

The Bridge

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



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Mastering the Common Core and PARCC

Where did the summer go? There are so many things happening at the beginning of the school year, we thought it would be helpful to highlight some key things you need to know about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the PARCC assessments, and the state's new educator evaluation system. Though they may at times feel like independent initiatives, improvements to educator evaluation and supports are intended to complement other elements of New Jersey's education system – in particular, implementation of the CCSS and related assessments (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/>). Understanding that district leaders manage multiple priorities every year, we want to be as clear as possible in demonstrating the ways that these initiatives intersect at the classroom, school, and district levels. For more information on how these initiatives are connected, please refer to Section I.F. of the Evaluation Update Memo (5-13) (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/resources/052813Update.pdf>).

Two things on the mind of every teacher this school year are undoubtedly the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the up-and-coming Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments. It makes sense that these two initiatives are thought about together: the CCSS are the educational standards of which the PARCC is designed to assess. Ensuring that students meet the CCSS means that students will be ready for the PARCC. In the spirit of helping teachers start the school year in a positive manner, the following is offered as a CCSS and PARCC checklist.

Checklist for the CCSS

- ✓ **Remember the Shifts:** Be sure to address the major shifts in instruction for ELA and Math. In a nutshell, here is what the Common Core requires:
 - o English language arts literacy:
 - 1.) Teach more content-rich nonfiction.
 - 2.) Encourage students to use text as proof and support when writing and speaking.
 - 3.) Give students regular practice with complex text and academic language.

- o Mathematics:
 - 1.) **Focus:** The assessments focus should match the focus of the standards.
 - 2.) **Coherence:** Students should learn math in such a way as to build new understanding onto foundations built in previous years.
 - 3.) **Rigor:** Students will pursue rigor, meaning a balance of conceptual understanding and procedural skill fluency. Students will focus on the **application** of knowledge.
- ✓ **Work Backwards!** When developing lesson plans and units of study, try to start with the CCSS first in mind and then work backwards from there.
 - o For instance, the 9-10th English language arts standard RI.9-10.6 asks students to “determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.” With this learning goal in mind, a teacher could then choose Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address” to teach students about an author’s use of rhetoric.

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What You Need to Know About AchieveNJ



As the new school year begins, we are providing you with the following easy reference guide of things you need to know about AchieveNJ. Below, you will find the major elements and requirements of the system and links to much more detailed information about each. In addition, the AchieveNJ Resources on Teacher Evaluation guide (<http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/ResourcesOnTeacherEvaluation.pdf>) offers an annotated list of additional resources.

AchieveNJ gives educators more opportunities than ever before to impact their evaluations, so please take time to become familiar with what to expect – and how to contribute.

Special Education Teachers:

Please review the AchieveNJ Special Educator Overview (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SpecialEducatorOverview.pdf>). Some key things to consider are:

- Local district leadership and the District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) should meet to identify areas related to special education teacher evaluation where local policy decisions are needed.
- Prior to conducting evaluations, evaluators who will be observing general and special education teachers instructing students with disabilities should meet with those teachers (review the AchieveNJ Special Educator Overview (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SpecialEducatorOverview.pdf>) for specifics regarding discussion).
- Educators who teach students with disabilities should provide evidence throughout this process that demonstrates the strategies they use to differentiate instruction in

their classroom. District leaders, principals, special education administrators, and teachers need to collaborate when preparing for and conducting observations and conferences.

Professional Development and Support:

- If you are a novice teacher in the provisional teacher program you will continue to be paired with an experienced teacher who serves as a mentor for one year.
- All novice teachers and experienced teachers new to a district will receive a comprehensive orientation to the district's policies and procedures, including, in particular, training on the evaluation system.
- In addition to a district orientation, experienced teachers new to the district will receive tailored supports including occasional mentorship by a supervisor, colleague, or team.

For more specific detail, please refer to the AchieveNJ Professional Development and Support Overview (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/PDOOverview.pdf>).

Getting Involved

- Each district must convene a DEAC with several teacher representatives.
- Each school must convene a School Improvement Panel (ScIP) with teachers comprising at least a third of the membership.
- Please contact your school and district leadership to learn more about these groups in your area.

For more information, please see the AchieveNJ Professional Development and Support Overview (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/PDOOverview.pdf>) and the AchieveNJ School

Improvement Panel and Strengthening Evaluation Overview

(<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SchoolImprovementPanelandImprovingEvaluation.pdf>).



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There are three major components of teacher evaluation this year: **Observations**, **Student Growth Objectives (SGOs)**, and **Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs)**. To view the specific requirements, please review the **AchieveNJ Teacher Evaluation Overview** (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/1PagerTeachers.pdf>) and **AchieveNJ Teacher Practice Overview** (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/TeacherPracticeOverview.pdf>).



OBSERVATIONS (“TEACHER PRACTICE”):

55% of the final evaluation score for teachers of 4th-8th grade LAL and math; 85% of the final evaluation score for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects



STUDENT GROWTH OBJECTIVES (SGOs):

15% of the final evaluation score for all teachers in New Jersey



STUDENT GROWTH PERCENTILES

(SGPs): 30% of the final evaluation score for teachers of tested grades and subjects; data available only for teachers of 4th-8th grade LAL and math

Non-tenured teachers – three required observations each year per the framework chosen by your district (i.e., Danielson, Marzano, etc.) as follows:

- At least two long and one short in the first two years of employment, and one long and two short in the third and fourth years of employment
- Multiple observers are required

Tenured teachers – three required observations each year

- Three short and at least one must have a pre-conference
- Multiple observers are recommended

Descriptions:

- Short Observations: 20 minutes, with a post-conference
- Long Observations: 40 minutes, with a post-conference; non-tenured teacher minimum requirement must include a pre-conference
- Announced and Unannounced Observations: all teachers must have at least one Unannounced and one Announced Observation (which includes a pre-conference)

For more specific information, please see the AchieveNJ Teacher Evaluation Overview (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/1PagerTeachers.pdf>).

Key Steps and Timeline for Teachers:

- September - Choose or develop a quality measurement tool (examples available online) (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/objectives.shtml>) that is aligned to applicable standards
- September – October - Determine students’ starting points
- By November 15, 2013 - With supervisor input and approval, set ambitious yet achievable SGOs
- By February 15 – Track progress, refine instruction accordingly, and make any necessary adjustments to SGOs with your supervisor’s approval
- By the end of the school year – Review results and discuss them with your supervisor

For more information, please see the AchieveNJ Student Growth Objectives (SGO) Overview (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGOOverview.pdf>) and detailed training modules, guides, and examples on the AchieveNJ SGO Web Page (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/objectives.shtml>).

SGP Scores – Teachers:

- A teacher must have 20 student SGP scores, and students must be enrolled in the teacher’s class for at least 70% of the school year
- If two or three years of data are available, a teacher will be evaluated on the best available score for the teacher – either the teacher’s median score from his or her current roster of students or the median of all student scores over the available years

SGP Scores – Principals:

- For principals who lead schools with two or more tested grades or subjects, 30% of their evaluation will be based on schoolwide SGP data
- For principals with only one SGP grade or subject, 20% of their evaluation will be based on schoolwide SGP data

For additional information, please see the AchieveNJ Student Growth Percentile (SGP) Overview (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/SGPOverview.pdf>), the Student Growth Percentile (SGP) Video (<http://survey.pcgus.com/njgrowth/player.html>), and significant additional resources on the AchieveNJ SGP Web Page (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/percentile.shtml>).

Mastering the Common Core and PARCC

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✓ **Keep Track:** Keep track of which standards you did and did not

teach over the course of a unit and the school year. Monitor your progress periodically to see what standards you still need to help students reach.

- ✓ **Don't Reinvent the Wheel!** Use the following resources to help with your teaching:
 - o ELA Teachers: Utilize Appendix B of the CCSS (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>) to find challenging literary and nonfiction texts for students to read
 - o Mathematics Teachers: Use Achievethecore.org (<http://www.achievethecore.org/math-common-core/math-shifts/>) for all types of teacher resources regarding the CCSS
- ✓ **Collaboration is Key:** There is strength in numbers. Use professional learning community (PLC) time to create and share lessons and units. If this time is not available, ask your principal to help you find the time to collaborate.
- ✓ **Helping ALL Students with the Core:** Students in our classrooms come from all different backgrounds. Therefore, we, as teachers, know that English language learners (ELLs) and students with special needs require additional supports to achieve success. Become familiar with what the Common Core says in regards to ELLs (<http://www.corestandards.org/assets/application-for-english-learners.pdf>). Collaborate with your child study team and special education teachers to find the best ways to modify your instruction so that students with special needs and ALL students can succeed.
- ✓ **Interdisciplinary Action:** The CCSS is an interdisciplinary effort. In your schools, encourage collaboration on the CCSS across disciplines. Check out the CCSS website regarding “Grades 6–12 Literacy in History/Social Studies, Sciences, and Technical Subjects” (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>).
- ✓ **College and Career Ready:** As educators, we are compelled to prepare our students for life “outside” schooling. This is the purpose of the Common Core. Fidelity to the standards will help ensure that all students are ready to enter the workforce or college.

Checklist for the PARCC

Staying Ahead of the Curve: In the spring of 2014, PARCC will begin its field testing in English language arts and mathematics. During the next school year, 2014–2015, the PARCC assessments will be fully operational for English language arts and mathematics, grades 3–11. Because the PARCC assessments measure the Common Core State Standards, the best way to prepare for the new assessments is to teach a rich curriculum aligned to the state standards. Here are some points to remember regarding the PARCC as you begin your school year:

- ✓ **An Assessment Worth Taking:** The PARCC assessments are designed to reward quality instruction aligned to the Common Core State Standards, so the assessment is worthy of preparation rather than a distraction from good work.
- ✓ **Timely Feedback:** Remember the “olden days” when students would take standardized tests and the results would not be available until the end of the year, or even worse, the next school year? Not so with the PARCC assessments! You will receive timely feedback throughout the school year of your students’ performance so that you can adjust instruction and improve student achievement.
- ✓ **Hi-Tech Testing:** The Internet age has made its way into educational assessment. As you might know, the PARCC assessments are fully online assessments, so try to adjust your instruction to provide students access to computers and other available technologies, as educators across the state have already been doing for years. Collaborate with other faculty members and your principal to help ensure that students are prepared.
- ✓ **Once Again, Collaboration is Key!** Work with your fellow teachers to develop lessons, units, and assessments that will prepare students for the PARCC assessments. Remember, due to its commitment to high-quality content and questions, the PARCC assessments are tests worth teaching to! Use your PLC time to discuss ways in which you will use the CCSS to prepare students for the rigors of the PARCC assessments. If this time is not available, ask your principal to help you find the time to collaborate regarding the CCSS and the PARCC assessments.
- ✓ **Helping ALL Students Achieve Success:** As you undoubtedly know, our English language learners (ELL) and special needs students will need additional scaffolds to be prepared for the PARCC assessments. As you introduce these supports to your ELL and special needs students, be aware that scaffolds are NOT permanent. Be sure to gradually, over time, remove these scaffolds so that the rigors of the PARCC assessments are not new to your students. Read the PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual (<http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-accessibility-features-and-accommodations-manual>) and work with your principal and child study team to ensure ALL of your students can experience success on the PARCC assessments.
- ✓ **Fidelity to the Standards!** Remember, the best way to ensure that students are prepared for the PARCC assessments is to keep the Common Core at the heart of your instruction.
- ✓ **PARCC Prototypes:** If you haven’t done so already, be sure to review PARCC’s website. There, you will find prototype items for the PARCC assessments (<http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes>). These sample items can help you and your students be prepared for the format of the assessment.

News, Upcoming Events & Professional Development Opportunities



Be sure to check the online upcoming [events calendar \(http://education.state.nj.us/events/\)](http://education.state.nj.us/events/) for opportunities available throughout the year.

September 2013

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL LIBRARY CARD SIGN-UP MONTH – Do you have a library card? If not, sign up for one this month. To find your nearest library, visit <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/librarysearch/> and enter your information in the “Search Public Libraries” box.

ASTHMA NEWS – The beginning of school in September is accompanied by the annual fall allergy season. Students who live with chronic medical conditions known as asthma and/or Reactive Airway Disease (RAD) may have an increased incidence of symptoms as a result. It is critical that parents and guardians provide the school nurse with an updated Asthma Treatment Plan from their health care provider. The school nurse is especially trained in assessment of airways and the management of asthma and RAD in the school setting. The Pediatric and Adult Asthma Coalition of New Jersey (PACNJ) has developed a variety of tools for schools, parents and students to make the successful management of these medical conditions a certainty. Over 650 New Jersey schools have attained the Asthma Friendly School Award certification (AFSA) during the last three years. Information to register for the AFSA and to download the handouts for parents, students and staff may be found at www.pacnj.org or the NJDOE website at www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/health/services under “Asthma.” If you have any questions, please call Christene DeWitt-Parker, coordinator for school health, at 609-777-4809.

September 10, 12, 17, 18, 19 or 23, 2013 – EDUCATOR FORUM - ACHIEVENJ EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEM –Time: 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm; Location: Various

The department is providing informational sessions designed for teachers on the AchieveNJ evaluation and support system. Presentations will provide an opportunity for educators to not only learn more about the system, but also to provide feedback to the Department on how best to support local districts as they implement changes. For more information, go to <http://education.state.nj.us/events/month/?month=09&year=2013>.

September 24, 2013 – LEA ACCOUNTABILITY FOR FEDERAL FUNDS – Time: 8:45 am to 3:15 pm; Location: East Brunswick Hilton, 3 Tower Center Boulevard, East Brunswick, NJ 08816

The department is hosting a full-day technical assistance event to share information with local education agencies on the oversight and monitoring requirements that accompany the use of federal funds. The NJDOE, in collaboration with the United States Department of Education’s Office of the Inspector General, will provide valuable information on the role and responsibilities of LEAs that accept federal funds to support their educational programs. For more information, go to <http://education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=20000>.

October 2013

October 1, 2013 – EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITY SUMMIT – This event is coordinated by the New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition, with funding received from the Mott Foundation, and in partnership with Assemblywoman Connie Wagner, Melanie Schulz from the Joint Committee on the Public Schools, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, and the New Jersey Department of Education. The purpose of this summit is to engage a broad range of stakeholders in a discussion on how to support student success and more widely share the best practices, research and outcomes data about high-quality afterschool and summer programs that expand learning opportunities in New Jersey. For more information visit, www.njsacc.org

State Emergency Information – Call 211

In the event of a statewide emergency such as Hurricane Sandy, district personnel and parents can call the state's emergency response line at 211 for up-to-date information. In addition to the information line, there is a Web site with current information at www.nj211.org

October 1, 2013 – TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS –

Time: 4:00 to 6:30 pm. Location: State House, Trenton, NJ. The State House Tour Program is offering a free professional development workshop for teachers in grades 3 through 6. Participants will learn how to transform the complexities of the legislative process into an exciting and meaningful role-playing opportunity with students acting as legislators. This free workshop will take place at the State House in Trenton. Participants will receive 2.5 hours of professional development credit. Space is limited. To register or ask questions, call 609-847-3150.

October 3, 2013 – HAVING A SURVIVOR/VICTIM IN THE CLASSROOM –

Time: 4:00 – 6:00 pm; Location: Historical Society of Princeton, The Updike Farmstead, 354 Quaker Road, Princeton, NJ 08540
Hear from a panel of survivors and survivor authors. Learn techniques to make the classroom experience meaningful and how writing helps learning and the healing process. This event meets the following standards & the Holocaust/genocide mandate: 6.2.2.D.2; 6.2.8.E.13; 6.2.12.E.15; 2.2.4.D.1; 2.2.12.D.1. For more information, visit <http://education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=19962>

October 7-11, 2013 – WEEK OF RESPECT – The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (P.L.2010, c.122) requires that school districts annually observe a “Week of Respect” beginning with the first Monday in October. School districts and charter schools are required to observe the week by providing age-appropriate instruction focusing on preventing harassment, intimidation or bullying. A guidance memorandum on the “Week of Respect” that includes resources to facilitate local planning can be found on the New Jersey Department of Education’s (NJDOE) website at www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/violence.shtml.

October 9, 2013 – INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL MONTH AND WALK TO SCHOOL DAY –

International Walk to School Month gives children, parents, school teachers and community leaders an opportunity to be part of a global event as they celebrate the many benefits of walking. In the USA, celebrate Walk to School Day on October 9, 2013, and promote safe walking and bicycling throughout the year. Visit www.iwalktoschool.org and www.walkbiketoschool.org for more information.

October 14-18, 2013 – NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK – The National School Lunch Week (NSLW) 2013 theme is “School Lunch Across the USA.” It’s about celebrating the regional flavors, ingredients, and traditions from across the country. The campaign runs from July 2013 to October 2013, culminating in National School Lunch Week. Visit www.schoolnutrition.org for more information.

October 17, 2013 – LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL – Join the Afterschool Alliance along with afterschool programs throughout the country to highlight the importance of afterschool programs. Each October, one million Americans and thousands of communities nationwide celebrate Lights on Afterschool to shine a light on the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. For more information, visit <http://afterschoolalliance.org/loa.cfm>.

October 21-25, 2013 – SCHOOL VIOLENCE AWARENESS WEEK – School districts, charter schools and approved private schools for students with disabilities must observe “School Violence Awareness Week” annually during the week beginning with the third Monday in October, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-5.1 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.2. To help with local planning for “School Violence Awareness Week,” guidance is available at www.nj.gov/education/students/safety/behavior/violence.shtml.

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Do you have ideas, information, or pictures you would like to submit? For comments, concerns, questions or feedback, contact us at: thebridge@doe.state.nj.us

Are you new to *The Bridge* or have you missed a previous issue? If so, check out the archives at <http://education.state.nj.us/feature/>

Survey Thanks! –

Thank you to everyone who participated in our survey. Your responses were appreciated and many of the suggestions you provided to us will be incorporated into future issues.

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