

Journal of Our Journey

Metuchen Public Schools

New Teacher Evaluation System

Cohort 2 Pilot

2012 – 2013

On Thursday, April 19th, the DEPAC (District Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee) held its first meeting to present and discuss the Excellent Educators For New Jersey Pilot Program for the Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation System components and the Stronge and Danielson teacher observation / evaluation models. The DEPAC meeting was a successful, initial step in the development of the district goal to redesign the staff evaluation process and protocol. The purpose of the DEPAC is to establish trust, transparency and two-way communication amongst stakeholders throughout the redesign process. There were a total of thirty one members in attendance. Members included teachers from all four schools and a wide range of disciplines and teaching assignments. All administrators, except those covering buildings, attended. DEPAC also comprised of three parents and one board member, Jackie Gibson. Guest administrators from Metuchen Christian Academy also attended and have asked to participate in the EE4NJ grant as a nonpublic school participant.

Throughout the presentations, meaningful discussions were on-going and touched upon all areas of the process and protocols of a new teacher effectiveness evaluation system. Advantages of applying for the EE4NJ grant from the NJDOE were presented and it has been determined that the district will complete the grant application, due April 26th, in hopes of receiving this competitive grant to implement the system in full beginning in 2012 – 2013. The NJDOE will provide notification of grant awards in early June. The next DEPAC meeting will be held in mid-June to discuss next steps which will be dependent upon whether the district is moving forward as an official EE4NJ Cohort 2 Pilot, or not. Regardless of whether Metuchen receives the grant or not, DEPAC will continue to meet on an ongoing basis in order to maintain trust, transparency and two-way communication in the establishment of a new teacher effectiveness evaluation system.

On April 26th, the Excellent Educators For New Jersey (EE4NJ) grant application for Metuchen School District (and its non-public school participant, Metuchen Christian Academy) to be a EE4NJ Cohort 2 pilot program was submitted to the NJDOE. The total budget amount requested in the grant is \$61,987.

On May 30th, Director of Curriculum, Rick Cohen, attended the Garden State Coalition of Schools 21st Annual meeting. Commissioner Christopher Cerf spoke about the four pillars for effective reform which will direct the state's work in the next year. The four pillars are:

1. High Academic Standards – Common Core Standards

2. Talent – recruitment
3. Performance / Accountability – providing teachers with useful data
4. Innovation – targeting personalized / individualized education

Piggy backing off his message about Talent, Performance and Accountability, Chief Talent Officer for the NJDOE, Peter Shulman spoke about how the new teacher evaluation system is geared to develop talent. He explained that the focus of the new teacher evaluation system continues to be rigorous evaluations which include qualitative and quantitative data.

On May 31st, Superintendent, Vince Caputo and Rick Cohen, developed further the action plan for new teacher evaluation for 2012 – 2013. One aspect of focus for action planning was communication. In order to ensure consistent communication with stakeholders regarding the new teacher evaluation system, it was determined that Metuchen's DEPAC would develop a site on the district website to be able to disseminate information to the staff, families and community and encourage two-way communication on a monthly and on-going basis. Mr. Caputo came up with the idea to create a *Journal of Our Journey*, include minutes from the DEPAC meetings and have a teacher representative on the State EPAC (Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee) attend each State EPAC session and report out to the DEPAC and community with minutes of those sessions as well.

The second DEPAC meeting was held on Monday, June 18th, from 1:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. at the Edgar School Library. At this meeting, staff needs and areas of focus for staff development were established. (See agenda attached). To that end, the new teacher evaluation system professional development activities would include extensive professional development for administrators and teachers. A variety of top notch professional development opportunities would be arranged for the summer including training in the James Stronge model attended by both administrators and teacher leaders. Teacher leaders who attended the training would then turn-key the system to staff on the November 6th, 2012 In-Service day along with a presentation on the system as a whole on the first days of school I-Services. In addition, Training in providing Good Feedback was targeted. In order to provide the highest quality training in this area, Dr. Grant Wiggins was contracted to provide two full days of training on how to give Good Feedback for Professional Learning. Additionally, the New York University was contracted to provide training to administrators to build their capacity to use data to provide feedback and lead to collaborative professional growth through the new teacher evaluation system. The professional learning opportunities offered over the summer would be made available to all staff and calendar of all summer PD activities would be posted. The summer was to be designed to be rich in professional and curriculum development and on-going communication regarding the new teacher evaluation system and the Common Core Standards, thereby ensuring teachers have the information, knowledge, skills and resources needed to provide high quality, Common Core Standards based instruction.

The first trainings on the James Stronge Model and the online component OASYS were held on July 17th and 18th. Administrators, teacher leaders and a number of volunteer teachers attended. Dr. Grant Wiggins trained administrators and participating teachers on Good Feedback on August 20th and 28th. The new teacher evaluation system and the James Stronge Model were introduced to teachers on

August 29th/30th. Administrators received an additional training on how to conduct evidence based observations on September 12th. On November 6th, administrators were scheduled to be tested for certification in the model and teacher leaders would provide further training to teachers on the James Stronge Teacher Performance Standards and Indicators that day (Due to Hurricane Sandy, these events were rescheduled)

On July 18th, we read first in the press, and then letter received via fax a letter from the NJDOE, that Metuchen was not selected as an EE4NJ Cohort 2 Pilot Program. A week later, Mr. Caputo was contacted by the Tim Matheney, Director of the Office of Evaluation, of the NJDOE, and was invited to “join the 2012-13 teacher evaluation pilot using your own funding” because Metuchen’s grant application received a “high enough composite score to be a finalist”. Metuchen accepted the offer in order to be able to participate in the State Advisory Committee (EPAC), have a voice in the process and increase our readiness.

On September 27th, Mr. Caputo attended the first State EPAC meeting at Rider College. At this session, Tim Matheney, Director of the Office of Evaluation advised pilots to build community, help identify resources, provide guidance and listen to concerns. In response, Mr. Caputo decided we would establish a James Stronge group, composed of the six Middlesex districts using the James Stronge Teacher Performance Model (This group was established and held its first meeting on December 11th at Metuchen).

On October 15th, Rick Cohen attended the next EPAC meeting at Rider College along with a DEPAC Teacher representative, Jennifer Miller. A great deal of information was discussed regarding the form of regulations that will be proposed by the EPAC for implementation statewide in September of 2013. Metuchen was able to provide more examples and suggestions to the other Cohort 2 pilots as we are currently much further along with the development and implementation of the Teacher Performance Evaluation Tool (See Minutes attached).

On October 23rd, the third DEPAC meeting was held (See agenda and minutes attached).

On November 12th, we hosted our second of seven NYU Building Data Teams professional development session for administrators. After the initial session which presented an overview of the action research process, the second session focused on applying the action research process to teacher evaluation. By focusing the action research training on Metuchen’s teacher evaluation process, the NYU sessions with Dr. Fergus served to both develop the capacity of our administrative team to use data to drive decisions, and at the same time, enable the administrative team to collaboratively evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the new teacher evaluation system and analyze its effectiveness for ongoing improvement and enhancement based upon our collective research findings.

On Monday afternoon, Metuchen hosted a meeting with other Directors of Curriculum in Middlesex to discuss best practices that may be utilized for the student achievement data component of the new

teacher evaluation system. We shared ideas and information to share with our DEPAC committees to include stakeholder input in the development process of this aspect of the new teacher evaluation system. Also, as per Mr. Caputo's suggestion, we will be establishing a consortium of districts in Middlesex that utilize the James Stronge model for teacher evaluation to share best practices and successes from lessons learned through implementation. This will also provide us the continued opportunity to share services such as make-up trainings and resources.

On November 14th, Rick Cohen attended the Middlesex County Curriculum Committee meeting. The topic of discussion was teacher evaluation. The guest speaker was Tim Matheney, who is the Director of Evaluation for the NJDOE. He provided updates on where pilots and non-pilots should be in their planning and development for full implementation next year.

On the week of November 21st, administrators received their iPad2s in order to enhance the new teacher evaluation system through use of online system and data management.

On December 10th, Metuchen hosted the first Middlesex Stronge group session. It was attended by all 6 districts using Stronge (Dunellen, MRESC, South Brunswick, South River, Spotswood, Metuchen and Metuchen Christian). The meeting was scheduled for an hour, but went on for three hours. Ideas for best implementation practices and transition were discussed and shared.

On December 17th, Rick Cohen and Mr. Caputo trained seven Teacher Leaders to turn-key the new teacher evaluation system activities. The activities Teacher Leaders were to conduct at their schools with all certificated staff are:

1. Conduct Self-Evaluation
2. Conduct Mock Observation utilizing observation tool
3. Identify Artifacts and documents for a Teacher Portfolio or Document Log to demonstrate student learning in ways not observed in a classroom

Teacher Leaders coordinated with their principals the times of the make-up sessions for their schools.

On December 18th, Rick Cohen attended with Jennifer Miller the 3rd NJDOE Evaluation Pilot Advisory Committee at Rider College. The two topics covered dealt with how the NJDOE is proposing that the Student Achievement Component of TEACHNJ, new legislation, is to be accomplished. The guidelines were very broad, with question marks on all components and the majority of the day comprised of a collection of input on thoughts and ideas from the Pilots on what regulations should be considered. The two main topics presented briefly and discussed throughout the day were as follows:

1. Non-tested Subjects and Grades – Student Growth Objectives
2. Tested Subjects and Grades – Student Growth Profile

On January 10th, 2013, Rick Cohen attended the NJDOE EPAC meeting with Jennifer Miller. The state got more specific with the regulation proposals for the Student Achievement component of the TEACHNJ legislation, which goes into effect September 2013.

on January 11th, the proposals from the January 10th EPAC meeting were presented to the Metuchen DEPAC. Metuchen was already aligning needed resources, training and data management systems to meet the requirements coming down from the state for both the new teacher and school leader evaluation systems. All needed trainings for all stakeholders for both systems had been secured and scheduled to be completed by May 24th, 2013.

On Thursday, January 31st, our administrative team participated in the final component of the Stronge Teacher Performance Evaluation System Training, the Inter-Rater Reliability training. The training was geared to build the capacity of the evaluators to make summative rating decisions for the teachers based upon a collection of multiple sources of data. At the end of the session, the trainer facilitated a common scoring activity so that consistency of rating is reliable across evaluators within the district, hence "inter-rater reliability". Seven Teacher Leaders also attended to effectively turn-key to Metuchen staff at upcoming turn-key sessions. Other district administrators will be sent as part of a shared service agreement which will enable us to send administrators from Metuchen who are covering buildings on Thursday to attend make-up sessions for free at future dates.

On February 11th, Dr. Eddie Fergus of NYU Steinhardt facilitated the third of seven sessions on Building School Based Data Teams with the administrative team. The focus for this session was Step 2 of the Data Analysis / Action Research which is the Data Collection step. During the session, the assessments each department has identified as measurements of student growth were presented for Dr. Fergus's review and the reliability and validity of the assessments to measure growth was discussed. The next step was to correlate the results of state tests in LAL and Math to the results of some of our local assessments to evaluate the reliability and validity. This training also served to develop the district's administrators' assessment literacy which will be turn-keyed to teachers as we launch the Student Growth Objective Process for the 2013-2014 school year as part of the New Teacher and Principal Evaluation System.

On February 14th, Rick Cohen attended the NJDOE EPAC (State Evaluation Committee) along with teacher representative Jennifer Miller, and Bob Capra and Kathy Glutz. Both the new principal

evaluation system and educational specialist evaluation system proposals for regulation were presented and discussed in small groups.

On February 19th, Rick met with the Middlesex Stronge Consortium group. The group discussed each districts' program implementation successes and effective practices. In the afternoon, Rick Cohen met with Mr. Caputo to discuss aspects of Stronge teacher and principal evaluation systems and next steps for the system roll out this year and preparedness for next year and set the next Metuchen DEPAC meeting for March 18th.

On February 27th and 28th, Mr. Caputo and Rick Cohen facilitated training and work sessions with Principals, Vice-Principals and Supervisors on how to calculate the mSGPs (median Student Growth Percentile for Teachers of state NJASK grades 4 – 8).

On March 4th, Rick Cohen and Ed Porowski met with the Director of Curriculum of Spotswood and the Supervisor of Social Studies to discuss a performance based assessment to measure student growth in social studies.

On March 6th, 2013, the NJDOE proposed regulations for all the new evaluation systems were provided to the State Board and made public. On March 7th, central office administrators reviewed the proposed regulations and spoke directly with Stronge and Associates to ensure alignment between Stronge's system and the NJDOE. The correspondence also enabled Metuchen to work directly with Dr. James Stronge in preparation for his training of Metuchen and Middlesex Stronge Consortium administrators on the Stronge School Leader Evaluation System, hosted on March 8th at Moss School.

On March 8th, we were very fortunate to have Dr. James Stronge with us. He was scheduled to provide training to our administrators on his Principal/Vice Principal Evaluation system, which is also well-aligned to the new regulations. On Friday morning, we were able to discuss with Dr.Stronge his system and how it aligns to the NJDOE, and collaboratively with some representatives of other Stronge Middlesex districts, customize Metuchen's system with the Stronge system and NJDOE system all together.

On March 11th, Rick Cohen went with Mr. Caputo and Jennifer Miller to EPAC where we got a breakdown of the components of the new teacher and principal evaluation system. In a break out group, Mr. Caputo and Rick Cohen were assigned to the same group in which the Implementer for NJDOE for EE4NJ/TeachNJ/AchieveNJ provided the group members the state's draft of the principal

evaluation rubric. This rubric will be used by districts to evaluate principal's implementation of the new teacher evaluation system in their schools. It will count for 20% of Principal's evaluation within the Principal Practice component of system.

On March 18th, a DEPAC meeting was held to present to the committee all the new proposed regulations for the new teacher evaluation system (see attached Power Point Presentation). DEPAC members were empowered with understanding and all resources needed to present the information to their staff members in their buildings.

On April 8th, Rick Cohen and Jennifer Miller went to the EPAC meeting to review the Student Growth Objective (SGO) process that the NJDOE is recommending, but not requiring, for the implementation of the required SGO component of the new teacher evaluation system. Throughout the day, Jennifer Miller and I attempted to use the NJDOE SGO design process to develop a draft SGO for Jennifer's class along with support from NJDOE liaisons. It was clear from the start that the NJDOE process was missing a key step which the Stronge SGO process has at its core. As a result, the decision was made by Mr. Caputo, after reviewing four potential processes on how to develop SGOs, for the district to officially adopt the Stronge SGO process.

On April 10th, Metuchen hosted the Stronge and Associates Student Growth Objective Process training for administrators at MHS Media Center for all Metuchen administrators (those administrators who covered buildings on Wednesday had attended an SGO training by NJPSA on April 8th). With administrators trained in the five step process of the Stronge SGO process, principals were ready to initiate the first step (Determine Needs) and part of Step 2 (Identifying assessments) can be accomplished before the start of next school year. The deadline for completing Step 2 (Create specific SGO's using pre-assessments) from the NJDOE is November 15th. Metuchen will be establishing a timeline for the completion of the process for October 15th since future deadlines for SGO's will be October 15th. In the first year, completing Steps 1 and 2 by October 15th will allow for a month of review and revision of SGOs to ensure their quality and effective design.