



STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: April 19, 2018
To: Chief School Administrators
Route To: All District Principals, Assistant/Vice Principals (APs/VPs), Web User Administrators, School/District Certification Staff
From: Carl Blanchard, Director
Office of Evaluation

NJDOE Announces Principal Evaluation Guidance, Streamlined Observation Instrument

Following a pilot process of two years, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is releasing updated guidance to simplify and increase the effectiveness and value of the evaluation process of principals/APs and VPs. A streamlined school leader observation instrument developed through the pilot is available for optional use by districts beginning in 2018-19.

Beginning in 2018, districts will submit and certify evaluation data through one application in the NJDOE's Homeroom webpage rather than through NJ SMART, the Evaluation Score Certification Tool and the Annual AchieveNJ survey. The window for submission of 2017-18 evaluation data will remain in the July-August timeframe.

Districts may access their four-year district AchieveNJ evaluation data cards in the Homeroom web portal.

Background on the NJ Principal Evaluation for Professional Learning Process and Observation Instrument

Principal quality is second only to teacher quality among school-related factors that drive student achievement, according to research.^{1,2} However, when compared to teacher evaluation, principal evaluation has been less commonly used as a professional learning tool to help school leaders grow. Following a careful review of evaluation data and educator feedback, the NJDOE began to address challenges in principal evaluation in 2015 using a multi-pronged approach of adjusting regulations and guidance, and broadly communicating and supporting best practices.

As it continues to improve evaluation systems and the support it offers districts and educators, the NJDOE is releasing the New Jersey Principal Evaluation for Professional Learning (NJPEPL) Process and Observation Instrument. Districts may adopt the NJPEPL Observation Instrument as the practice component of their principal evaluation rubric beginning in the 2018-19 school year.

The NJPEPL Process and Observation Instrument was developed through broad stakeholder engagement and a two-year pilot process. As an integrated system of principal evaluation, NJPEPL offers a simpler yet more powerful approach for the evaluation and professional development of school leaders. The approach has been well-received by principals and superintendents alike.

¹ Leithwood, Kenneth; Louis, Karen Seashore; Anderson, Stephen; Wahlstrom, Kyla. *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*, 2004. The Wallace Foundation, New York.

² P. Goff; E. Goldring; J. Guthrie; L. Bickman. *Changing principals' leadership through feedback and coaching*, 2014. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 52(5), 682-704.

Some of the comments from pilot participants include:

"This instrument allows for more discussion and collaboration. The instrument is much more straightforward than the previous instrument." – Lori Burns, Principal, Neptune Township School District

"More appropriate evaluation of what the principals are doing on a day-to-day basis." – Chris Carrubba, Superintendent, Belvidere and Harmony Township

"This process allows for more dialogue with the superintendent and also allows you to showcase your standards with specific artifacts rather than a multitude of artifacts. It focuses on the growth model." – Jayme Orlando, Principal, Manalapan-Englishtown Regional School District

"The 'window of time' aspect is a benefit and more truly captures the role of the principal." – Scott Oswald, Superintendent, Collingswood Public Schools

More in-depth training materials and guidance for the process and instrument will be available toward the end of this school year to supplement the introductory documents links below. Technical assistance sessions will be offered regionally during summer 2018 for districts contemplating a switch to this New Jersey-specific, no-cost, principal evaluation tool.

[New Jersey Principal Evaluation for Professional Learning Process](#)

[New Jersey Principal Evaluation for Professional Learning Observation Instrument](#)

Revised Evaluation Data Submission Process

As the NJDOE continues to simplify its data processes, districts will now submit and certify their staff evaluation data through a Homeroom application similar to the Evaluation Score Certification Tool (ESCT) that has been in use for the past four years. Also, rather than submitting required evaluation-related information through the Annual AchieveNJ survey, districts will submit this information through the same evaluation data Homeroom application that they submit and certify their staff evaluation scores.

While districts will no longer submit evaluation data through NJ SMART, all other NJ SMART data collections such as staff and course roster information will continue as before. The timeframe for evaluation data submission will not change.

Over the next several months, we will be providing more detailed technical information and guidance regarding this streamlined collection and certification method.

Four-Year District Evaluation Data Cards

Districts can access their four-year district AchieveNJ Data Cards through the NJDOE's Homeroom webpage. The primary purpose of the AchieveNJ Data Card is to provide a longitudinal view of a district's certified AchieveNJ data. The AchieveNJ Data Card includes the past four years of district-certified evaluation data and may be used by authorized school district personnel to:

- a. Examine information on trends in evaluation within one comprehensive document;
- b. Promote conversations regarding evaluation efficacy in relation to student achievement; and
- c. Encourage actions to improve evaluation accuracy and usefulness.

The AchieveNJ Data Cards are accompanied by a User Guide to help districts read and use the cards effectively.

Please note that the AchieveNJ Data Cards differ from the New Jersey School Performance Reports. The Data Cards are for district use only, while the Performance Reports provide in-depth information on each school and are publicly accessible.

The NJDOE welcomes questions and suggestions regarding the above topics, or any other matter related to evaluation or teacher leadership, at educatorevaluation@doe.nj.gov or (609) 376-3974.

c: Members, State Board of Education
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