Teacher Evaluation Strategies

For New Jersey Speech-Language Specialists

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Background

The New Jersey Department of Education will be implementing a new teacher evaluation system in all districts for the 2013-2014 school year. Twenty-four districts were selected to engage in a pilot version of the system during the 2012-2013 school year. The *Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey* Act (TEACHNJ Act) is the tenure reform law that was passed in August 2012. ACHIEVENJ is the educator evaluation and support system developed under the 2012 TEACHNJ Act which mandated a new statewide teacher evaluation system with links to tenure decisions. (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2013, May 7: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/guide.pdf .).

In 2012, President Obama's administration released a Flexibility Policy for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) under which "ten states that have agreed to implement bold reforms around standards and accountability will receive flexibility from the burdensome mandates of … NCLB" (United States Department of Education, 2012, February 9). NCLB constitutes the 2011 reauthorization of the Education and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), first signed into law under President Johnson in 1965. The U.S. Department of Education's FAQ sheet on flexibility includes the following:

> Q: What will this flexibility mean for teachers?
>
> NCLB has put too much emphasis on a single standardized test on a single day. This is teachers' biggest complaint about the law. They feel pressure to prepare students for those tests, leading to an unintended narrowing of the curriculum and an emphasis on the basic skills measured by standardized tests. NCLB's accountability system doesn't help drive and shape a well-rounded curriculum that challenges students to excel academically.
>
> ESEA flexibility will let States make accountability decisions based on student growth and progress, as well as other measures of student learning and school performance. They will consider more than a single test score measured against an arbitrary proficiency level. States will be able to look comprehensively at how schools are serving their students and communities, in areas like school climate, access to rigorous coursework, and providing a well-rounded education.
>
> ESEA flexibility also will support States and districts in fixing the broken teacher evaluation system. States will begin to use multiple measures to evaluate teachers, including peer reviews, principal observation, portfolios, and student work. Improving teacher evaluation systems will support a learning culture where teachers can target instruction towards the needs of students, and will encourage a well-rounded curriculum. These improved evaluations will also consider student growth, to help focus on what

really matters – the annual gains of students – and to recognize, reward, and learn from the schools and teachers that are accomplishing this hard work. (2012, August 3)

To summarize, the trade-off for flexibility in reporting annual yearly progress based on standardized tests was a revised educator evaluation and support system. The NJ DOE's FAQ sheet on ACHIEVENJ can be accessed at: http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq_eval.shtml. (Please note that links change frequently on the NJ DOE website. This link was accessed on 2013, July 5.) If a district was not involved in the pilot year, the district needed to train all teachers on the evaluation system by July 1, 2013 and all evaluators by August 31, 2013.

Models of Teacher Evaluation

The professional literature on teacher assessment identifies two main purposes of teacher evaluation. *Value-added* teacher evaluation utilizes "statistical techniques to isolate a teacher's impact on his or her students' testing progress while controlling for other measurable factors, such as student and school characteristics, that are outside that teacher's control" (DiCarlo 2012, p. 1). *Standards-based evaluations* include "classroom observations in which expert evaluators assess a teacher's practice relative to explicit and well-defined district standards" (p. 1).

Why is Assessment Needed?

According to the State of New Jersey Department of Education (n.d.),

Nothing impacts student learning in schools more than teachers. All New Jersey students deserve great teachers, and all New Jersey teachers deserve meaningful opportunities for growth. In 2012, the Legislature unanimously passed a law requiring new teacher and principal evaluations to be implemented by the 2013–14 school year. AchieveNJ is designed to recognize those who excel, identify those who need additional support, and provide meaningful feedback and professional development to all teachers.
(http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/)

Teacher evaluation reform is not unique to New Jersey. Most states have implemented new teacher evaluation systems in the last few years (Curtis & Weiner, 2012). Evaluation reform also corresponds to the movement toward universal adoption of the Core Curriculum standards while funding for public education has decreased. According to Cutis and Weiner, "(p)owerful evaluations provide actionable information to teachers and cultivate cultures of continuous improvement" (p.3).

Educational assessment is often described in terms of a feedback loop model. The graphic below (Figure 1.) which illustrates the feedback loop of   has been adapted from a model by the

3

American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges (Beyond the Crossroads Writing Team, 2006).

Figure1. Assessment Implementation Loop
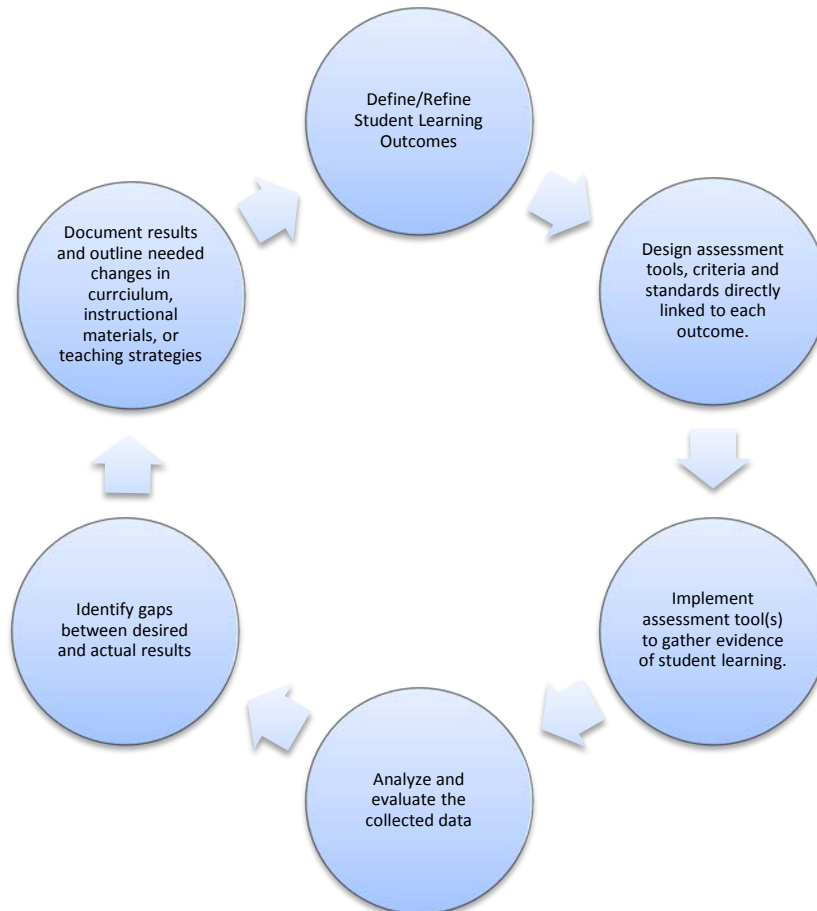
A research briefing released in 2011, *Getting Teacher Evaluation Right: A Challenge for Policy Makers* was released by the American Educational Research Association and the National Academy of Education (Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein). Evaluation tools that predict teacher effectiveness and improve teacher practice include those which include "structured observations, classroom artifacts, analysis of student learning, and frequent feedback based on professional standards" (p. ii). The authors also concluded that "(s)uccessful systems use multiple classroom observations throughout the year by expert evaluators looking at multiple sources of data that reflect a teacher's instructional practice, and they provide timely and meaningful feedback to the teacher" (p.9).

What Evaluation Reform Means for Speech-Language Specialists

The New Jersey State Board of Examiners issues all certificates for employment in public schools. The Board issues three types of credentials: instructional, educational services and administrative (New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:9, 2011).

It is essential to understand that speech-language specialists (SLSs) are not issued instructional certificates. In the state of New Jersey SLSs are issued *educational services certificates.*

The New Jersey Department of Education presented a series of regional presentations throughout the state in early 2013. The following information was presented by Bob Fisicaro, Implementation Manager of the Office of Evaluation. The AchieveNJ comprehensive educator evaluation and support system is designed for: members of the teaching staff who hold instructional certificates, vice/assistant principals, and principals. Public school employees holding educational services certificates are not included in the same evaluation process described in Achieve NJ that applies to classroom teachers. According to Mr. Fisicaro, with regard to speech-language specialists (and other individuals who hold educational services certificates):

- These professionals must be evaluated on a four-point scale
- Student achievement does not need to be part of the evaluation
- Local districts MAY choose to include measures of student achievement but such measures should not be part of tenure decisions

Figure 2 is taken from *A Guide to the TEACHNJ Act* located at: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/TeachNJGuide.pdf. It summarizes the differences in evaluation requirements for different positions. The components of the evaluation system for "counselors and therapists" include:

- A more robust evaluation system including a rubric with for rating categories. (Highly Effective, Effective, Partially Effective, Ineffective)

- Ongoing professional development and individual professional development plans.

- Corrective action plans for teaching staff members found to be Ineffective or Partially Effective.

- A four-year timeline for tenure acquisition.

- A streamlined arbitration process.

Figure 2.

How TEACHNJ Applies to Various Positions									
		Components of TEACHNJ							
		EVALUATION SYSTEMS		OTHER GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS			TENURE DECISIONS			
Types of Positions		More Robust Eval. Including Rubric w/ 4 Rating Categories**	SciP Conducts Evals. & Supports Growth	Mentoring Program Req. by Law	Ongoing PD / Individual PD Plan	Corrective Action Plan (CAP)	4-yr Timeline for Tenure Acquisition*	Tenure Acquisition Linked to Eval. Rating*	Tenure Revocation Triggered by Eval. Rating***	Streamlined Arbitration Process
"All Teaching Staff Members"	Teacher (holding and working under instructional certificate)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Principal, VP/AP (holding position & has administrative certificate)	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Supervisor	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓
	School Nurse, Athletic Trainer	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓
	Counselors, Therapists	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓
Other Staff	Secretarial & Custodial Staff									✓
	Teacher at State Institution/ Katzenbach									✓

A Brief Summary of the AchieveNJ Evaluation for Teachers

Members of the teaching staff who hold instructional certificates will participate in the AchieveNJ teacher evaluation and support system which includes measures of both student achievement and teacher practice (http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/TeachNJGuide.pdf.)

Teacher practice is measured by a series of observations. Data are gathered during observations by trained evaluators using a state-approved practice instrument. Trained evaluators must be employed within the teacher's district and have a New Jersey supervisory certificate. A list of approved practice instruments can be located at: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/approvedlist.pdf.

Examples include:

- Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching (2007, 2011)
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- Focal Point Teaching practice Model

- Marzano's Casual Teacher Evaluation Model
- The Marshall Rubrics
- The Newark Public Schools Model

Measures of Student Growth

Teachers holding instructional certificates will also have a value-added component to their evaluations. AchieveNJ refers to the value-added component as *student achievement*. Measures of student achievement vary according to the teacher's instructional area.
Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) measure achievement gains within 4th through 8th grade for subjects aligned with state assessment in language arts/literacy and mathematics.
 SGPs compare the change in a student's achievement from one year to the next to that of all other students in the state who had similar historical results. "For teachers of tested grades and subjects, SGP counts for 35 percent of the overall evaluation rating." (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2013, May 7,
http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/1PagerTeachers.pdf).

For teachers in *nontested grades and subjects* (those other than language arts/literacy and mathematics, grades 4-8) student achievement is not linked to test results but instead to *Student Growth Objectives (SGOs).* An example of an SGO for a 6th grade music teacher might be: *80% students will master 7 of 9 skills measured by the district-developed 6th grade music rubric* (Source: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/RegOverview.pdf)

The evaluation of school principals, assistant principals, and vice principals will include components of both student achievement and principal practice. An explanation of the evaluation and support system for teachers and administrators, including an explanation of SGOs can be found at: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/RegOverview.pdf. This is a link to the slides used by the New Jersey of Department of Education information sessions on AchieveNJ that were presented regionally in early 2013.

Student Growth Measures: Implication for Speech-Language Specialists

Recently, the Department of Education has added the following page to its resources on Achieve NJ. Note that the DOE pledges to continue to work partner with stakeholder organizations including NJSHA.

> • 2013-14: Districts will be granted considerable latitude in evaluating staff members in these roles. Districts can choose to continue existing practice, adopt or adapt their selected teaching or principal practice instruments, or create their own instrument – but will need to meet the statutory requirements…(Refer to the full text of the document at: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/SpecialistsandOthersOverview.pdf)

The statutory requirements referred to (which appear earlier in the documents are:

Four-year timeline to tenure;
• Three observations for non-tenured staff members in these roles; (*non-classroom teacher specialists including SLSs).*
• Four rating categories: Highly Effective, Effective, Partially Effective, Ineffective;
• Individualized professional development planning;
• Corrective Action Plans for teaching staff members rated Partially Effective or Ineffective; and
• Efficient and fair arbitration process for tenure revocation.

• Moving forward, the Department pledges to:
• Identify informal pilots in 2013-14, provide support, and share lessons learned;
• Identify and share best practices from other states and large districts;
• Partner with stakeholder organizations such as the New Jersey School Counselor Association and the New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association in the development of evaluation recommendations;
• Make resources available through web site links, broadcast memos, and other communications; and
• Consider possible additions to regulations for 2014-15 or future years.

Note that the last bulleted item indicates that additional regulations may be forthcoming.

In the same document (http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/intro/SpecialistsandOthersOverview.pdf) the DOE reiterates that wide latitude is being provided to districts in the evaluation of specialists, however, one model of specialist evaluation is **suggested** in figure 3.

Figure 3. NJ DOE Suggested model of specialist evaluation.

Practice Score
Performanceon a practice instrument o r exosting set of evaluation criteria*

+

Growth Objectives
Individual sets growth objectives in conjunction with immediate supervisor/principal

=

Summative Rating
Overall eval. score that combines measures of practice and achievement of growth objectives

* A practice score would be determined by utilizing a district-adopted rubric.

The document further explains that the summative evaluation score,

> under this suggested approach, would combine the multiple measures
> of educator practice and student growth, earning a summative rating of
> Highly Effective, Effective, Partially Effective, or Ineffective. Staff members
> in these roles who are rated Ineffective or Partially Effective work with their
> principals to create a Corrective Action Plan with targeted professional development
> for the subsequent year.

At his time, the use of growth objectives by specialist is suggested only by NJDOE. Local districts MAY choose to include measures of student achievement but such measures should not be part of tenure decisions (per information presented by Mr. Bob Fisicaro, Implementation Manager of the Office of Evaluation at Regional Presentation on Educator Evaluation April 19, 2013, Ocean City, NJ).

Professional Development

AchieveNJ is described as an *educator evaluation and support system.* According to the Department of Education, one means of support is expanded mentoring for novice teachers and teachers new to the district. A summary of the *Roles in Planning for and Implementing Evaluation, Professional Development, and Mentoring* can be retrieved at: http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/RolesInPlanningOverview.pdf. According to NJ DOE, AchieveNJ adds critical sources of data to inform professional development planning at the individual, school, and district levels.

According to information on the Professional Standards and Learning Page (http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/pd/teacher/) *"*professional development planning process at the school and district levels for the 2013-2014 school year will remain the same as it was for the 2012-2013 school year…." Extensive links to assist schools and educators in developing School Professional Development Plans may also be accessed through the same page.

Following a feedback model, teachers will establish professional development plans in consultation with their supervisors. According to NJ DOE, professional development plans can be more effectively tailored to their specific needs and strengths through the addition of evaluation data. Professional development plans should utilize data gathered and analyzed in the assessment process and facilitate professional development. According to the American Educational Research Association (2005), "(t)eachers are more likely to change their teaching practices when professional development is directly linked to the program they are teaching and the standards and assessments that they use" (p.2).

Based on the research in professional development, NJSHA strongly advocates for the provision of targeted professional development for speech-language specialists. While SLSs provide support for students in meeting curriculum benchmarks, appropriate professional development should support the current Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists in Schools (ASHA, 2011). According to ASHA (2011) Critical Roles of school based speech-language pathologists include:

- **Working Across All Levels**
- **Serving a Range of Disorders**
- **Ensuring Educational Relevance**
- **Providing Unique Contributions to Curriculum**
- **Highlighting Language/Literacy**
- **Providing Culturally Competent Service**

The ASHA document also highlights that in order to **"**keep abreast of changes in education and speech-language pathology, it is essential that SLPs seek out and be permitted to engage in continuing education experiences to update their knowledge base and hone their skills" (sec1.1).

Assessment, when used appropriately can be an effective tool in helping professionals reflect on practice and work toward continuous improvement. Those who demonstrate exemplary practice benefit from evaluation tools which allow them to document and share successful practice.

Recommendations for Public School Districts from the New Jersey Speech-Language Hearing Association (NJSHA)

<u>Background</u>

On December 18, 2012 a meeting was held at the State Department of Education offices in Trenton, NJ. In attendance were: representatives from the NJSHA School Affairs Committee (Robin Kanis and Amy Hadley), NJSHA Legislative Agent Lynn Nowak, Carl Blanchard Evaluation Policy Manger, NJDOE and Tim Matheny, Director of Evaluation, NJ DOE

During the December 18<u>th</u> meeting, the following information was conveyed to the representatives of NJSHA:

- **Implementation of the evaluation system would be a multi-year process**
- **DOE is providing a "fair amount of latitude" to local districts for the evaluation of speech-language specialists.**
- **Districts may choose " the most appropriate way to evaluate speech-language specialists"**
- **The system used to evaluate speech-language specialists does not have to be the same system used to evaluate classroom teachers**
- **NJSHA representatives were commended for initiating discussion with the DOE and were invited to develop a tool that could be used by districts to evaluate speech-language specialists**

On January 24, 2013, the School Affairs Committee convened for a meeting. One of the tasks accomplished was to draft the New Jersey Framework for Speech-Language Specialists.

NJSHA SAC reviewed several available tools developed for the evaluation of school-based speech-language specialists (SLSs)/speech-language pathologists (SLPs). The NJSHA *New Jersey Framework for the Evaluation of Speech-Language Specialists* is based primarily on the *Framework for Specialist Positions* by Charlotte Danielson (2007). Charlotte

Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* is an approved model for teacher evaluation under *TEACHNJ*. The NJSHA document has aligned four levels of effectiveness for SLSs with those specified in the *TEACHNJ Act*: Highly Effective, Effective, Partially effective, Ineffective.

The Committee also developed a companion document, *Evidence of Effectiveness for the New Jersey Framework for the Evaluation of Speech-Language Specialists*, to serve as a guide for SLSs and those conducting their performance evaluations in order to determine levels of proficiency. Using a rubric format, the *Evidence of Effectiveness* provides several types of documentation that might be used to assign levels of proficiency in each of the rubric's domains. As such, the *Evidence of Effectiveness* document provides examples of, but not all, measures by which proficiency levels may be assigned. Those evaluating SLSs also should consider the unique roles of SLSs within their district, specific schools, and in relation to caseloads/workloads assigned to that those specialists.

NJSHA prepared a draft version of a framework and shared it with Mr. Blanchard and Mr. Matheny. Mr. Blanchard replied and complimented NJSHA for taking a lead on the project. Mr. Matheny advised members of the NJSHA committee to discuss copyright concerns with ASCD which holds the rights to the Danielson Frameworks (http://www.ascd.org/Publications/Authors/Charlotte-Danielson.aspx?id=30981306001). NJSHA obtained permission on July 2, 2013) to use the framework under the following conditions:

Secondary Use Request

Area of Distribution: Members of NJSHA in New Jersey

Additional Terms: Licensee may post the NJSHA document titled "Framework for Speech-Language Specialists-Evidence of Effectiveness in READ ONLY PDF FORMAT on the Licensee's secure website for members to view. The posting must contain a statement that the document is for informational purposed only. Schools in New Jersey must each license use of the 2007 Danielson Framework separately for implementation purposes within such school by writing to permissions@ascd.org.

A licensing fee of $25 was paid (from a member donation to NJSHA) to ASCD for permission to utilize the ASCD publication as described above.

The following documents are available for NJSHA members the NJSHA website:

- **Introduction to the NJSHA recommended *New Jersey Framework for the Evaluation of Speech-Language Specialists* (printable)**
- ***New Jersey Framework for the Evaluation of Speech-Language Specialists* View Only**

- ***Evidence of Effectiveness for the New Jersey Framework for the Evaluation of Speech-Language Specialists* View Only**

At the April 10, 2013 Mr. Bob Fisicaro, Implementation Manager of the New Jersey Department of Education Office of Evaluation, clarified that when using a four-point scale, such as the *Danielson Framework* or the *New Jersey Framework for the Evaluation of Speech-Language Specialists*, a comprehensive score may be obtained for the instrument in a variety of ways. **For example, a mean rating score may be used or certain strands of the evaluation tool may be weighted more heavily than others.**

Suggestions for a Successful Evaluation

Preparing for evaluation can help lead to an accurate measure of performance. After selecting a framework to use for the evaluation, the SLS should become familiar with the framework and "self- reflect about which performance level best matches (their) instructional practices" (Benedict, Thomas, Kimerling, & Leko, 2013, p. 63). The SLS should also "(p)articipate in professional development opportunities to help elevate (themselves) to the next level" (p. 63).

According to Charlotte Danielson (2010/2011), author of the *Danielson Framework for Teaching,* evaluation helps teachers improve when

> (p)articipants learn how to recognize the sources of evidence for each component and element. For example, Domain 2 (the classroom environment), and Domain 3 (instruction) are demonstrated primarily in the classroom, whereas Domain 1 (planning and preparation) and Domain 4 (professional responsibilities) depend on artifacts, such as teachers' techniques for communicating with families (for example, newsletters or handouts for back-to-school night) or logs of professional development activities.

SLSs can organize artifacts in professional portfolios. Teaching portfolios are collections of materials that demonstrate evidence of effectiveness over time. "The process of selecting and organizing material for a portfolio can help one reflect on and improve one's teaching" (Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching). Portfolios can be in "hard copy" form or electronic. For more information on electronic portfolios, refer to *An Overview of e-Portfolios* by Lorenzo and Illteson (2005). Recommendations for artifacts are included in the *Evidence of Effectiveness* document that accompanies the *New Jersey Framework for the Evaluation of Speech-Language Specialists.* Examples include: therapy schedules, testing schedules, sample reports, parent handouts, and teacher checklists.

Conclusions

Evaluation reform is a national trend, not unique to New Jersey. Evaluation, when conducted effectively, can facilitate self-reflection, improve instruction, and encourage professional development. SLSs should work with their building and district administrators, as well as local bargaining units (i.e. NJEA representatives) to ensure that SLSs are included in the selection of the tool they feel most appropriately evaluates their unique contributions to the education of children.

NJSHA has developed the *New Jersey Framework for the Evaluation of Speech-Language Specialists* which utilizes a four-point rating system. NJSHA advocates for appropriate evaluation of speech-language specialists by appropriately trained evaluators. In order for SLSs to reach their greatest potential, professional development addressing the unique roles and responsibilities of SLSs in public schools must be made available and accessible.

This white paper was prepared as part of the strategic plan of the New Jersey Speech-Language Hearing Association (NJSHA) with input from the School Affairs Committee and the NJSHA Board of Directors. Concerns about accuracy of content may be directed to Dr. Amy J. Hadley, primary author, at amy.hadley@stockton.edu.

The information contained in this report was deemed to be accurate and current as of July 5, 2013. As AchieveNJ continues to be updated and revised by the New Jersey Department of Education, prudent members will monitor the NJ DOE website at: http://www.state.nj.us/education.

This paper has been prepared as a guide for NJSHA members and is not intended to serve as legal advice.

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APPENDIX A
SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

1. **Speech-language specialists (SLSs) are not issued instructional certificates.** In the state of New Jersey SLSs are issued *educational services certificates.*

2. The AchieveNJ comprehensive educator evaluation and support system is **designed for: members of the teaching staff who hold instructional certificates,** vice/assistant principals and principals.

3. With regard to speech-language specialists (and other individuals who hold educational services certificates):
    a. These professionals must be evaluated on a four-point scale (such as the *New Jersey Framework for the Evaluation of Speech-Language Specialists*).
    b. Student achievement **does not** need to be part of the evaluation for SLSs.
    c. Local districts MAY <u>choose</u> to include measures of student achievement but such<u> </u>measures <u>should not</u> be part of tenure decisions.

4. SLSs **do not** need to be evaluated on the same tool selected for teachers with instructional certificates in their district.

5. Districts may choose the most appropriate way to evaluate speech-language specialists.

6. SLSs should work with their building and district administrators, as well as local bargaining units (i.e. NJEA representatives) to ensure that SLSs are included in the selection of the tool they feel most appropriately evaluates their unique contributions to the education of children.

7. Once you have selected a framework for evaluation, become familiar with the components and what constitutes evidence for each component.

8. Organize artifacts to help demonstrate competencies. One way to organize artifacts (e.g. sample therapy schedules, parent newsletters, certificates of attendance at CE events) is by developing a professional portfolio.

9. Arrange for both a pre-observation and a post-observation meeting with the evaluator. The pre-observation meeting will help the evaluator understand what is occurring during the observation. The post-observation meeting should provide feedback on the data gathered during the observation.

10. Advocate for appropriate professional development, based on the feedback you receive, that will help you in continuous professional improvement. Professional development, aligned with the unique roles and responsibilities of SLSs in public schools, is important for all professionals regardless of where they fall on the evaluation continuum.