

AchieveNJ: The School Improvement Panel and Strengthening Evaluation at the Building Level

About the School Improvement Panel

Based upon the provisions of TEACHNJ Act and AchieveNJ, every school must establish a School Improvement Panel (SciP) whose role is to ensure, oversee, and support the implementation of the district's evaluation, professional development (PD), and mentoring policies at the school level. The SciP also ensures that teachers have a strong voice and significant opportunity to help shape evaluation procedures within each school.

The SciP must include the school principal, an assistant/vice principal or a designee if the school does not have one, and a teacher.

- As of SY15-16, teachers serving on SciPs must have earned a rating of Effective or Highly Effective in the most recent evaluation. Until then, the teacher must meet local standards for having “a demonstrated record of success in the classroom.”
- ~~In order to conduct observations for the purpose of evaluation, the teacher member must~~
 - ~~(1) Have the consent of the local teacher association to conduct observations,¹~~
 - ~~(2) Possess an administrative or supervisory certificate, and~~
 - ~~(3) Be assigned by the principal to conduct the observation.~~
- ~~A SciP teacher who conducts observations for the purpose of evaluation cannot serve as a mentor.~~
- Teachers on SciPs will become important “resident experts” on evaluation policies and supports for other teachers. Teacher representatives will help to ensure open communication and opportunities for feedback among colleagues.

The principal has final responsibility for SciP membership but must consult with the local association representative in determining a suitable teacher to participate. More staff members may be added to the SciP, provided that teachers represent *at least one-third* of the total membership. The initial formation of SciPs was required by February 1, 2013; moving forward, these panels must be established in each school by August 31st each year.

The SciP is being implemented during a transitional period in state-level policies governing PD requirements. Changes to PD planning and implementation have been proposed to the New Jersey State Board of Education and will be considered for adoption in June 2013. Please see the [Roles in Planning for and Implementing Evaluation, Professional Development, and Mentoring Overview](#) on the [AchieveNJ](#) website for more information.

Required and Suggested Activities

The members of the SciP have the following specific responsibilities under the TEACHNJ Act:

- Ensuring that evaluation procedures are implemented;
- Ensuring that procedures for Corrective Action Plans are implemented;
- Identifying PD opportunities for staff members; and
- Overseeing the mentorship of new teachers at the building level.

In addition, members of the SciP may choose to pursue other locally-determined responsibilities, such as the following:

Observation of Practice

- Supporting the principal in creating the schedule of observations;
- Monitoring the progress of observations and conferences to ensure they are occurring according to schedule; and
- De-briefing observers' experiences after co-observations and suggesting activities to promote inter-rater reliability.

¹ If the teacher serving on the SciP does not have the approval of the teacher association to participate in individualized evaluation activities, teachers' names in observation data and forms should be expunged. Under the same circumstances, the teacher also should not participate in any discussion of an individual teachers' evaluation.

Academic Growth

- Reviewing school-level evaluation data (e.g. Student Growth Objectives (SGOs) and median Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs)) and reporting findings and trends to the District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) and district administration in order to inform district goals; and
- Examining a sample of SGOs for rigor and suggesting approaches for further strengthening the goals.

Professional Development

- Communicating with the DEAC and district administration regarding district-wide directives or initiatives;
- Supporting building-level training on the district’s teacher practice instrument; and
- Identifying individual (where appropriate), group, and building-level PD needs and opportunities based on observation and achievement data and feedback from teachers and administrators.

Sample School Year Calendar

A SciP might consider pursuing evaluation and related activities according to this calendar. Specifically-mandated responsibilities of the SciP are noted in red; other activities are suggested to enhance the panel’s role.

August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize membership on SciP by August 31. • Review district evaluation directives in preparation for communication at school level.
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize the observation schedule. • Ensure that all new teachers receive initial training on the practice instrument. • Discuss yearly refresher training for observers. • Ensure the district mentoring program is being implemented.
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify any obstacles in the process of setting SGOs. <i>(In 2013-14; SGOs must be set by November 15. In subsequent years, SGOs must be set by October 15.)</i>
November – December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the first round of teacher observation data and identify related PD needs. • Discuss “lessons learned” from first round of co-observations.
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the progress of observations. • Review the quality of the feedback provided to teachers. • Review the implementation of Corrective Action Plans. • Review the mentoring program and suggest approaches for further strengthening supports for new teachers.
February-March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct calibration activities with observers such as video review of lessons. • Reflect on the progress and quality of the second round of co-observations.
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the “lessons learned” from second co-observations. • Review the second round of teacher observation data and identify related PD needs. • Review challenges in the teacher observation process and report those findings to the DEAC.
May-June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review assessments upon which SGOs were based and analyze SGO results. • Discuss possible PD goals for the upcoming year.
Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify PD opportunities based on all available data, including feedback from teachers and administrators. • Begin planning PD based on student learning and observation data; develop plans integrated with mentoring requirements and refresher trainings.

For More Information

- Contact your School Improvement Panel or District Evaluation Advisory Committee.
- Visit the [AchieveNJ](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ) website at www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ.
- E-mail educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us, or calling the [AchieveNJ](http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ) Help Line at 609-777-3788.
- E-mail TeachPD@doe.state.nj.us for information on PD and mentoring requirements.