

May 5, 2020

NJDOE clarifies evaluation procedures for 2019-20

On Friday, May 1, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) published updated details on evaluation procedures titled [“COVID-19 School Closures: Guidance for Completing Observations for Provisional Status Teachers and Nontenured Educators.”](#)

The slides disseminated by the NJDOE provide details around many issues that have arisen in the field, spelling out procedures for educators to use over the remainder of the school year. For a general overview of the NJDOE’s prior guidance on evaluation, please refer to the [April 16 Field Advisory on evaluation](#) and the [Evaluation FAQ](#) updated April 23. Following are some key points we would like to emphasize:

Summative Conferences for Tenured Staff: Although tenured certificated staff members in good standing (meaning their most recent rating was Effective or Highly Effective) will receive a rating of Not Evaluated (NE), many individuals have nevertheless been directed to participate in formal summative conferences including the submission of documentation logs. The May 1 guidance clarifies that if a district chooses to hold such close-out meetings for tenured individuals, these are to be called “end-of-year conferences” that require “little or no preparation demands of staff.”

Corrective Action Plans (CAPs): Tenured individuals on CAPs should be aware that their district administrators can exercise discretion to issue a summative score that would exit them from the CAP, for those “who have been progressing towards an Effective or Highly Effective rating.” The rating for these educators should be calculated using the same procedures as for nontenured and provisional certificated staff members. Those whose CAPs must carry over to 2020-21 will receive NE for this year.

Portfolio Observations: Recognizing the wide range of evaluation practices in place across the state, the NJDOE offers a “recommended procedure” to follow for nontenured and/or provisional staff who received only one observation this year. The portfolio “allows educators to showcase their professional practice with a set of artifacts, stretched out over a period of weeks.” It is “not meant to be a large portfolio” and should focus on “critical” domains within a mutually agreed-upon observation window of two months maximum, beginning no earlier than the educator’s first post-observation conference and ending no later than the school building closure date. Administrators have discretion on how many artifacts to require; however, all artifacts must be obtained remotely as educators should not enter school buildings. The NJDOE recommends no more than five artifacts per domain, but within some evaluation instruments it may be possible to apply one artifact to multiple indicators or components.

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, the Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division at NJEA has been working in partnership with the NJDOE on modifying the evaluation regulations. Our advocacy efforts have helped develop policy modifications that are common sense, equitable, and fair. Those with further questions about the evaluation process should email edueval@doe.nj.gov and with these communications, they are welcome to copy Elisabeth Yucis, associate director of PDII as well: eyucis@njea.org.