South Harrison Twp. Elementary School District

Committed to Excellence

Teacher Evaluation Guide

Empowering Effective Teachers
&
Advancing G.R.E.A.T. Instruction

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Introduction

On March 6, 2013, New Jersey's Department of Education (NJDOE) proposed regulations outlining specific evaluation policies in response to the TEACHNJ Law, a bipartisan tenure reform approved unanimously by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Christie on August 6, 2012. The goal of the law is to "raise student achievement by improving instruction through the adoption of evaluations that provide specific feedback to educators, inform the provision of aligned professional development, and inform personnel decisions." At its core, TEACHNJ reforms the processes of earning and maintaining tenure by improving evaluations and opportunities for professional growth. Specifically:

- Tenure decisions are now based on multiple measures of student achievement and teacher practice as measured by new evaluation procedures.
- Lengthy and costly tenure hearings are shorter, focused on process only, and less expensive.
- Educator feedback and development is more individualized and focused on students.

As a result, the South Harrison Township Elementary School District () has focused its vision on promoting student achievement by helping teachers excel in the classroom. Teacher effectiveness is the most significant factor affecting student achievement. Therefore, our goal as a district is to promote effective teaching in every classroom by identifying and rewarding effective teaching across our district. We intend to elevate the teaching profession by supporting teachers' professional development and helping teachers excel as professionals. We believe that by helping teachers excel, students will achieve success, and when students achieve more, our entire community benefits.

Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of this handbook is to outline South Harrison Township Elementary School District's teacher evaluation process. This handbook is to be used as a reference tool to help teachers, observers, and administrators understand the district's processes for observing, documenting, and evaluating classroom instruction and overall teacher performance. This handbook should be used to better understand the components of the teacher evaluation process, the classroom observation process, and the expectation and definition of effective teaching.

AchieveNJ

The NJ state-mandated AchieveNJ evaluation and support centers around several guiding principles:

- *Educator effectiveness can and should be measured to ensure our students have the best teachers in the classroom.* A three-year study by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation recently affirmed the impact of evaluations and showed that huge variations exist between the most and least effective teachers — in some cases, up to an 11-month difference in student learning.

- *Evaluations should always be based on multiple measures that include both learning outcomes and effective practice.* No teacher or principal should ever be assessed based on test scores alone, much less a single test. AchieveNJ includes a combination of student growth on objective measures and observations of a teacher's classroom practices and a principal's leadership practices conducted by appropriately trained observers.

- *Timely feedback and high-quality professional development, tied to evaluations, are essential to help educators improve.* Evaluations provide educators with more opportunities to engage in high-quality professional conversations and nuanced data that can be used to tailor professional development to staff needs. Evaluations that do not contribute to these types of growth and development offer limited value.

- *Evaluation and support systems should be developed with significant input from educators.* We have been working every step of the way over the past two years with those most affected: teachers and principals.

- *Tenure and other forms of recognition should be based on effectiveness.* As codified in the new tenure law passed in 2012, educators should be recognized and rewarded based on the outcome of meaningful evaluations rather than simply time served.

Empowering Effective Teachers

The South Harrison Township Elementary School District Teacher Evaluation System is based upon a philosophical commitment to the concept that the professional development of a teacher is a lifelong process and that communication between the evaluator and the teacher is a critical component.

The focus of this instructional evaluation system is to improve the quality of instruction and impact student performance through collaborative conversations and professional development. This purpose can best be achieved by establishing an evaluation system comprised of an integrated set of components that include gathering data, sharing information, and providing opportunities for professional growth experiences. This evaluation system chosen by the South Harrison Township Elementary School District is based upon the research of Dr. Robert Marzano.

Advancing G.R.E.A.T. Instruction

Through an effective teacher evaluation system, teachers are encouraged and supported in their quest to implement effective instructional practices. These methods, in turn, ensure high levels of learning for each and every student. So what are the characteristics of effective instruction? The South Harrison Township Elementary School District has adopted the acronym G.R.E.A.T. to communicate expectations of effective instruction. G.R.E.A.T. instruction is:

- **G**uided by the curriculum
- **R**igorous & Relevant
- **E**ngaging & Exciting
- **A**ssessment FOR Learning
- **T**ailored to the Individual Student

Teacher Evaluation

AchieveNJ relies on multiple measures of performance to evaluate teachers. These measures include components of both the **student achievement** and **teacher practice** noted below.

Student Achievement

Teachers of Tested Grades and Subjects:
To whom does this apply?
- 4th–8th grade English language arts and mathematics teachers with students that have baseline and end-of-year standardized test scores available. Because 3rd grade is the first testing year of the NJ ASK, there is no baseline data to create an SGP for students and teachers in that grade.
- In order for teachers to have an SGP score, they must have 20 student SGP scores, and students must be enrolled in a teacher's class for at least 70 percent of the year.

- If two or three years of data are available, the Department will choose the best available score for the teacher — either the teacher's median score of their current roster of students or the median of all student scores over the available years.

How will these teachers be measured?
- 10% of a teacher's overall evaluation rating is based on Student Growth Percentile (SGP) data from standardized test scores.
- 20% is based on Student Growth Objective (SGO) data from one to two measures that teachers set with the approval of their principals.
- 70% percent is based on classroom observations *(see Teacher Practice Below)*

Teachers of Non-Tested Grades and Subjects

To whom does this apply?
- All teachers who are not considered teachers of tested grades and subjects.

How will these teachers be measured?
- 80% of a teacher's overall evaluation rating is based on classroom observations *(see Teacher Practice)*
- 20% is based on SGO data from two measures that teachers set with the approval of their principals.

Teacher Practice & Observations

Teacher practice is measured by performance on a state-approved teacher practice instrument *(South Harrison has adopted the Marzano Casual Teacher Framework),* which is used to gather evidence primarily through classroom observations. Classroom observations are essential to the teacher evaluation process. Evaluators (certified supervisors and administrators) conduct observations to gather and document evidence of effective teaching. Ratings from observations (*excluding walkthroughs*) are used to provide feedback to prescribe and track professional development and growth. The ratings generated during the observation using the Marzano framework also assist in calculating the summative evaluation for the teacher. South Harrison Township Elementary School District follows the observation guidelines depicted below. *

Teacher Tracks	Total Minimum # of Observations	Multiple Observers
Non-Tenured	3 (2 long, 1 short)	Required
Tenured	2 (2 long)	Recommended
Additional Notes on Observations:		

- *Long observations*: 40 minutes (minimum)
- *Short observations:* 20 minutes (minimum)
- *Announced vs. Unannounced:* Within the minimum requirements, all teachers receive at least one announced (with pre-conference) and one unannounced (no preconference) observation.
- Each teacher receives at least one observation during semester 1 and one observation during semester 2.
- All observations have a post-conference meeting with the observer. The observation results are posted in iObservation within 10 days.
- *Corrective Action Plans:* After the first year, teachers who receive an **Ineffective or Partially Effective** rating receive two additional observations with multiple observers.

  *The district has the discretion to conduct more than the minimum requirements at any time.

Marzano Causal Teacher Evaluation Model

In accordance with New Jersey State Statutes and AchieveNJ and through collaboration with members of the South Harrison Educational Associate (SHEA), has adopted the Marzano Causal Teacher Evaluation Model.

The underlying constructs of the Marzano Causal Teacher Evaluation Model are:

➢ Teachers can increase their expertise from year to year, which can produce year-t o - y e a r gains in student learning.
➢ A common language of instruction and evaluation is a key school improvement strategy.
➢ The common language must reflect the complexity of teaching and learning.
➢ Focused feedback and focused practice using a common language provides opportunities for teacher growth.

The Marzano Causal Teacher Evaluation Model identifies a direct cause and effect relationship between elements in the model and student learning. The model provides teachers with clear expectations that enable teachers to direct their own professional learning. Inherent within the model is aligned professional development and feedback to support teacher growth and development.

The model includes a well-articulated knowledge base in teaching with four domains directly tied to student achievement:

➢ **Domain 1:** Classroom Strategies and Behaviors
➢ **Domain 2:** Preparing and Planning
➢ **Domain 3:** Reflecting on Teaching
➢ **Domain 4:** Collegiality and Professionalism

The Marzano model is based on an aggregation of the research on elements that have been shown to correlate with student academic achievement and is based on thousands of studies that span multiple decades. One of the unique aspects of the research on this model is that it has a growing number of experimental/control studies conducted by practicing teachers on the effectiveness of specific strategies in their classrooms. Studies that use correlation analysis techniques do establish a link between elements of a model and student achievement. Current evaluation models only have correlational data regarding the *relationship* between their elements and student achievement.

The Four Marzano Domains

The four interdependent domains include 60 elements. The model is enhanced by clear descriptions of teaching and levels of performance using rating scales ranging from *0- Not using 1- Beginning, 2-Developing, 3-Applying, and 4-Innovating*, which enable teachers and observers to engage in focused practice and feedback.

Domain	Description
Domain 1: Classroom Strategies and Behaviors	With 41 of the 60 elements, Domain 1 is the most complex and has a direct causal link with student achievement. It addresses what teachers do in the classroom. Domain 1 is organized into nine design questions that are further organized into three major categories: Lesson Segments Involving Routine Events, Lesson Segments Addressing Content, and Lesson Segments Enacted on the Spot. These segments reflect the complexity of teaching and the natural flow of activities in the classroom based on the premise that lessons are constructed with multiple parts and that each part of a lesson has distinct characteristics, routines, and processes.

Domain 2: Preparing and Planning	Domain 2 contains eight elements focuses on planning and preparing for units of instruction and lessons within units. It is organized into three general categories: 1. Lessons and units 2. Materials and resources and 3. The special needs of students. Because these elements are directly related to Domain 1, the better a teacher prepares, the more effective his/her choices are in implementing instruction
Domain 3: Reflecting on Teaching	Domain 3 is based upon the concept of deliberate practice. It addresses teacher self-reflection in the areas of evaluating personal performance and developing and implementing a professional growth plan. When teachers receive specific and focused feedback using a common language of instruction, they can increase their expertise and subsequently, student performance. Teachers select one to three elements to engage in focused practice with feedback from self-reflection, peers, and supervisors.
Domain 4: Collegiality and Professionalism	Domain 4 addresses collegiality and professionalism, placing emphasis on opportunities to observe and discuss expertise. Three categories of elements include: 1. Promoting a positive environment 2. Promoting exchange of ideas and strategies 3. Promoting district and school development. This domain supports teacher participation in lesson study, instructional rounds, teacher-led professional development, and professional learning communities in which teachers collaboratively examine evidence of student learning and the impact that specific instructional strategies have on learning.

Observation Ratings within Marzano

Teacher practice data from Domains 1-4 are reviewed and assessed based upon rubrics set forth in the Marzano Art and Science of Teaching Model. Within the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Framework a 5-level rubric is used to rate the performance and provide feedback to teachers on their use of the 60 Elements of the Art and Science of Teaching Framework. They are:

Innovating (4)	Applying (3)	Developing (2)	Beginning (1)	Not Using (0)

Evidence is rated based upon the rubrics provided by the Marzano Evaluation Model on the scale of 0-4 as described above. Ultimately the collection of evidence across all observable elements in the framework will contribute to a final evaluation score (in addition to student growth evidence). The teacher practice calculation is done through iObservation, the data collection system that is used exclusively with the Marzano Model.

Summative Ratings within NJ State Guidelines

This overall evaluation score combines the multiple measures of teacher practice and student growth. All New Jersey teachers earn one of four ratings: *Highly Effective, Effective, Partially Effective, or Ineffective.*

All teachers receive individual professional development plans based on their ratings. Teachers rated *Ineffective* or *Partially Effective* work with their building principals and/or supervisor to create a *Corrective Action Plan* with targeted professional development for the subsequent year. *To maintain tenure, all teachers (regardless of hire date) have to continue to earn a rating of Effective or Highly Effective.*

Final Summative Score

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) uses an evaluation scale that involves four levels:

- Highly Effective
- Effective
- Partially Effective
- Ineffective

Under AchieveNJ, teachers are evaluated based on multiple measures of educator practice and student achievement. Each element of the evaluation results in a 1 - 4 rating, which is weighted according to the state formulas. Once the scores for all evaluation measure are finalized, each educator will receive a final summative rating on a scale from 1 – 4. The NJDOE has adopted the following cut scores that reflect this rating.

Summative Rating Cut Scores

Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
1.0	1.85	2.65	3.5 4.0

As noted above, the Marzano Evaluation model employs a 5-point scale, while the state employs the above noted 4-point scale. The difference in the number of components from the state scale and Marzano scale is not problematic as long as the _NJDOE scale is used as the summary scale_ (i.e., a 4-point summative score). Please note the translation below.

EE4NJ Performance Rubric

Highly Effective	Effective	Partially Effective	Ineffective
• 3 & 4 • 3.5-4	• 2 & 3 • 2.5-3.4	• 1 & 2 • 1.5-2.4	• 1 & 0 • 1.0-1.4

Innovating 4	Applying 3	Developing 2	Beginning 1	Not Using 0
New strategies are created to meet needs of specific students or class as a whole _in order for the desired effect to be evident in all students._	Strategy is used **and monitored to see if it has desired effect with the majority of students.**	Strategy is used correctly but the majority of students are not monitored for the desired effect of the strategy.	Strategy is used but pieces or components are missing.	Strategy is called for, but not used.

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How is the Teacher Practice Score Calculated?

The South Harrison Township Elementary School District uses a weighted and conjunctive scoring approach to determine the overall teacher practice score. A conjunctive approach does not focus on the "central tendency" of a set of scores. In this method, minimum scores are established for each proficiency level, but teachers do not necessarily suffer for a weakness in one area if they have sufficient strengths in others. This approach supports the idea that teachers may be skilled in different areas and still achieve high levels of expertise (with the need to grow in others). The weighting and conjunctive scale used by is depicted below.

All Teachers	Weighting	Highly Effective (4)	Effective (3)	Partially Effective (2)	Ineffective (1)
Domain 1	68%	At least 65% at applying or higher	At least 65% at developing or higher	Less than 65% at developing and less than 50% at beginning or not using	Greater than or equal to 50% at beginning or not using
Domain 2	14%				
Domain 3	8%				
Domain 4	10%				

Evaluation, Tenure, & CAPs

In addition to calling for new evaluations, the TEACHNJ Act also changed how tenure is awarded to all teaching staff members. Educators are eligible to earn tenure after four years — one year longer than it took under the previous law. In addition, for teachers, principals, APs and VPs, TEACHNJ links the earning and keeping of tenure to the results of the employee's annual summative evaluation. The charts below depict the new four-year timelines.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
• Participate in district mentoring program • Receive evaluation, but summative rating does not count toward tenure acquisition	• To earn tenure, a teacher must receive an Effective or Highly Effective rating on the annual summative rating in at least two of the three years.		

To maintain tenure, all those evaluated under the evaluation system (regardless of hire date) have to continue to earn a rating of *Effective or Highly Effective*. A superintendent *must* file tenure charges of inefficiency against a teacher after two unsatisfactory annual evaluations.

Under AchieveNJ, teachers who are rated *Ineffective or Partially Effective* on the annual summative evaluation will receive a **Corrective Action Plan (CAP).** To implement the CAP, teachers will work with their principals and/or supervisor to create a plan for support focused on meeting the needs for improvement identified through the evaluation. The CAP will include specific goals and timelines for professional growth and delineate the responsibilities of both teachers and administrators in implementing the plan. For these teachers, the CAP will take the place of the required individual professional development plan. Teachers with a CAP will receive an additional mid-year observation and conference. Tenured teachers with a CAP must have multiple observers (this is already required for non-tenured teachers).

Support for Teachers

The South Harrison Township Elementary School District will support teacher development in three concentrated ways: *Evaluation, Focused Feedback, and Professional Development.*

1. Evaluation
We evaluate teacher performance based on multiple sources of input including classroom observations, teacher/student evidence, and student achievement data. By considering input from multiple sources as well as through multiple observations evaluators gain a more comprehensive picture of a teacher's practice. The district can, therefore, achieve a fair and substantive assessment of teacher practice. South Harrison evaluators can also improve the district to support our students' growth by capturing and implementing best practices from outstanding teachers.

2. Focused Feedback
The evaluation process is both formative and summative. Through classroom observations as well as collected teacher/student evidence evaluators can assist teachers to identify pedagogical areas of strength to support and those areas that need additional reinforcements in order to improve their practice. This notion of individualized feedback for each teacher allows for a more focused approach to improving instruction and practice.

3. Professional Development
AchieveNJ adds critical sources of data to inform PD planning at the individual, school, and district levels. All educators will have ongoing opportunities to engage in professional learning as guided by an individual professional development plan, which can be more effectively tailored to their specific needs and strengths through the addition of evaluation data. Teachers and school leaders will now utilize their educator practice and student learning data to prioritize areas for improvement as they develop their plans in consultation with their supervisors.

Classroom observation and evaluation results may be used to help teachers set training and professional development paths that support the continuous improvement of their practice. Furthermore, teacher observation and evaluation ratings may be aggregated at the school level to help identify systemic gaps and needs, and to support and drive school improvement planning. Additionally, we can provide a wider variety of development and career opportunities for our most highly effective teachers. Traditionally, talented teachers could either choose to remain in the classroom, or move into administration. Going forward, however, positions such as peer evaluator, mentor evaluator, and teacher leader will provide a wider variety of development and career opportunities for teachers.