"No to the status quo"

Certified Staff Evaluation Guide

A GUIDEBOOK FOR TEACHERS & ADMINISTRATORS

2026-2027 School Year

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Please note: In addition to procedures contained in this guidebook, staff are required to adhere to all state laws and regulations indicated on the New Jersey Department of Education website (https://www.nj.gov/education/edueval/district/guide/index.shtml) Educator Evaluation webpage.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Teacher Observation and Evaluation Handbook for the Byram Township School District. This guide has been developed to provide clarity, consistency, and transparency in the observation and evaluation process for all staff.

As noted on the New Jersey Department of Education website, the State of New Jersey requires that school districts implement a comprehensive system of teacher evaluation aligned to TEACHNJ. The Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey (TEACHNJ) Act was established with the goal of raising student achievement by improving instruction through the adoption of evaluations that:

- Provide specific feedback to educators
- Identify areas for growth
- Guide professional development
- Inform personnel decisions

The New Jersey Department of Education believes that educators want to be engaged in ongoing discussions about what is working in their practices and what is not. A high-quality educator evaluation system provides the opportunity for a dialogue that meaningfully supports and develops practice.

In keeping with New Jersey mandates, our district has designed an approach that not only meets state requirements but also reflects our shared commitment to professional growth, continuous improvement, and student achievement.

The purpose of teacher observation and evaluation is twofold:

1. **Support Professional Growth** – to provide educators with meaningful feedback, resources, and opportunities for reflection that strengthen instructional practices.
2. **Ensure Accountability and Excellence** – to maintain high standards of teaching and learning while honoring the dedication and professionalism of our staff.

This handbook outlines:

- The district's adopted observation and evaluation model
- The process and timelines for classroom observations
- Roles and responsibilities of teachers, administrators, and evaluators
- Tools and resources available to support professional learning

We recognize that teaching is complex, challenging, and deeply impactful. Our observation and evaluation system is designed to foster a collaborative culture where teachers feel supported, respected, and empowered to grow. The ultimate goal is to ensure that every student in our district experiences high-quality instruction every day.

OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Step 1: Training

School administrators in each school will provide training to certificated staff on the observation process.

If a staff member misses or is absent when training takes place, it is the teacher's responsibility to contact their principal and/or designee to arrange make-up training.

Step 2: Goal-Setting

Development of PDP

All staff are required to develop a professional development plan that includes two (2) goals. As noted in N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-4.4(d), one (1) goal must be "derived from the results of observations and evidence accumulated through the teacher's annual performance evaluation." Administration will also direct staff to include a building-wide or district-wide goal (goal 2) where staff must include activities in an effort to meet that goal.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:6-128.a, each teacher shall be guided by an individual professional development plan (PDP), which shall include at least 20 hours per year of qualifying experiences (professional development) that support student achievement, including achievement in academic, physical, social, and emotional learning.

The content of each individual PDP shall be developed by each teacher's supervisor in consultation with the teacher.

Each teacher's individual PDP shall be updated annually no later than October 31st. The teacher's immediate supervisor may request that the PDP be submitted prior to this date so they have adequate time to review and approve. Each building principal will provide you with deadlines and additional information pertaining to PDP's no later than September 30th.

If a teacher joins the Byram School District from another district, they may utilize their current school year PDP upon approval by their supervisor. If the current individual PDP is found to be unsuitable to the teacher's new assignment, the new employing school district shall ensure a revised individual PDP within 25 working days after the teacher's hire.

Development of Student Growth Objectives (SGO's):

Student Growth Objectives (SGO) are academic goals for students that a teacher sets with their principal or designated supervisor at the beginning of the year.

- These academic goals must be aligned to standards and measured using high-quality assessments of various types including locally-developed tests, performance assessments, and portfolios.
- High-quality SGOs use multiple measures to determine the starting point of the students and are differentiated to be ambitious and achievable for all of the students included.
- Additionally, SGOs should include a significant proportion of the standards, course work, and students for which a teacher is responsible.

On June 30, 2025, Governor Murphy signed P.L. 2025, c. 79, extending P.L. 2024, c. 14, which required the halt of the collection of new SGO data for teachers. This new law is not only an extension, but also halts the collection of administrator goal data for tenured principals, assistant principals, and vice principals. For both sets of educators, this extension remains in place for the 26-27 school year.

Here are the relevant changes and how they affect educators:

1. Temporary Suspension of SGO Data Collection: For the 2026-2027 school year, the collection of new SGO and Administrative Goal data from TENURED STAFF is halted. Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) are instructed to use the most recent SGO/Administrative Goal data from the last year in which TENURED educators completed SGOs/Administrative Goals for their evaluations.

2. Requirements for Specific Educators: The following groups are required to design and complete SGOs/Administrative Goals during the 2026-2027 school year despite the general suspension:

* Teachers, Principals, Assistant Principals in their first year of employment in the LEA;
* Teachers, Principals, and Assistant Principals who do not have a record of pre-existing SGOs/Administrative Goals; and
* All non-tenured Teachers, Principals, and Assistant Principals.

* NOTE: For teachers on extended leave required to complete SGOs: Even teachers who are not present for a portion of student school days may receive a summative evaluation rating as long as they have both a practice score and a student achievement score meeting the minimum requirements. Observations and student growth objectives (SGOs) may have to occur in a narrower timeframe than usual. For SGOs, it is best if teachers are present for a continuous 9-week period. Teachers who are required to set SGOs but did not set them before the October 31 deadline due to an extended absence should set them immediately upon their return to the classroom. Non-tenured staff present for less than 40% of the total school days in an academic year must receive at least two (2) observations and must complete SGOs that reflect the instructional period for which they are present.

All tenured teachers have the option of developing and completing SGOs if they choose to do so. They must inform their direct supervisor in writing on or before September 30th of the school year.

SGO Deadlines:

- **No later than October 31 -** Teachers and supervisors meet to discuss and agree on SGO.
- **No later than February 15 –** SGO Adjustment Deadline (with administrative approval)
- **End of School Year Summative Conference -** Staff and supervisors meet to discuss SGOs as well as review final assessment data.

For additional questions and information pertaining to SY 2025-2026 SGO and Administrator Goals, click here to access the NJDOE Frequently Asked Questions document.

Development of Smart Goals:

Certificated staff must continue to develop Smart Goals this school year. Information pertaining to Smart Goals is located on the Intermediate and Lakes teacher hubs, as well as your assigned Google Classroom. Documents available include, but are not limited to:

SMART Goal Worksheet
Impact Cycle Worksheet
SMART Goal Single Point Rubric

Fall Goal Setting Meeting:

In the fall, teachers and their assigned administrator will meet to review and "finalize" the PDP, SGO, and Smart Goals. Both the administrator/supervisor and teacher will sign all documents. In order to set appropriate student growth goals and a thorough professional development plan, administrators and teachers should review the areas of focus for each of the teacher's classes or groups of students and ensure they are aligned to the standards and/or curricular objectives for each group. Administrators and teachers should review where the students are starting the year based on available data, then discuss and agree on what students will be able to demonstrate by the end of the school year in order to show progress toward mastery of the focus area. Administrators and teachers should also discuss strategies and tools to track student progress toward the goal.

Step 3: Formal Evaluations

Non-tenured certificated staff are observed a minimum of three (3) times. Tenured staff are observed a minimum of two (2) times.

Teacher Status	Minimum # of Observations that are at least 20 minutes
Non-Tenured	3
Tenured	2
Corrective Action Plan	Plus one

First Round Observations for staff (Domains 1, 2, and 3):

- Announced - Pre-conference meeting will be scheduled

Second Round Observations (Domains 2 and 3):

- Unannounced (no pre-conference)

Third Round Observations (Domains 2 and 3):

- Unannounced (no pre-conference)

Summative:

- Domain 4

The observation period will commence on September 22, 2026, and conclude on April 30, 2027, for non-tenured staff and culminate on or about June 1, 2027, for tenured staff. All certificated staff members receive a written summative evaluation in May or June 2026.

Conference Timeline Procedures:

Pre-Observation Conference	Post-Observation Conference
Must occur within 7 teaching staff member working days of the scheduled observation.	Must occur within 15 teaching staff member working days of the scheduled observation.

Domain Weights for Teaching/Support Staff:

Domain 1= 20%

Domain 2= 30%

Domain 3= 30%

Domain 4= 20%

Additional Evaluation Protocols:

- Any certified staff member (anyone who teaches math and/or language arts) should be prepared to be formally observed during their intervention period at least once during the school year so tier 2 instruction can be analyzed.
- For unannounced observations, to ensure equity and fairness, observers have been instructed to **not leave the room** or "not count" an observation and return later**.** As an example, an observer will not leave the room even if students are "taking" a test, quiz, or completing any other type of assessment. Observers must complete the unannounced observation weather "it is a good time" or not for the teacher.
- As part of their instructional responsibilities, administrators will be requesting and reviewing tier 2 paperwork to ensure teachers are complying with district MTSS guidelines, protocols, and expectations. Teachers should have this material readily available for review at any time, especially during *ANY* pre and post-observation conferences.

Post-Observation Protocols:

- After the observation, it is the administrator's responsibility to schedule a post-observation conference within 15 school days. After receiving the written observation, if the teacher does not agree with the observer's evaluation, the

teacher has the right to submit his or her written objection(s)of the evaluation within 10 teaching staff member working days following the conference.

Component Weights:

Type of Educator	Evaluation Component Weights
mSGP Teachers	• Teacher Practice: 70% • SGO: 25% • mSGP: 5%
Non-mSGP Teachers	• Teacher Practice: 85% • SGO: 15%
mSGP Principals/APs/VPs	• Principal Practice: 70% • Administrator Goals: 10% • SGO Average: 10% • mSGP Average: 10%
Non-mSGP Principals/APs/VPs	• Principal Practice: 80% • Administrator Goals: 10% • SGO Average: 10%

Step 4: End of Year Review – Annual Summary Conference

Prior to the annual summary conference that will take place towards the end of the school year, a teacher may request a meeting at any point in time with their supervisor(s) to review progress on goals as well as teaching performance and adherence to professional responsibilities (i.e., mid-year review).

Actions taken at the annual summary conference will include:

- Completion of SGO's
- Completion of Smart Goals
- Completion of PDP
- Review teaching evaluation scores
- Completion of "end-of-year" summary conference form (hard copy)

<u>End of year annual summary conferences should take place:</u>

Non-tenured staff= No later than April 15th

Tenured staff= No later than May 30th

Certificated staff members who end the school year with a summative rating of Ineffective or Partially Effective receive a corrective action plan (CAP). The CAP replaces the professional development plan (PDP) for the following school year. A minimum of four (4) observations, a

mid-year evaluation, and a summative evaluation are required for all certificated staff on a CAP.

Summative Score Overview



Summative Score Calculator

Acronyms key:
mSGP: median student growth percentile
SGP: student growth percentile
SGO: student growth objective

For each table:
enter the scores in Column B, and
the summative score is auto calculated and the cell is locked.

Teachers with mSGP

Component	Score
Teacher Practice (70%)	
SGO (25%)	
mSGP (5%)	
Summative Score (100%)	0.00

Teachers without SGP

Component	Score
Teacher Practice (85%)	
SGO (15%)	
Summative Score (100%)	0.00

Principals / Assistant Principals with mSGP: Principal Practice

Component	Score
Principal Practice (70%)	

Administrator Goals (10%)	
SGO Average (10%)	
median of school-wide SGP scores (10%)	
Summative Score (100%)	0.00

Principals / Assistant Principals without mSGP: Principal Practice

Component	Score
Principal Practice (80%)	
Administrator Goals (10%)	
SGO Average (10%)	
Summative Score (100%)	0.00

Summative Rating Cut Scores

Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
1.0	1.85	2.65	3.5 - 4.0

Calculating the Summative Rating

All teachers receive a practice score, based on classroom observations, and a score based on student growth objectives (SGOs). English Language Arts and Mathematics teachers of tested grades also receive a score for their median student growth percentile (mSGP), based on state assessment performance.

Educational Specialists Evaluation Procedures:

Educational services professional's overall evaluation is based on observations of their practice.

Teacher Status	Minimum # of Observations that are at least 20 minutes
Non-Tenured	3
Tenured	2
Corrective Action Plan	Plus one

Summative Rating

Each component of an educator's evaluation results in a score between 1 and 4. Each component is weighted according to a formula and the total is added to determine the summative rating of Highly Effective, Effective, Partially Effective, or Ineffective.

Summative Rating Cut Scores

Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
1.0	1.85	2.65	3.5 - 4.0

Any educational services professional who ends the school year with an Ineffective or Partially Effective rating has an additional observation the following year as part of their Corrective Action Plan (CAP).

Evaluation Templates:

The district utilizes the following observation rubrics:

Staff

- **Teacher**
- **Counselor**
- **Nurse**
- **Psychologist**
- **Social Worker**
- **Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant**
- **Physical/Occupational Therapist**
- **Speech/Language Therapist**
- **Dean of Students**

Administration:

- **Director/Supervisor**
- **Principal**