school year (see District Spotlight on West Deptford on page 30 for more details).
Receiving SGPs midway through the next school year will prevent districts from bringing tenure charges when warranted.	Filing tenure charges as indicated by changed summative rating will be delayed by a few months in a small number of cases. However, the tenure charge process will have a much faster timeline than before the TEACHNJ Act.

### 3.4 Promoting Data-Driven Decision-Making

A core purpose of evaluation is to maximize teacher growth and effectiveness.<sup>18</sup> As demonstrated through the [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Measures of Effective Teaching Initiative](#), multiple measures can provide teachers with rich, contextualized information on their practice for use in professional development. In addition, the “measures, while focused on teaching, are able to provide feedback at all levels of the system – school leadership, coaching support, professional development, and even central office administration – to align efforts in support of more effective teaching and learning.”<sup>19</sup>

For districts to use data successfully, they must plan strategically to collect, analyze, share, and use these data. The following section describes some strategies districts might adopt to maximize the value

<sup>17</sup> The State of Tennessee recently changed its policy to include special education students in the evaluation ratings of teachers. A statewide analysis of performance data showed that when growth scores of special education students were added to teachers' summative ratings, their ratings remained stable or increased.

<sup>18</sup> <http://widgeteffect.org/>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.metproject.org/>

of data they will collect in the new evaluation system. This section begins with a District Spotlight section on Pemberton Township and advice based on their experiences as a two-year pilot district.

## District Spotlight: Pemberton Township

### *Tips to Collect and Use Data*

#### Plan to Collect, Store and Analyze Data

- Use a common teacher identifier – such as Staff Member IDs (SMIDs) - across data types (e.g. observation, SGO, and SGP data).
- Keep electronic evaluation in encrypted files for security purposes.
- Identify someone to link and analyze teacher evaluation information.

#### Inspect Early Data for Anomalies

- Inspect the first round of data for anomalies or coding problems to determine any necessary changes. Identify and correct mistakes (e.g. scores outside the allowable range).
- Look for anomalies in scores by raters and positions. For example, if one rater gives very low or very high ratings to every teacher, that rater may need recalibration training.

#### Integrate Data

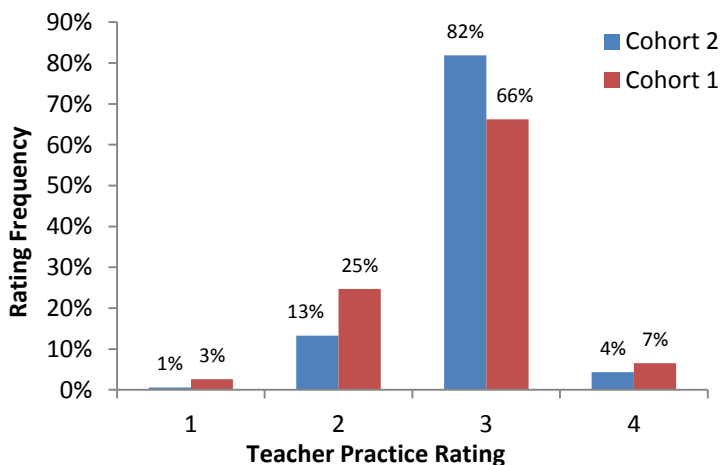
- Assess relationships/correlations among teacher observation, SGO, and SGP scores. If they are not related, consider reasons to explain why, such as discrepancies between SGO quality and rater effectiveness.
- Use this information to make decisions regarding future training requirements.
- Share data with the SciP and DEAC to make professional development recommendations.

### Differentiating Between Levels of Practice

As the pilot district experience shows, there will be a learning curve as educators employ AchieveNJ for the first time. However, pilot districts demonstrated that the process becomes easier with time and as districts begin to use the new evaluation tools to better support educator practice and student achievement.

As discussed in section 3.3, districts were able to conduct many more observations as they became more familiar with the observation instrument. Additionally, their increased familiarity also helped administrators more effectively differentiate levels of teacher practice. This can be seen in Figure 3.5. This chart compares the distribution of teacher practice ratings in SY12-13 between districts in their second pilot year to those in their first.<sup>20</sup> The blue bars (the left bar in each rating group) show data from Cohort 2 districts – those who completed their first year of piloting during SY12-13. The red

*Figure 3.6: Distribution of teacher practice ratings in 2012-13; for Cohort 2, this was their first year, for Cohort 1, this was their second year with a new teacher practice instrument.*



<sup>20</sup> Ten districts piloted a new teacher evaluation system in SY11-12. These Cohort 1 districts continued this work into SY12-13 and became part of the second year teacher pilot. They were joined by 15 new districts who piloted teacher evaluation for the first time in SY12-13. These districts were the Cohort 2 districts.

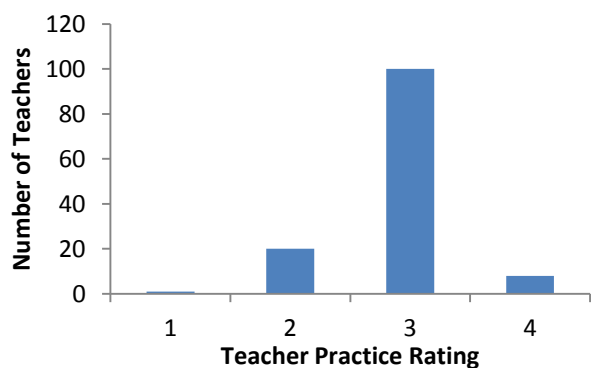
bars in the chart (the right bar in each rating group) represent data from Cohort 1 school districts – those districts who completed two years of piloting the new teacher practice model. The teacher practice ratings of Cohort 1 districts were more differentiated than those of Cohort 2. Eighty-six percent of Cohort 2 teachers were rated 3 or 4; less than 1 percent received a rating of 1. Cohort 1 districts had a broader distribution of teacher practice. Seventy-three percent of teachers were rated 3 or 4, and 3 percent were rated 1. In addition, a higher percentage of teachers were rated 4 than in Cohort 2. Since districts from the first cohort were in the second year of implementation, teachers and administrators had more experience with the observation tool, a greater understanding of what the competencies look like in practice, and more opportunities to calibrate across raters.

These data indicate that with time, greater understanding of the observation framework, and more practice, observers will increase their ability to identify nuances in teacher practice, and as a result, differentiate ratings. This increased differentiation will allow districts to better identify teachers who need targeted support and at the same time, recognize those highly effective educators whose expertise can be shared to help all teachers improve their practice.

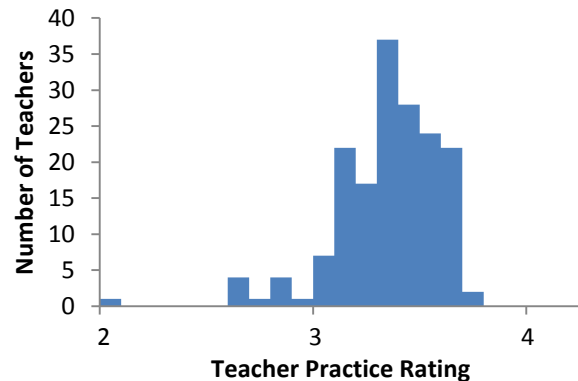
### Differentiating Within Levels of Practice

Observation data is more meaningful and useful when it effectively differentiates between and within levels of practice. More precise ratings (to one decimal place, as opposed to whole numbers) help teachers and administrators identify relative strengths and growth areas rather than view all teachers within a given rating the same way. Teachers have requested this level of detailed data, and administrators will be able to make better decisions if it is available. Figures 3.7 and 3.8 demonstrate the difference between the use of whole numbers versus decimal places for teacher practice ratings.

**Figure 3.7: District A - distribution of teacher practice ratings using whole numbers.**



**Figure 3.8: District B - distribution of teacher practice ratings in a Teacher Pilot 2 district using 1 decimal place.**



This level of detail helps educators reflect on their practice and prioritize development needs, and allows administrators to target specific skills and provide individualized feedback and professional development aligned to those skills. Districts must make deliberate decisions on how to collect and report data in order to achieve this level of granularity. For example, districts might average the scores of certain elements/components in order to create an overall domain/competency score or average all scores together to create an overall observation score. Another approach is to double-weight certain competencies rather than calculate a straight average. Either way, these types of calculations will provide more nuanced data than simply rounding scores to the nearest whole number, and these data can inform feedback, targeted support, and action plans to improve teacher practice.

## Using Quality Data Productively

The high-quality observation instruments that all New Jersey districts now use can yield a wealth of information about teaching at the individual, grade, school, and district level. Pairing these data with student performance data provided by SGPs and SGOs, schools will be well-positioned to:

- 1) Lead reflective discussions with staff to improve practice and student outcomes;
- 2) Improve rater accuracy;
- 3) Design and differentiate professional development; and
- 4) Inform broader staffing decisions.

Each of these is described in the following section.

### ***Reflective Conversations Using SGPs and Observation Scores***

Early in 2013, districts in Teacher Pilot 1 received SGP scores for their teachers and, for the first time, were able to use this measure in conjunction with teachers' practice scores. In several districts, there was a positive correlation between SGPs and observation scores, indicating that these measures are aligned even though they assess different things (e.g., practice in a classroom and student outcomes on state assessments). This analysis helped highlight common trends as well as discrepancies that required further exploration.

For example, West Deptford School District actively shared its SGP data to promote professional, reflective conversations with teachers. In many instances, the SGP data validated what district administrators had learned about the effectiveness of particular teachers through observations. See the District Spotlight on West Deptford below for strategies to familiarize staff with and effectively utilize SGP data.

### **District Spotlight: West Deptford School District**

#### ***Sharing SGP Data with Teachers***

- **Train everyone, whether or not they receive SGP scores** – Acknowledging that “the unknown frightens people,” West Deptford purposely trained everyone on SGPs, even teachers and schools that did not receive SGP scores. Share the [SGP video](#) with principals, teachers, the board, and the DEAC to ensure all stakeholders hear the identical message and explanation of SGPs. Set expectations by discussing SGPs in the first staff meeting.
- **Support principals to be effective ambassadors** – Conduct principal-specific SGP training to prepare school leaders to explain SGP to their faculty, answer questions, discuss individual scores with teachers, and respond to a variety of potential teacher reactions.
- **Dispel myths** – Proactively name common myths or fears about SGP and provide factual information to address each one. For example, in response to a concern that SGP data would negatively impact special education teachers, the district shared data that its special education teachers actually did better once SGP scores were incorporated.
- **Discuss SGPs in context** – Align SGP data with the observation framework and discuss the differences between low, typical, and high growth scores. Use SGPs in conjunction with school performance reports and other data to build a sense of urgency, highlight areas needing improvement, and paint a picture of what is happening in a given classroom or school.
- **Share SGP data one-on-one with teachers** – Have principals meet individually with each teacher who receives an SGP score and discuss the meaning of the data. Ensure teachers know to expect these discussions.
- **Use SGP to prompt dialogue** – SGP data can prompt candid, reflective dialogue to identify and diagnose root problems. Pair teachers who have different SGPs to explore why they have different results and identify concrete strategies to improve practice.



Although pilot districts were able to make effective use of SGP data at the local level, broad conclusions at the state level based on pilot data are not possible at the time of publication. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, for Teacher Pilot 1, SGP data were only available for a few schools, with most data concentrated in a single school district. Also, on average, only 1.6 observations were performed per teacher and these were conducted using a new framework on a restricted timeline. Teacher Pilot 2 data should have more robust observation data and will include more districts and teachers. However, SGP data is not yet available for these districts. The Department will analyze the relationship between SGP data and observation scores more closely once 2012-13 SGP data become available.

### ***Promoting Rater Accuracy***

School and district leaders can use data to promote observer accuracy and calibration and to:

- Determine whether administrators are on track to complete the required number of observations;
- Identify outliers in terms of observers who consistently give higher or lower ratings;
- Assess how close observers' ratings are to expert ratings and provide additional training or support as necessary;
- Analyze the links between SGP data and observer ratings to see if observers effectively and accurately differentiate practice; and
- Prompt observer reflection and analysis to improve their observation and feedback skills.

The District Spotlight below shows how Elizabeth Public Schools ensured calibration and accuracy among its administrators.

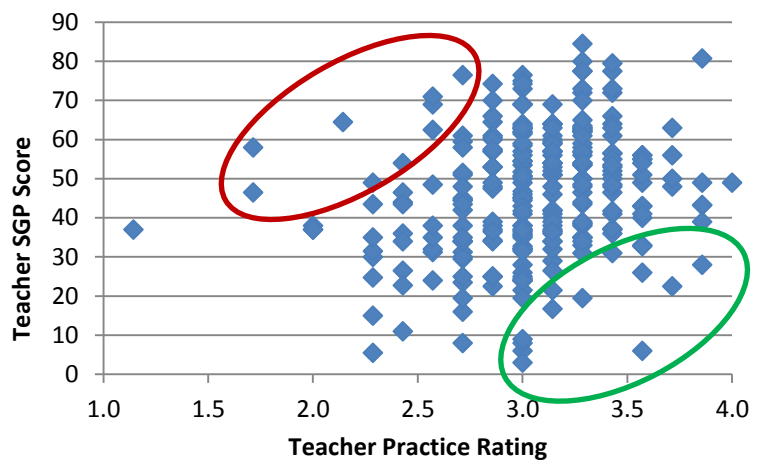
### **District Spotlight: Elizabeth Public Schools** ***Ensuring Rater Accuracy and Inter-Rater Reliability***

- **Thorough and Continuous Training** – Administrators received initial training on the framework to ensure all observers understood what to look for and how to rate evidence and follow-up training based on observation and student assessment data. Observers watched videos, collected evidence of what teachers and students said and did, paired evidence with competencies, and rated evidence according to the rubric. Observer ratings were compared to experts' ratings of the same videos and, if aligned, observers were certified. Observers regularly recalibrated using videos and discussing evidence and ratings.
- **Data Transparency** – Early on, Elizabeth shared data with each observer so they could see how their observation data compared to broader data at the school and district level.
- **Data Analysis and Retraining** – Elizabeth used three measures of rater accuracy and reliability at the component level and overall across the framework to determine trends:
  - **Percent Match** – How many individual component scores matched the master score?
  - **Score Differential** – How far away was the observer's average of all components from the average of the master score?
  - **Variation** – How many observers scored the component the same or differently?The trend analysis led to specific professional development. Upon identifying outliers, the district provided individual observers additional training and calibration.
- **Correlation Analysis** – The district analyzed correlations between SGP data and each observer's ratings to verify whether observer results mirrored SGP results. The data correlated positively overall, and observers who had the strongest correlations between teacher evaluation and SGP also scored higher in the certification process.



Several districts inspected their data to identify patterns across and within schools. For example, when discrepancies in SGP and practice measures did occur, they used the data to evaluate rater accuracy. In a large district, it might be worthwhile to use a chart similar to that shown in Figure 3.9. This shows the relationship between practice scores and SGPs in a large Teacher Pilot 1 district. The bulk of the ratings show a positive correlation, but there are examples of points that do not follow this pattern. Those included in the green ellipse (bottom right) show teachers whose students grew at a very low rate despite the teachers having very high observation scores. Those bounded by the red ellipse (top left) show teachers whose student growth is better than average despite low observations scores. Based on these data, the district may want to look more closely at its evaluation findings in general. Administrators might examine who performed the observations and whether the observation scores were consistently high or low for a particular observer or teacher. They might look for patterns in particular schools, noting the ones where many points fell outside the general pattern of data. These data can be used for future professional development or extra training for certain administrators.

**Figure 3.9: Relationship between teacher practice ratings and SGP scores for individual teachers in a Teacher Pilot 1 district.**



### ***Designing and Differentiating Professional Development***

Equipped with accurate, useful data, districts can analyze trends at the component level and across teacher ratings overall. Such analyses can help administrators:

- Identify common strengths and growth areas across groups of teachers (e.g., within a grade or content area, across a school, and throughout the district);
- Develop targeted and job-embedded professional development linked to common growth areas in order to improve educator practice;
- Share specific feedback with individual teachers and create tailored professional learning goals and action plans; and
- Highlight teachers with exemplary practices and engage them in providing professional learning, and/or opening their classrooms so other teachers can observe and learn.

The Red Bank Borough School District regularly reviews observation data to identify trends and needs at the teacher, grade, school, and district level. In SY11-12, an analysis of observation data showed that many teachers scored poorly in the area of “Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques.” In response, the district shared specific frameworks to help teachers formulate questions and generate deeper levels of thinking in students. After this training, an analysis of observation data for SY12-13 showed that 31% fewer teachers scored in the lowest category of this component when compared to SY11-12. More information about Red Bank’s approach to using observation data to inform professional development can be found in the Red Bank Borough District Spotlight below.

## District Spotlight: Red Bank Borough

### *Using Observation Data to Inform Professional Development*

- **Frequently discuss observation progress and trends** – Bring administrators together monthly to discuss trends, gaps, and patterns emerging from observation data and concrete next steps for specific teachers, grade levels, and school-wide professional development. Examine performance by domain and component to identify common strengths and growth areas.
- **Develop supports and interventions at all levels** – Provide targeted professional development at the teacher, grade, school, and district level.
  - **Teacher** – Create differentiated action plans for individual teachers based on specific areas of growth.
  - **Grade** – Discuss data trends and promising practices at grade level meetings. Visit each other's classrooms to observe these techniques in practice.
  - **School** – Create school-wide professional development plans. Utilize teachers who demonstrate exemplary levels of performance in a particular area to lead professional development for the grade and school to foster sharing of promising practices.
  - **District** – As systemic patterns emerge, plan district-wide PD to address those needs. Use designated professional development days to focus on specific areas.
- **Regularly revisit Professional Development Plans (PDPs)** – Align PDPs with summative evaluations, making areas of growth the focus in the following year's PDP. Each time a teacher is observed, provide an opportunity for the teacher and administrator to review the PDP and status of growth areas. Make professional growth a continuous feedback and improvement cycle, rather than something that is discussed only at the end of each year.
- **Focus on teacher practice and growth** – Use data in a way that promotes ongoing dialogue between teachers and administrators and helps teachers grow professionally. Keep the practice of teaching at the core of the conversation.

### *Informing Broader Staffing Decisions*

Evaluation data provides insight to the overall effectiveness of a school system's educators. Schools and districts can use this knowledge to proactively make more strategic decisions related to the cycle of recruiting, selecting, training/developing, evaluating, and retaining the most effective educators. In particular, schools and districts can use these data for the following:

- **Expectations** – Clarify what is expected of teachers and show teachers (through frameworks, rubrics, resources, and training) what these skills look like in practice at different levels of effectiveness.
- **Preparation Programs** – Identify common needs among new educators. Work with preparation programs to ensure they incorporate these skills into their training and provide feedback to the preparation programs accordingly.
- **Interviewing and Selection** – Conduct the interview process so that it aligns with the district's observation instrument. This will increase the likelihood of hiring teachers who possess the competencies the school or district values most.
- **Strategic Retention** – Identify high-performers, recognize and celebrate their successes, share their practices, and retain them as classroom teachers. Provide them growth opportunities and encourage them to maximize their potential as instructors and/or leaders. Identify struggling teachers and provide support to help them improve. Identify low-performers who do not improve despite additional supports, and use the data to help them exit the system.

## Part Four: Principal Evaluation Pilot

### 4.1 Background

As noted by one of the principal evaluation pilot districts, “Without effective principals, any school district will find it next to impossible to develop capacity and place a high-quality teacher in front of every child.” The significant role the principal plays in raising student achievement has been clearly documented in research.<sup>21</sup> However, prior to SY13-14, New Jersey lacked a statewide evaluation system that adequately measures or differentiates among principals’ performance.

The primary benefits of a strong principal evaluation system are as follows:

- Help districts accurately assess the effectiveness of principals in order to recognize those who are excelling and provide support for those who are struggling;
- Improve principals’ effectiveness by clarifying the expectations for performance and providing support where necessary;
- Facilitate the creation of school- and system-wide collaborative cultures focused on continuous improvement; and
- Use principal effectiveness for selection, placement, compensation, retention, or dismissal of school leaders.

New Jersey’s Educator Effectiveness Task Force Report<sup>22</sup> presented the principles of an accurate and rigorous system of principal evaluation. In August 2012, the TEACHNJ Act required that principals, assistant principals, and vice principals be evaluated using multiple measures including a balance between practice and student performance starting in SY13-14. Therefore, the Department utilized SY12-13 to pilot a principal evaluation system in order to get input from districts and develop policies that would enhance the effectiveness of the system. Pilot districts were asked to develop an evaluation system within the guidelines set forth by the Department. The components of the system are shown in Figure 4.1 below.

*Figure 4.1: Weights and types of evidence for components of the principal evaluation rubric in pilot districts.*

Evaluation Rubric Component	Percentage of Rubric	Evidence
Principal Performance	40	Conduct 2-3 observations using a principal practice observation instrument aligned to ISLLC standards
Human Capital Management Responsibilities	10	Staffing decisions, implementing teacher evaluation systems, developing collaborative structures and PD opportunities.
Aggregated School-wide Student Performance	35	Growth scores on NJ ASK or HSPA, plus at least two subject areas with no state tests.
School-specific Student Performance Goals	15	Scholastic and/or non-scholastic goals targeting a particular growth area, e.g. ELL reading performance, attendance, etc.

Five districts who participated in the Teacher Pilot 1 also were selected to join the principal evaluation pilot in Year 2. In addition, eight districts of varied size, location, and demographic makeup became a part of the principal evaluation pilot in Teacher Pilot 2. Information about New Jersey’s principal pilot districts can be found in [Appendix C](#).

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.sisd.net/cms/lib/TX01001452/Centricity/Domain/33/ReviewofResearch-LearningFromLeadership.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.state.nj.us/education/educators/effectiveness.pdf>

## 4.2 Policy Decisions in Principal Evaluation

Given the one-year pilot, it was not possible for the EPAC to obtain the same depth of understanding about principal evaluation as with teacher evaluation over two years. However, policy decisions were informed by visits to pilot school districts, formal meetings such as the EPAC monthly session, and close work with the NJPSA.

Initial thinking on the structure of the principal evaluation rubric was presented to a select group of educators that included EPAC appointees, pilot district participants, and representatives of New Jersey's associations for teachers, principals, superintendents and school boards. This panel met early in 2013 to provide recommendations and other input that guided the Department as it fine-tuned its proposals. Members of this panel continued to be involved over the next several months during the evolution of the regulations. The origins and development of several of the key policy decisions for principal evaluation are described below.

### Principal Practice Instrument

Similar to the process for a teacher observation instrument, the TEACHNJ Act allows districts to choose from a number of principal practice instruments appearing on a [state-approved list](#). These instruments all align with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards. The Department has provided flexibility to districts that would like to establish their own observation instrument through a process of review and approval by the state.

For teachers, evidence for teaching practice is generally collected in classroom-based observations. However, for principals, with their more varied work and responsibilities, the Department decided to allow flexibility in the ways observers collect evidence for principal practice. These can include activities such as:

- Conducting school walkthroughs;
- Observing the principal at staff meetings, school assemblies, teacher observation conferences, or parent meetings; and/or
- Examining a case study provided by the principal.

All principals must now be observed with the principal practice instrument at least twice a year. Non-tenured principals must be observed three times to ensure they are receiving the support and guidance necessary in their first few years as school leaders.

### Leadership Instrument

During the pilot, districts were charged with developing measures of “human capital management responsibilities” that would be incorporated into a principal’s evaluation. This was in keeping with the recommendations of the [EETF report](#) from March 2011. Evidence of this could include any number of activities such as fulfilling the supervision and evaluation of teachers, including conferences, managing the implementation of the required school level professional development plan, providing opportunities for collaborative work time, and recruiting and/or retaining teaching staff.

All pilot districts struggled to define this component and very few were able to develop a measure that they felt captured important information in principal evaluation. In response, the Department chose to provide very specific guidelines in the form of rubrics for principals and assistant/vice principals that all districts must use in SY13-14. For at least the first year of the new evaluation system, these Leadership Instruments will be used to measure how effectively building leaders implement AchieveNJ. The instruments contain aspects of the human capital management component of the pilot rubric such as building collaborative structures and providing a supportive evaluation process. In addition, they address other important components of teacher evaluation such as providing support for teachers in

developing high quality SGOs. Because principals across the state have very different involvement in staffing decisions, the Leadership Instruments focus only on those aspects of a school leader's job that they control. Finally, because the Department is invested in supporting principals in enhancing their roles as educational leaders, this component of a principal's evaluation is weighted at 20 percent, rather than 10 percent as it was in the pilot program.

The Leadership Instruments were developed by the Department with substantial input from groups including the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA) and the EPAC. There was broad support for the idea of statewide instruments within a principal subcommittee at the EPAC. Several drafts of the instruments were shared over a period of several months with EPAC members as the components and language were adjusted to reflect the input of those involved. The final versions for both principals and assistant/vice principals are posted on the [Leadership Instrument](#) section of the AchieveNJ website.

### **Student Growth Objectives**

Incorporating measures of student achievement into principal evaluation was another requirement of the pilot that districts struggled to accomplish. However, the addition of the SGO component into AchieveNJ for teachers provides a measure of student achievement that can be incorporated into principal evaluation. Principals will receive an average score of their teachers' SGOs, weighted at 10 percent of their evaluation. During SY13-14 and beyond, principals will assume the responsibility of supporting their staff in creating high quality SGOs and providing structures that help teachers achieve their goals. Through an average teacher SGO rating, they will share in the success of their staff.

### **Schoolwide Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs)**

Schoolwide SGPs can provide a rigorous measure of student growth, offering a way to assess not just what a principal does in a building but the results of those actions on student achievement. As part of a balanced evaluation system, schoolwide SGPs can provide a fairer and more accurate assessment of a principal's performance. However, the Department recognizes that principals work in buildings where different proportions of students take the NJ ASK. Therefore, the weight of this measure varies to take this into account. A [summary of these weights](#) can be found on the AchieveNJ website.

Because of the time-intensive nature of calculating SGPs for students, principals in schools where students are tested using the NJ ASK, like their teacher counterparts, will be unable to receive a final rating until a few months into the following school year. While this timeline is less than ideal, with the implementation of PARCC testing in SY14-15, this delay should be reduced in the future.

### **Administrator Goals**

In the pilot, administrator goals were referred to as School-specific Student Performance Goals. In AchieveNJ, they are included in every principal's evaluation under the name of Administrator Goals. Even though the name has changed, the nature of these goals remains the same. Principals may set between one and four goals to focus on a particular area of growth that a school leader identifies as important for his or her students. Figure 4.2 below provides an example. This example uses NJ ASK scores as the metric although administrators may use a wide variety of measures such as AP exam results, other standardized test data, and graduation rates.

Figure 4.2: Example of an Administrator Goal based on the NJ ASK.

Administrator		School		
W. Bowen		Tilghman School		
Rationale				
The basic literacy skills of reading, writing, and reasoning with print are essential. Current data shows lagging middle school student proficiency in the area of language arts and literacy as measured by the NJ ASK.				
Administrator Goal				
During the 2013-14 school year, 60% of the students in grades 5, 6, and 7 who scored Partially Proficient (<200) on the 2012-13 Language Arts NJ ASK will score in the Proficient or Advanced Proficient range.				
Baseline Data				
NJ ASK scores from 2012-13				
Scoring Plan				
Goal Attainment Based on Percent of Students Achieving Target				
Target Score	Exceptional (4)	Full (3)	Partial (2)	Insufficient (1)
≥ 200 on NJ ASK	Greater than 65%	55%-65%	34%-54%	Less than 34%

As all teachers will set SGOs, all principals will set administrator goals. However, the weight of these goals in the principal’s evaluation will be 10, 20, or 40 percent depending on the proportion of students in their building that receives SGP scores.

**Modifications of Principal Evaluation System for Assistant Principals and Vice Principals**

While the roles and responsibilities of principals within and between districts can vary to a degree, vice principals and assistant principals – referred to as simply vice principals in this section – may have very different roles, even within the same building. Therefore, the Department sought to build flexibility into the evaluation system for building leaders.

- **Leadership Instrument:** In consultation with the EPAC and other groups, the Department developed a modified version of the Leadership Instrument. This seeks to better reflect job descriptions of vice-principals and the day-to-day realities of their work while reinforcing the important role they play in the teaching and learning that occurs in schools.
- **Administrator Goals:** If the vice principal’s work is closely aligned to that of the principal, it may be appropriate for them to share the same set of administrator goals. However, vice principals may set their own goals if their work is significantly different.
- **SGOs:** Vice principals may be awarded the average SGO score for all teachers, as in the case of the principal, or a portion of the teacher’s scores. This portion should represent the staff that the vice principal works more closely with, e.g., a vice principal in charge of 9<sup>th</sup>-grade may have an SGO average of all 9<sup>th</sup>-grade teachers only.

**Supervisors, Directors and Other Administrative Staff**

Even greater than the diversity of the roles of vice principals is that of other administrative staff such as athletic directors, chief academic officers, science supervisors, etc. Such varied job descriptions make it

difficult to create a common evaluation practice instrument. Additionally, while there has been a tremendous amount of research devoted to principal effectiveness, studies of these other groups are not as substantial. For these reasons, the Department chose to grant latitude in evaluating staff members in these roles in SY13-14. Districts can choose to continue existing practice, adopt or adapt instruments from instrument providers, or create their own. More information can be found on the [AchieveNJ website](#). Moving forward, the Department is committed to partnering with professional associations and a variety of educators.. Using these partnerships, the Department will develop recommendations for supervisors, directors, and other administrative staff.

### 4.3 Practical Advice from Pilot Districts for Principal Evaluation

At the time of analysis, districts did not have access to their aggregated school-wide student performance data. However, the Department learned some important lessons throughout the pilot year from the other components of the evaluation rubric.

#### Ensure Superintendent Leadership

Pilots that successfully made the switch to a more rigorous principal evaluation system benefited greatly from clear leadership from the district’s chief school administrator. Strong superintendents took ownership of the evaluation initiative and were actively engaged in many aspects of its implementation. Key steps to manage this process effectively include:

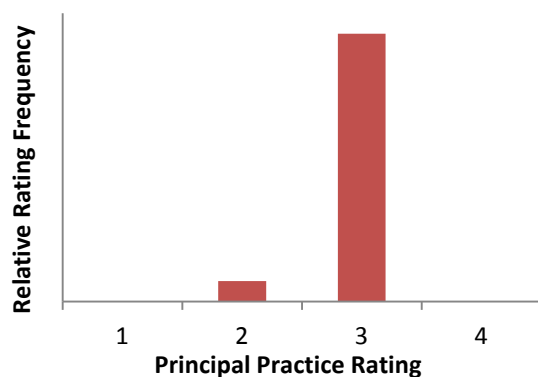
- Ensuring all central office staff are involved in principal evaluation training;
- Establishing protocols and procedures to include the whole administrative team; and
- Meeting one on one with each principal to review goals mid-year and end-of-year goals.

#### Collect and Use High Quality Observation Data

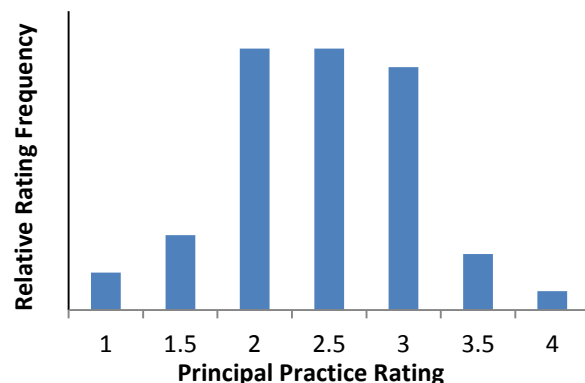
One of the potential benefits of an improved principal evaluation system is the ability to differentiate the performance levels of principals and provide recognition when deserved and support when needed. The degree to which these data are useful is dependent upon not just its accuracy but how well it differentiates between different levels of practice. The value of using high quality data in teacher evaluation is discussed at length in [Section 3.4](#). These lessons apply to principals and a similar pattern can be seen in the data collected by these pilots. Figures 4.3 and 4.4 show principal practice data from two principal pilot district schools that adopted different approaches.

Figure 4.3 shows that principals in District A earned one of two whole number scores – 2 or 3. District leadership may be limited in what it can do with data of this type where little differentiation is apparent.

*Figure 4.3: District A - principal practice ratings reported in whole numbers.*



*Figure 4.4: District B - principal practice ratings using 1 decimal place (shown here in 0.5 groups).*

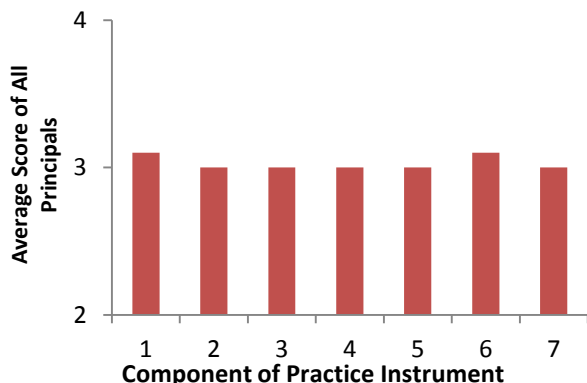




This is in contrast with the data collected by District B as shown in Figure 4.4. This district used ratings to the nearest 0.1 and used its practice instrument in a way that provides more useful information about school leadership in the district.

Beyond the value in distinguishing overall practice levels in principals, an examination of component level data can help districts tailor individual and district-wide leadership professional development. However, districts must be committed to use their practice instrument to discern these patterns. Figure 4.5

**Figure 4.5: District C - 96% of all principal practice instrument component ratings are 3s.**



displays the component level data taken from a district’s principal practice instrument. Of the 91 component level ratings collected by two observers, 96 percent of them were “3s.” In a similar vein, one district reported that on looking at its observation data, it could find no areas of practice that warranted particular attention. Therefore, it made no adjustments to its professional development plan. This homogeneity of ratings may be a reality in some districts, where building leaders are effective or highly effective in all areas of their practice. However, as district leaders become more familiar with the observation instrument and the practice of systematically collecting evidence throughout

the year, they may be able to discern patterns at district and individual levels that will inform sound professional development decisions for their principals.

### Complete Training Early and Conduct Inter-rater Reliability Checks

Districts used a variety of training methods, the most popular option being face-to-face training with an expert in the observation instrument, often supplied by an instrument vendor. Most instruments, however, provided no certification process tools to establish rater accuracy and reliability. To address the lack of a certification process, one district created its own calibration questions for the McREL framework (see “Establishing Rater Accuracy for Principal Observations” box).

Follow-up training was useful especially after some observations had been conducted. This allowed administrators to discuss and get clarification on details surrounding language in the rubrics, for example. Most districts conducted their training early on in the school year or before it began. This allowed them to focus on teacher training during the school year and had the added advantage of allowing a district to “embed the leadership concepts into all aspects of the district before the year begins,” in the words of one principal.

### Set Administrator Goals that Align with Overall Building Goals

Superintendents encouraged principals to set administrator goals that were appropriate for their buildings. Within buildings, and when possible, APs/VPs and supervisors set goals that supported the overall building goals rather than having individual goals.

#### Establishing Rater Accuracy for Principal Observations

*“We developed scenarios that were distributed to everyone on our leadership team. After reading the scenario, the results were reviewed with the team giving individuals the opportunity to defend why they selected a certain result. This practice has been repeated multiple times. In the beginning of the school year, all of the administrators who evaluate other administrators conducted at least two tandem observations. After completing separate rubrics, the two observers collaborated about what was observed and met together to review the evaluation with the observed administrator.”*

~Andrew Zuckerman, Project Manager, Lawrence Township



### **Use the New Evaluation System to Encourage Professional Conversations and Growth**

Similar to the shift noted by educators in teacher pilot districts, when administrators use a high quality observation instrument as part of a structured principal evaluation system, the quality and frequency of discussion surrounding principal practice increases dramatically. The quotations from districts below indicate this important change:

- “All administrators are on the same page.”
- “There was increased dialogue about effective leadership.”
- “We developed clearer expectations of leadership.”
- “We developed a common language and understanding of professional practice.”
- “We realized what we don’t know about principal practice.”

These comments suggest that the principal practice instrument can be more than just a tool for evaluation; it can also be a powerful vehicle for professional learning. This may be true even for administrators who have been conducting observations for many years.

### **Summary**

While the principal pilot lasted only one school year, several districts were able to make significant progress in using a new principal practice instrument and setting administrator goals. A preliminary analysis of principal data suggests that districts were able to differentiate between different levels of principal performance quite well. Compared to the first year of teacher pilot data where districts produced a majority of Effective and Highly Effective ratings, several principal pilot districts generated much more normally distributed data.

## Part Five: Looking Ahead: Challenges and Opportunities for AchieveNJ

Despite using a careful and deliberative three-year process in the development of a new evaluation system, the process of effectively evaluating educators has only just begun. The Department recognizes that challenges lay ahead. However, these challenges exist because New Jersey educators and policymakers are striving to provide the best possible education to every child. Some of these challenges are described below.

### **Integrating Initiatives**

School districts across the country are being asked to adopt multiple initiatives in a relatively short period of time; CCSS, PARCC, and new evaluation systems including measures of student learning such as SGOs. The scope of these initiatives is straining districts. However, each of these initiatives is designed to tackle very real problems in education that the country and the state of New Jersey cannot ignore. Preparing students adequately for college, careers, and their responsibilities as citizens has never been more important. Through these reforms, New Jersey educators will have important tools to help them improve teaching and learning. Over the next several years, the Department will work with districts and stakeholder groups to help identify the best approaches to integrate these initiatives to ensure they become part of a connected whole.

### **Increasing Leadership Capacity**

For some educational leaders, the shift in expectations in New Jersey's evaluation system may pose significant challenges. With AchieveNJ, principals are being asked to serve as educational leaders. Principals, supervisors, and directors must evaluate teachers more thoroughly and provide accurate and useful feedback to help teachers grow. These leaders must create or improve supportive and collaborative structures to help advance teaching and learning. Superintendents must more thoroughly evaluate principals and help their building leaders use the new practice instruments and rubrics to improve their practice. While many principals already function as educational leaders and operate within clear and fair systems of accountability, this will be a significant shift for others, who must rise to meet the higher standard that New Jersey has adopted. Providing clear expectations and priorities, AchieveNJ seeks to recognize highly effective leaders and provide guidance and support for those who are struggling.

### **Addressing Historical Expectations**

In the binary evaluation systems used by districts in the past, many teachers and principals have come to expect to be rated as good or excellent – or at least satisfactory. With the new 4-point scale, high quality observation instruments, and measures of teacher performance based on student growth, educators and their administrators may have trouble adjusting to a system in which fewer earn top marks. If implementation of the new evaluation process is effective, educators will come to see the real benefits that the new systems provide in supporting their improved practice. To that end, school leaders should work to create a healthy school culture in which ongoing learning is a priority, not only for students, but also for educators. If educators are to receive the support and recognition they deserve, administrators must have honest, professional conversations with each educator. Trust and mutual respect among teachers and administrators fosters collective responsibility for student success and motivates educators to do their best. This mutual commitment to excellence in supportive environments creates a culture which enhances educator performance and ultimately serves students best.

### **Providing Valuable Professional Learning**

Professional learning can be a powerful strategy to improve the skills of teachers, but professional development programs are not created equal. For instance, a more tailored approach to professional learning will help educators grow better than a one-size-fits-all session delivered during an in-service day. School leaders must invest in high quality professional learning which is job-embedded, sustained, and focused on school and district goals as well as the individual needs of educators. Transforming professional learning so that it is truly data driven and designed with adult learning styles in mind requires thoughtful planning. New collaborative structures such as learning teams hold great promise but they must be carefully constructed and facilitated to assure their usefulness. The SciP can play a vital role in assuring that professional learning activities meet the needs of staff and that the professional development program continues to evolve in useful ways.

### **Developing a Growth Mindset**

AchieveNJ is asking educators to make the evaluation process meaningful. For teachers and administrators who have become accustomed to a perfunctory system, this may be the greatest challenge of all. However, the potential for educator growth when AchieveNJ is used by districts as an evaluation *and support* system should not be underestimated. The switch from a compliance attitude to a growth and development mindset<sup>23</sup> will be challenging but the rewards will be great. While educators will benefit when teachers and principals are fairly and accurately evaluated and provided the support and guidance they need to grow as professionals, ultimately, it is New Jersey's children who will be the winners.

## **Conclusion**

The State of New Jersey has embarked on an ambitious project to overhaul the evaluation of educators. Recognizing that educator effectiveness is the most important in-school factor for student success, the Department has progressed deliberately and thoughtfully to develop an evaluation system that will more effectively recognize the performance of classroom teachers and school leaders.

The Department has not done this work alone. Learning from the hard work of thousands of educators in New Jersey's evaluation pilot districts and benefitting from the leadership and guidance of the EPAC, the Department developed AchieveNJ – the State's educator evaluation and support system. Working within the framework proposed by the Governor's Educator Effectiveness Task Force in 2010, AchieveNJ was systematically constructed and modified based on educator input collected over three years. AchieveNJ comprises policies that seek to improve evaluation while providing districts enough flexibility to facilitate implementation and address local needs.

The value of the state's pilot districts does not stop with the development of policies, though; they have lessons to share with other districts in New Jersey. Most importantly – and despite capacity challenges – they show that with transparent communication, clear planning, and effective implementation management, districts can adopt a more rigorous evaluation system in a single school year. Districts that completed their second pilot year showed that not only does the work become easier, it becomes more valuable. Once districts become comfortable with the new multiple measures of educator effectiveness, they can improve their observation processes, establish school cultures rich in professional discussions about teaching and learning,<sup>24</sup> and use data effectively to provide more targeted professional support. Districts around New Jersey should take advantage of the knowledge

---

<sup>23</sup> <http://mindsetonline.com/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/resources/EPACInterim11-12.pdf>

gained by pilot districts outlined in this report to better understand the benefits of an improved evaluation system.

The Department recognizes that statewide implementation of AchieveNJ in SY13-14 is just one step on the path to improving student achievement in New Jersey. While supporting districts in implementing the CCSS and preparing for the PARCC assessments in 2015, the Department is committed to learning from educators and improving AchieveNJ. In SY13-14, a new AchieveNJ Advisory Committee comprised of education experts and district representatives will provide guidance and recommendations to the Department in the same way the EPAC did in developing the new system. The AchieveNJ Advisory Committee will provide critical input for the continuous learning cycles the Department uses to steadily improve its policies.

Through the TEACHNJ Act and AchieveNJ, educator evaluation will form a cornerstone of improved student achievement in New Jersey. The new system challenges many long-held assumptions about the lifecycle of an educator, requiring educators to demonstrate they can consistently and effectively earn and maintain tenure. Districts must provide fairer and more accurate assessments of educators' performance and leaders must provide targeted and effective support to educators across the performance spectrum. These changes require a significant shift in thinking and behavior for many, but this shift must occur. In pursuit of the common goal to provide a world class education for all students, effective evaluation is integral to ensuring that each child has the best possible educators that New Jersey can provide.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Glossary and Acronyms

**AchieveNJ** – The new educator evaluation and support system outlined in regulations that support the TEACHNJ Act, implemented statewide in SY13-14.

**Annual Performance Report** – A written appraisal of a teaching staff member's performance prepared by an appropriately certified supervisor, based on the evaluation rubric for his or her position.

**Annual Summative Evaluation Rating (or Summative Rating)** – An annual evaluation rating that is based on appraisals of educator practice and student performance, and is the sum of all measures captured in a teaching staff member's evaluation rubric. The four summative performance categories are Highly Effective, Effective, Partially Effective, and Ineffective.

**Appropriately Certified Supervisor** – Personnel qualified to perform duties of supervision, including, but not limited to, the superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, assistant principal, vice principal, and supervisor who hold the appropriate certificate and who are designated to serve in a supervisory role.

**Corrective Action Plan (CAP)** – An individual professional development plan for educators who are rated Ineffective or Partially Effective on the annual summative evaluation, focused on meeting the needs for improvement identified through the evaluation. Teachers with a CAP will receive an additional mid-year observation and conference.

**Common Core State Standards (CCSS)** – The state standards for English language arts and math, adopted by the State Board of Education in 2010, which define what is expected of students at each grade level.

**Chief School Administrator (CSA)** – The superintendent or designee in charge of a school district.

**District Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee/District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEPAC/DEAC)** – The DEPAC was required for each evaluation pilot district and was renamed "DEAC" when the requirement was expanded for all New Jersey districts. The group oversees and guides the planning and implementation of the district board of education's evaluation policies and procedures.

**Educator Practice Evaluation Instrument** – A teaching practice evaluation instrument or principal evaluation instrument selected by a district from state-approved lists. More commonly known as an "observation instrument" this assessment tool provides scales or dimensions that capture competencies of professional performance, and differentiation of a range of professional performance as described by the scales, which must be shown in practice and/or research studies. The scores from the instrument, whenever applicable, are components of the teaching staff member's evaluation rubrics and the scores are included in the summative evaluation rating for the individual.

**Evaluation Rubric** – A set of criteria, measures, and processes used to evaluate all teaching staff members in a specific school district or local education agency. Evaluation rubrics consist of measures of professional practice, based on educator practice instruments and student outcomes. Each district board of education will have an evaluation rubric specifically for teachers; another specifically for principals, assistant principals, and vice principals; and evaluation rubrics for other categories of teaching staff members.

**Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee (EPAC)** – The statewide advisory group convened at the start of the evaluation pilot in 2011 to provide feedback and guidance to the State in developing evaluation policies.

**Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO)** – A process by which districts compete for funds for a specific initiative. The teacher and principal evaluation pilot districts were selected using the NGO process. The NGO document described the requirements of each pilot, and district applications described their plans for fulfilling those requirements.

**Observation** – A method of collecting data on the performance of a teaching staff member's assigned duties and responsibilities and that will be included in the determination of the annual summative evaluation rating.

- **Announced observation:** An observation for which the person conducting an observation for the purpose of evaluation will notify the teaching staff member of the date and the class period when the observation will be conducted
- **Co-observation:** An observation for which two or more people observe simultaneously, or at alternate times, the same lesson or portion of a lesson for the purpose of increasing accuracy and consistency among observers. Also known as “double scoring.”
- **Long Observation:** An observation for the purpose of evaluation that is conducted for a minimum duration of 40 minutes or one class period, whichever is shorter.
- **Post-observation Conference:** A meeting, either in-person or remotely between the teaching staff member and the person who conducted the observation for the purpose of evaluation, to discuss the data collected in the observation.
- **Short Observation:** An observation for the purpose of evaluation that is conducted for at least 20 minutes.
- **Unannounced observation:** An observation for which the person conducting an observation for the purpose of evaluation will not notify the teaching staff member of the date or time when the observation will be conducted.

**Observation Instrument** – See Educator Practice Evaluation Instrument.

**Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)** – A consortium of 19 states plus the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers (<http://www.parcconline.org/about-parcc>).

**Professional Development (PD)** – A comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers’ and administrators’ effectiveness in raising student achievement.

**Professional Development Plan (PDP)** – The Teacher PDP is an individualized plan, which includes at least 20 hours per year of qualifying activities, developed annually by each teacher’s supervisor in consultation with the teacher and aligned with the Professional Standards for Teachers. The School Leader PDP is an individualized plan that he or she develops annually in collaboration with the chief school administrator and that aligns with the Professional Standards for School Leaders.

**Professional Learning Community (PLC)** – A collaborative team of teachers, school leaders, and other administrative, instructional, and educational services staff members who commit to working together to accomplish common goals and who are engaged in a continuous cycle of professional improvement.

**School Improvement Panel (ScIP)** – A group required in each school by the TEACHNJ Act to include the school principal or designee, an assistant principal or vice principal, and a teacher who has a demonstrated record of success in the classroom. The ScIP’s role is to ensure, oversee, and support the implementation of the district's evaluation, professional development, and mentoring policies at the school level.

**Student Growth Objective (SGO)** – An academic goal that teachers and administrators set and supervisors approve for groups of students.

**Student Growth Percentile (SGP)** – A specific metric for measuring individual student progress on statewide assessments by tracking how much a student’s test scores have changed relative to other students statewide with similar scores in previous years.

**Teaching Staff Member:** A member of the professional staff of any public district or regional board of education, or any county vocational school district board of education holding office, position, or employment of such character that the qualifications for such office, position, or employment require him or her to hold a valid, effective, and appropriate standard, provisional, or emergency certificate issued by the State Board of Examiners. Teaching staff members include the positions of school nurse and school athletic trainer. There are three different types of certificates that teaching staff members work under:

1. Instructional certificate;
2. Administrative certificate; and
3. Educational services certificate.

Note that for the purposes of the rules for evaluation, any staff member holding and working under an “instructional certificate” is a “teacher.”

**TEACHNJ Act (Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey Act)** – The tenure reform law passed unanimously by the New Jersey legislature and signed into law by Governor Chris Christie in August, 2012. The AchieveNJ evaluation and support system was developed to support requirements of this law.

**Vice Principal** – Part of principal’s administrative team, synonymous with Assistant Principal.



## Appendix B: Teacher Pilot Districts Years 1 and 2

Figure A.1: Cohort 1 Teacher Pilot Districts. These districts completed Teacher Pilot Years 1 and 2 (2011-13).

District	Teacher Practice Evaluation Instrument	Students	Teachers
Alexandria Township*	Stronge	556	59
Bergenfield *	Danielson	3,559	268
Elizabeth*	Danielson	24,081	2,043
Monroe Township	Marzano	6,077	510
Ocean City	Danielson	2,045	206
Pemberton*	Danielson	5,027	483
Red Bank	Danielson	1,345	95
Secaucus	Danielson	2,190	170
West Deptford Township	McREL	3,062	254
Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional	McREL	1,704	141
<b>Cohort 1 Totals</b>		<b>49,646</b>	<b>4,229</b>

Figure A.2: Cohort 2 Teacher Pilot Districts. These districts completed Teacher Pilot Year 2 (2012-13) along with Cohort 1 districts (Figure A.1).

District	Teacher Practice Evaluation Instrument	Students	Teachers
Bordentown Regional	Danielson	2,501	208
Collingswood, Audubon, and Merchantville Consortium	Danielson	3,600	352
Cranford Township	Danielson	3,896	347
Freehold Borough	Marzano	1,567	115
Gloucester School District	McRel	2,071	175
Haddonfield Borough	Danielson	2,400	225
Lenape Valley Regional and Stanhope Consortium	Danielson	1,100	125
Middlesex County Vocational	McREL	2,039	178
Piscataway Township	Danielson	7,707	593
Rockaway Township*	Danielson	2,400	280
Teaneck	Danielson	3,792	397
Woodbury City	Marzano	1,534	130
<b>Cohort 2 Totals</b>		<b>34,607</b>	<b>3,125</b>
<b>Cohort 1 and 2 Totals</b>		<b>84,253</b>	<b>7,354</b>

\* These districts participated in teacher and principal components of the evaluation pilot. Newark Public Schools are not included in these numbers but piloted principal and teacher evaluation systems concurrently with the official state evaluation pilot and shared information with the Department.

## Appendix C: Principal Pilot Districts

Figure A.3: Pilot Cohort districts. All completed the Principal Pilot (2012-13).

District	Principal Practice Evaluation Instrument	Principals	Assistant/Vice Principals
Alexandria Township	Stronge	2	0
Bergenfield	Danielson	7	2
Edison Township	McREL	17	11
Elizabeth	Marzano	31	41
Lawrence Township	McREL	7	5
Monmouth County Vocational	Stronge	14	2
Morris	Marshall	1	2
North Brunswick Township	McREL	6	11
Paterson	Focal Point	47	51
Pemberton Township	MPPR & Val-Ed360	10	7
Rockaway Township	Stronge	6	2
Spotswood	Stronge	4	1
Stafford Township	Stronge	5	5
<b>Principal Cohort Totals</b>		<b>143</b>	<b>133</b>

## Appendix D: AchieveNJ: Resources Guide

The following resources describe various aspects of the improved educator evaluation and support system for 2013-14:

### General Information

- [Website](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/): <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/>
- [FAQ](http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq_eval.shtml): [http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq\\_eval.shtml](http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq_eval.shtml)
- [Overview](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/guide.pdf) (narrative): <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/guide.pdf>
- [Overview Presentation](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/RegOverview.pdf) (slides):  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/RegOverview.pdf>
- [Training and Implementation Overview](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/resources/TrainingImplementationOverview.pdf):  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/resources/TrainingImplementationOverview.pdf>

### Evaluation of Various Types of Employees

- [Teacher Evaluation Overview](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/1PagerTeachers.pdf):  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/1PagerTeachers.pdf>
- [Principal Evaluation Overview](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/1PagerPrincipals.pdf):  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/1PagerPrincipals.pdf>
- [Assistant/Vice Principal Evaluation Overview](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/principal/APandVPEvaluationOverview.pdf):  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/principal/APandVPEvaluationOverview.pdf>
- [Special Educator Overview](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SpecialEducatorOverview.pdf):  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SpecialEducatorOverview.pdf>
- [Specialists and Others Evaluation Overview](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/SpecialistsandOthersOverview.pdf):  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/SpecialistsandOthersOverview.pdf>
- [Directors and Supervisors Evaluation Overview](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/DirectorsandSupervisorsOverview.pdf):  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/DirectorsandSupervisorsOverview.pdf>

### Measures of Student Achievement in Evaluations

- [Student Growth Objective \(SGO\) Overview](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGOOverview.pdf):  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGOOverview.pdf>
- [SGO Overview Presentation](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGOOverviewPresentation.pdf):  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGOOverviewPresentation.pdf>
- [SGO Guidebook](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGOGuidebook.pdf) (narrative, examples, and forms):  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGOGuidebook.pdf>
- [SGO Frequently Asked Questions](http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq_eval_sgo.shtml)  
[http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq\\_eval\\_sgo.shtml](http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq_eval_sgo.shtml)
- [Individual SGO Forms](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/objectives.shtml) (fillable forms):  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/objectives.shtml>
- [SGO Training Modules](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/modules.shtml): <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/modules.shtml>
- [Student Growth Percentile \(SGP\) Overview](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGPOverview.pdf):  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGPOverview.pdf>
- [SGP Overview Presentation](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGPOverviewPresentation.pdf):  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGPOverviewPresentation.pdf>
- [Video on SGPs](http://survey.pcgus.com/njgrowth/player.html): <http://survey.pcgus.com/njgrowth/player.html>

### **Measures of Educator Practice in Evaluations**

- [Teacher Practice Overview:](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/TeacherPracticeOverview.pdf)  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/TeacherPracticeOverview.pdf>
- [Preliminary Evaluation Leadership Practice Instrument:](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/principal/PracticeInstrument.pdf)  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/principal/PracticeInstrument.pdf>

### **Professional Support Tied to Evaluations**

- [Professional Development and Support Overview:](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/PDOverview.pdf)  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/PDOverview.pdf>
- [School Improvement Panel and Strengthening Evaluation Overview:](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SchoolImprovementPanelandImprovingEvaluation.pdf)  
<http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SchoolImprovementPanelandImprovingEvaluation.pdf>

### **TEACHNJ and Regulatory Resources**

- [Evaluation Regulations, Adopted September 11, 2013:](http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap10.pdf)  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap10.pdf>
- [Definitions of Evaluation Terminology in Proposed Regulations:](http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/resources/definitions.pdf)  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/resources/definitions.pdf>

## Appendix E: Sample Teacher Evaluation Schedule for AchieveNJ Implementation

Month	Required State Deadlines	Observation Schedule			Student Growth Objective (SGO) Activities	Conferences
		Non-Tenured	Tenured	Walk-throughs		
2013 September	8/31: All teachers and evaluators trained on practice instrument			Non-tenured	In-service day: Introduce district guidelines, begin turnkey training. Use department/team meetings for job-alike training	
October	10/15: All principals trained on practice instrument	First round		Tenured	1) In-service day: Job-alikes continue SGO development, first drafts due to principal 2) Faculty meeting - Continued SGO work, second draft to principals	Oct- Nov: Pre-conferences and post-conferences for first observation for all teachers without tenure <b>Discuss progress on SGOs</b>
November	11/15: Final SGOs submitted to principal by teachers		First round	Non-tenured	Administrators review SGOs posted by teachers electronically, approve SGOs during conference with individual teachers	1) 11/5 - 6: 15-min. SGO conference with administrator 2) Nov. - Dec: Pre- and post-conferences for first observation for all tenured teachers
December		Second round		Tenured	Dec. - Jan.: Track progress through faculty, team, and individual meetings	Dec. - Jan.: Post-conferences for second observation for non-tenured teachers; discuss progress on SGOs
2014 January	By end of first semester: At least one observation		Second round	Non-tenured		Jan - Feb: Post-conferences for second observation for all tenured teachers Discuss progress on SGOs
February	2/15: SGO revisions with CSA approval	Third round		Tenured	Teachers request approval to make adjustments to SGO scoring plan for exceptional circumstances	
March			Third round	Non-tenured	Late March: SGO results collected by administrators for non-tenured teachers	Late March - April: Pre-conferences* and post-conferences for third observation for all non-tenured teachers; <b>combine with annual conference and discuss SGOs and PDPs for 2014-15</b>
April	4/30: Observations of non-tenured teachers complete		Third round	Tenured	SGO results collected by administrators for tenured teachers	April - May: Final post-conference for tenured teachers; combine with annual conference and discuss SGOs and PDPs for 2014-15
May	5/15: Notification of rehire for non-tenured teachers			Non-tenured	Job-alike meetings held to discuss SGO assessments for 2014-15	
June	By end of school year: Annual conference for all teachers					
July/ August					Plans developed by DEAC for SGO training, approval process and collection system; communications material for SY13-14 developed	

\* At least one observation must be unannounced and at least one must be announced and preceded by a pre-conference. The superintendent must determine whether the third observation will be announced or unannounced and if it is announced, there should be a pre-conference.

*This sample schedule is based on materials shared by several New Jersey districts and is provided as an example of how to integrate each component of teacher evaluation in SY13-14. All districts must follow State-mandated deadlines shown in the table; however, **use of this schedule is not mandatory.** See the following sections of regulatory code for more details on required activities and deadlines: DEAC (NJAC 6A:10-2.3); SciP (NJAC 6A:10-3); Teacher Observations/Conferences (NJAC 6A:10-4.4); SGOs (NJAC 6A:10-4.2e); Training (NJAC 6A:10-2.2(b)).*

Month	Required State Deadlines	DEAC Activities	ScIP Activities	Training
September	8/31: All teachers and evaluators trained on practice instrument	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Create district-wide SGO <b>assessment inventory</b></li> <li>2) Facilitate district-wide implementation of SGO training schedule</li> <li>3) Check course rosters</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Create school-wide SGO assessment inventory</li> <li>2) Finalize observation schedule</li> <li>3) Ensure all new teachers receive evaluation training</li> <li>4) Ensure all new teachers assigned appropriate mentor</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>Training for new staff</b> hired after 5/1 in evaluation rubric/practice instrument</li> <li>2) <b>Teacher SGO training</b> in district group then school based groups; <b>Administrator-specific SGO training</b></li> </ol>
October	10/15: All principals trained on practice instrument	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Monitor SGO training - ensure consistent message and support structures</li> <li>2) Finalize course rosters</li> </ol>	<p><b>EACH MONTH – ensure observations are on schedule, ensure new teachers are trained and have a mentor</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Identify obstacles to setting SGOs and provide solutions</li> <li>2) Monitor and support mentoring and make adjustments as needed</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Continued <b>SGO training</b> for teachers and administrators</li> <li>2) Follow-up training for staff in <b>observation instrument</b></li> </ol>
November	11/15: Final SGOs submitted to principal by teachers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Facilitate process for SGO collection, evaluation, approval by administrators</li> <li>2) Analyze first round of observation reports and provide guidance for supplemental training and <b>immediate</b> professional development</li> </ol>	<p><b>Collect the following information and distribute to appropriate groups for PD purposes:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) First round of aggregated teacher observation data</li> <li>2) Quality of feedback provided to teachers</li> <li>3) "Lessons learned" from first round of co-observations</li> <li>4) First-year and non-tenured teacher support needs (administer survey)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>Evaluation instrument</b> and <b>SGO follow-up training</b> as needed during faculty meetings and PD days throughout year</li> <li>2) <b>Calibration training</b> for administrators conducting observations as needed</li> <li>3) <b>Training for new staff</b> as needed</li> </ol>
December		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) SGO monitoring - tracking progress</li> <li>2) Assess immediate district PD needs to address trends, gaps, and patterns that result from first round of observations</li> </ol>		
January	End of first semester: At least one observation	Suggest district-wide modifications to mentoring system based on feedback from schools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>Review mentoring program</b> and suggest approaches for strengthening supports for new teachers</li> <li>2) <b>Review Corrective Action Plan (CAP)</b> implementation</li> </ol>	
February	2/15: SGO revisions with CSA approval, mid-year conference with teachers on CAP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Monitor number and type of SGO revisions</li> <li>2) Analyze second round of observation reports and provide guidance for supplemental training and <b>immediate professional development</b></li> </ol>	Collect information from second round of aggregated teacher observation data, feedback quality and co-observation lessons and distribute to appropriate groups for PD purposes	
March		Analyze school-based reports on observation data and suggested PD goals. Synthesize into a <b>district-wide PD plan for 2014-15</b>	Review all aggregated observation data to determine general strengths and weaknesses in teacher practice. Identify appropriate <b>PD goals for 2014-15</b>	
April	4/30: Observations of non-tenured teachers complete	Review school data on evaluation process and provide guidance on ways to improve;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Review successes and challenges in evaluation and mentoring and report findings to DEAC</li> <li>2) <b>Analyze SGO results</b> and audit random sample for quality of SGOs, assessments, and attainment</li> </ol>	
May	5/15: Notification of rehire for non-tenured teachers	Review aggregate SGO results to determine training and communication needs for SY14-15		
June	By end of school: Summary conferences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Suggest modifications to SGO communication, training, approval, and collection system; update SGO assessment inventory</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Modify school induction, evaluation, and mentoring plans for first year teachers</li> </ol>	
July/ August		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) Review and modify SY14-15 school and district PD and mentoring plans</li> <li>3) Provide training for administrators/new staff</li> </ol>	Develop observation schedule for SY14-15	Training in evaluation rubric, observation instrument, and SGOs completed for evaluators/new staff

## Appendix F: Teacher Observation Data by Cohort, Observer, and Teacher

Figure A.4: Number of observations in Cohort 1 of the teacher pilot over two years.

District	Number of Teachers Observed	Number of Observers	Total Observations	Observations per Teacher (Average)		Observations per Observer (Average)
				Year 1	Year 2	
A	56	4	N/A	1	N/A	N/A
B	86	N/A	177	N/A	2.1	N/A
C	141	11	553	N/A	3.9	50.3
D	172	14	703	1.0	4.1	50.2
E	194	13	495	1.6	2.6	38.1
F	385	29	1289	1.2	3.3	44.4
G	596	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A
H	1876	108	3966	1.7	2.1	36.7
<b>Cohort 1 Average</b>				<b>1.3</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>39.4</b>

Figure A.5: Number of observations in Cohort 2 in Teacher Pilot Year 2

District	Teachers Observed	Observers	Total Observations	Average # of Observations per Teacher (Average)	Observations per Observer
I	33	2	115	3.5	57.5
J	155	18	603	3.9	33.5
K	171	17	594	3.5	34.9
L	180	14	454	2.5	32.4
M	202	13	612	3.0	47.1
N	333	22	1123	3.4	51.0
O	525	34	1589	3.0	46.7
<b>Cohort 2 Average</b>				<b>3.3</b>	<b>43.3</b>



## Appendix G: Appointed Members of the EPAC

### 2012-13:

- **Mr. Carl Blanchard**, National Board Certified Teacher; Somerset County Teacher of the Year 2011, Biology Teacher, Franklin High School
- **Ms. Marie Blistan**, Secretary/Treasurer, New Jersey Education Association
- **Ms. Jeanne DelColle**, State Teacher of the Year 2012; History Teacher, Burlington County Institute of Technology
- **Dr. Dorothy Feola**, Associate Dean, College of Education, William Paterson University
- **Ms. Elizabeth Morgan**, National Board Certified Teacher; English Language Arts Teacher, Ann A. Mullen Middle School
- **Dr. Brian Osborne**, Superintendent, South Orange-Maplewood Schools
- **Mr. Richard Panicucci**, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum – Vo-Tech, Bergen County Technical Schools/Special Services
- **Ms. Judith Rattner**, Superintendent, Berkeley Heights Public Schools
- **Dr. Sharon Sherman**, Dean, School of Education, Rider University
- **Ms. Peggy Stewart**, National Board Certified Teacher, State Teacher of the Year 2005, Chair, Professional Teaching Standards Board, Center for Teaching and Learning
- **Mr. Thomas Storer**, Assistant Principal, Highland High School
- **Dr. Dorothy Strickland**, New Jersey State Board of Education; Samuel DeWitt Proctor Professor of Education, State of New Jersey Professor of Reading, Emerita, Rutgers University
- **Ms. Patricia Wright**, Executive Director, NJ Principals and Supervisors Association

### 2011-12:

- **Ms. Marie Bilik**, Executive Director, New Jersey School Boards Association
- **Mr. Carl Blanchard**, National Board Certified Teacher, Somerset County Teacher of the Year 2011, Biology Teacher, Franklin High School
- **Ms. Jeanne Delcolle**, State Teacher of the Year 2012, History Teacher, Burlington County Institute of Technology
- **Ms. Patricia Donaghue**, Parent, Toms River, NJ
- **Ms. Carole Everett**, Executive Director, New Jersey Association of Independent Schools
- **Dr. Dorothy Feola**, Past President, New Jersey Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; Associate Dean, College of Education, William Paterson University
- **Ms. Darleen Gearhart**, Director, School Improvement Grants, Newark Public Schools
- **Mr. Timothy Matheney**, Principal, South Brunswick High School
- **Ms. Eileen Matus**, Retired Principal, Toms River Regional School District
- **Ms. Elizabeth Morgan**, National Board Certified Teacher, English Language Arts Teacher, Ann A. Mullen Middle School
- **Dr. Brian Osborne**, Superintendent, South Orange-Maplewood Schools
- **Mr. Richard Panicucci**, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum – Vo-Tech, Bergen County Technical Schools/Special Services
- **Ms. Meredith Pennotti**, Principal, Red Bank Charter School
- **Ms. Judith Rattner**, Superintendent, Berkeley Heights Public Schools
- **Dr. Vivian Rodriguez**, Assistant Superintendent, Perth Amboy School District
- **Dr. Sharon Sherman**, Dean, School of Education, Rider University
- **Ms. Peggy Stewart**, National Board Certified Teacher, State Teacher of the Year 2005, Chair, Professional Teaching Standards Board
- **Ms. Belinda Stokes**, Principal, Henry Snyder High School

- **Dr. Dorothy Strickland**, New Jersey State Board of Education, Samuel DeWitt Proctor Professor of Education, State of New Jersey Professor of Reading, Emerita, Rutgers University
- **Mr. Bruce Taterka**, U.S. Teaching Ambassador Fellow, Lead Teacher of Science and Technology, West Morris Mendham High School
- **Ms. Patricia Wright**, Executive Director, NJ Principals and Supervisors Association