

September 2014

Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR)

Frequently Asked Questions & Glossary of Terms



What is APPR?

APPR stands for Annual Professional Performance Review, and it is the process by which teachers and principals are evaluated in New York state. The purpose of APPR is to empower educators to improve the quality of instruction in schools and, in turn, to improve students' performance and readiness for colleges and careers. APPR plans must meet strict state guidelines and are negotiated with local unions. Under state guidelines, APPR takes into account classroom observations, student test scores, and a variety of achievement and assessment measures — many of which are decided at the local level. Teachers and principals across New York ultimately receive a number grade every year, which equates to an effectiveness rating.

Have teachers and principals always been evaluated?

Teachers and principals have always been evaluated and held to specific standards. The APPR system was revamped in 2010, 2012 and again in 2014 as a result of the federal Race to the Top education reform initiative. Evaluation plans must adhere to more rigid rules set by the state. Plans must also be submitted and approved by the NYS Education Department and a portion of the evaluations is directly tied to student performance on state exams or other state-approved learning measures.

What is the goal of APPR?

The current evaluation system is one pillar of the larger federal Race to the Top education reform initiative that aims to improve the quality of instruction in our schools and, in turn, improve student performance and college-and-career readiness. The APPR requirements aim to provide standardized, objective evaluation results, which can be used to better focus professional development for teachers and principals. According to the State Education Department, "The purpose of the evaluation system is to ensure that there is an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every school."

How are teachers and principals evaluated?

The details of the evaluation process are determined locally by districts, but all K-12 teachers/principals in the state are evaluated in three areas: classroom/leadership observations and evidence, student growth and student achievement. Currently, teachers and principals receive a score in each evaluation area and a cumulative score, broken down as follows:

- *Observations & evidence: 60 possible points*

These are locally-selected measures of teacher/principal effectiveness. While districts must follow state guidance and use state-approved rubrics to assess teacher and principal performance, districts — through the collective bargaining process — select how points in this component are assigned, as well as the respective scoring bands. "Scoring band" simply means the range of points that equate to a particular level of effectiveness.

- *Student achievement: 20 possible points*

These are locally-selected measures for student growth, such as building-wide learning targets. Like the 60-point

component, districts select the process by which points are assigned in this area through collective bargaining with local unions. The scoring bands however, are determined by the state.

- **Student growth: 20 possible points**

This is either a state-provided growth score, derived from state assessment results, OR a score indicating progress made toward meeting student learning targets (a.k.a., Student Learning Objectives). As of August 2013, the state provides student growth scores for classroom teachers in grades 4-8 based on the state English language arts and math exams taken by students in these grades during the prior school year. Many principals also receive state-provided growth scores. For other grades/subjects, teachers — including those whose courses end in Regents exams — must create Student Learning Objectives, or SLOs, for their students, while principals must set building-wide learning objectives. These learning objectives are academic goals that are set at the start of a course/school year following specific state guidelines. The process by which the SLOs are set, reviewed and assessed is determined at the local level. For teachers of Regents classes, the Regents exam results must be used within the SLOs as evidence of student learning. Scoring bands for this component are set by the state.

- **Total score: 100 possible points**

Once these scores are compiled at the end of the school year, the cumulative score is converted into a final effectiveness rating: Highly effective, effective, developing or ineffective (HEDI rating).

How are effectiveness ratings determined based on these scores?

According to SED guidelines, every K-12 teacher and principal in the state receives a HEDI rating, calculated based on a 100-point possible overall score. The conversion for these ratings is as follows. *(Note: Scoring bands — the range of points that equate to a particular level of effectiveness — may change slightly from year to year based on state requirements.)*

HEDI Score (2013-2014)	Growth or other Comparable Measures Scoring Bands (20 pts. Possible)	Locally-Selected Measures of Growth or Achievement Scoring Bands (20 pts. Possible)	Other Measures of Effectiveness (60 pts. Possible)	Overall Composite Score (100 pts. Possible)
Highly Effective	18-20	18-20	Ranges determined locally	91-100
Effective	9-17	9-17		75-90
Developing	3-8	3-8		65-74
Ineffective	0-2	0-2		0-64

The chart below, provided by the State Education Department, also demonstrates how each rating is determined:

Standards for Rating Categories	Growth or Other Comparable Measures	Locally-Selected Measures of Growth or Student Achievement	Other Measures of Effectiveness
Highly Effective	Results are well-above state average for similar students (or district goals if no state test).	Results are well-above district or BOCES-adopted expectations for growth or achievement of student learning standards for grade/subject.	Overall performance and results exceed standards.

Effective	Results meet state average for similar students (or district goals if no state test).	Results meet district or BOCES-adopted achievement of student learning standards for grade/subject.	Overall performance and results meet standards.
Developing	Results are below state average for similar students (or district goals if no state test).	Results are below district or BOCES-adopted expectations for growth of achievement of student learning standards for grade/subject.	Overall performance and results need improvement in order to meet standards.
Ineffective	Results are well-below state average for similar students (or district goals is no state test).	Results are well-below District or BOCES-adopted expectations for growth or achievement of student learning standards for grade/subject.	Overall performance and results do not meet standards.

Are APPR scores available to the public?

No, schools are prohibited by law from releasing APPR scores to the public. Teacher and principal composite scores ONLY can be released to parents of students in each teacher’s classroom and in each principal’s school. By law, scores can only be released to parents who specifically request them, and can only be released for a student’s current year teacher(s) and principal. Parents who wish to request these scores should contact their child’s school.

Is teacher/principal expertise taken into account in each APPR evaluation?

Guidance from the State Education Department has been that districts are not expected to consider educator experience when calculating evaluation scores or when selecting local performance measures.

Who evaluates teachers and principals?

Teachers and principals are evaluated by trained administrators within the district. Districts are required to include in their APPR plan the process by which these evaluators are trained and certified.

What if a teacher/principal receives a rating of developing or ineffective?

If a teacher/principal receives a rating of developing or ineffective — and a portion of that teacher’s/principal’s score is based on the Common Core state assessments given to grades 3-8 — the district must calculate a safety net score (based on state guidelines) for that individual. If the safety net score is higher than the actual score, the district is not allowed to use the score for certain employment decisions (i.e., termination, granting tenure, expedited hearings). If the safety net score is lower or the same than the actual score, the actual score may be used for employment and evaluation decisions. Both the safety net score and the actual score will be given to parents/guardians in accordance with state law. If no part of a teacher’s/principal’s score is based on the state assessments, a safety net is not required and the actual score is that individual’s only score.

Certain teachers/principals rated as developing or ineffective (depending on the safety net calculation) will receive a negotiated Teacher Improvement Plan (TIP) or Principal Improvement Plan (PIP). These plans include the identification of needed areas of improvement, a timeline for achieving improvement, the manner in which the improvement will be assessed, and, where appropriate, activities to support improvement in those areas. A pattern of ineffective

performance could lead to an expedited hearing process for termination. Teachers/principals who receive a rating of developing or ineffective may file an appeal based on the process outlined in their district's APPR plan.

If every district has a locally negotiated APPR plan, how do the effectiveness ratings of teachers and principals in my district compare to those in other districts?

Put simply, they don't compare. While all districts must follow a certain set of guidelines when developing APPR plans, and then those plans must be approved by the State Education Department, many of the standards within these plans vary by district. This includes, but is not limited to, the observation rubrics districts decide to use, the student growth measures and assessments used in areas other than state standardized exams, and the way in which points are assigned within the different components. Similarly, districts routinely renegotiate their APPR plans with local unions, so it may be difficult to compare effectiveness ratings even within the same district from year to year.

Besides principals, are any other school administrators evaluated?

The state's APPR law requires that building principals be evaluated based on the new regulations. Any other administrators within the district must be evaluated based on the district's procedures outlined in any collective bargaining agreements. Superintendents are required, under state law, to be evaluated each year by the district's governing body (typically the board of education).

Is there a limit on the amount of time a district can spend testing students for the purposes of APPR?

Yes. As of May 2014, district APPR plans must show that time spent on traditional standardized assessments for the purposes of APPR doesn't exceed 1 percent of the required number of instructional hours annually for each grade level. Similarly, the time devoted to test preparation for the purposes of APPR may not exceed 2 percent of required instructional hours. This time limit calculation only includes certain types of assessments, as outlined by state law. Traditional standardized assessments refers to tests that allow the test-taker to select one or more of the given options as their response, such as a multiple choice exam. Traditional standardized assessments may not be used at all in grades K-2 for the purposes of APPR.

How can I learn more about APPR?

Call the superintendent's office at 273-1422 to learn more about APPR in Green Island. Online, you'll find a copy of the district's state-approved APPR plan and information on how to request the effectiveness rating(s) for your child's teacher(s) and/or principal(s).

For more information on the federal Race to the Top education initiative and NYS Regents Reform agenda, please visit the following websites:

- Engage NY: <http://www.engageny.org/>
- Common Core Learning Standards: <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/standards-assessments/ccls.html>
- Common Core State Standards Initiative: <http://www.corestandards.org/>
- Race to the Top: <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/>

Glossary of Terms

APPR (Annual Professional Performance Review): A state-governed process for evaluating New York's teachers and principals. Teachers and principals are given a number grade and a corresponding effectiveness rating at the end of each school year. A portion of that grade is directly tied to student performance on state exams or other state-approved

learning measures, and district APPR plans must be submitted to and approved by the New York State Education Department.

Growth score: A state-provided score given to teachers in grades 4-8, derived from results on the state English language arts and math exams.

Appeals process: A process required by education law and negotiated locally, by which teachers or principals can contest their effectiveness rating.

Conversion: The process by which observation, student growth and student achievement measures are translated into point scores and by which those numerical scores are then translated into associated effectiveness ratings using a consistent scale.

HEDI rating: An effectiveness rating of Highly Effective, Effective, Developing or Ineffective given to all teachers and principals in the state based on the numerical scores under APPR.

Safety net calculation: If a teacher/principal receives an overall rating of either ineffective or developing AND a portion of that teacher's/principal's score relies on the Common Core ELA/math state assessments for grades 3-8, the district must calculate a safety net score for that teacher/principal. If the safety net score is higher than the actual score, the actual score may not be used in certain employment decisions (i.e. termination, granting tenure, expedited hearings). The NYS Education Department has provided districts with guidance on how to calculate and use a safety net calculation. Parents/guardians will receive both the safety net score and the actual score where applicable. The safety net rule currently applies to only the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. If no part of a teacher's/principal's score is based on the state assessments, a safety net score is not required.

Rubric: A set of consistent criteria and standards used to outline expectations of quality performance and measure success in achieving those expectations. Districts must choose from a list of state-approved rubrics to guide evaluation and scoring of classroom observations.

SLO (Student Learning Objective): An academic goal for the school year set by teachers and administrators for the group of students that is specific and measurable, based on prior student learning data and aligned to state curriculum standards. Assessment of student progress toward SLOs is used to determine a student growth score for teachers who are not provided a growth score by the state. The process by which the SLOs are set, reviewed and assessed is determined at the local level.

TIP/PIP (Teacher/Principal Improvement Plan): A professional development plan provided to teachers/principals rated as developing or ineffective. A TIP/PIP includes identification of needed areas of improvement, a timeline for achieving improvement, the manner in which the improvement will be assessed, and, where appropriate, activities to support a teacher's/principal's improvement in those areas.

Benchmark assessment: Tests administered throughout the school year that give teachers immediate feedback on how students are meeting academic standards. Benchmark assessments can be used as a tool to measure individual student progress toward academic goals, and to help teachers identify content areas that need further attention or students who need extra help.

Traditional standardized assessment: NYSED defines these tests as a systematic method of gathering information from objectively scored items that allow the test-taker to select one or more of a the given options or choices as their response. Examples include multiple choice or true-false exams. These are tests that require the student to use a "bubble" answer sheet.

Formative assessment: This is a process by which teachers and students provide feedback during instruction to adjust teaching and learning and achieve intended instructional outcomes.

Diagnostic assessment: These are evidence-gathering procedures that provide teachers with clear indications on which skills or knowledge a student possesses – or doesn't possess. These activities provide teachers with information that helps them design and/or modify their instructional practices to best meet student needs.

Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS): New, national learning standards (also called the Common Core State Standards, <http://www.engageny.org/>), which are being adopted by states across the country as part of the Race to the Top education reform agenda. These standards replaced the existing learning standards, and influence what is being taught in New York's schools.

Growth model: The NYS Education Department's system for comparing the progress (i.e., academic growth) of similar students, and by which those numerical scores are then translated into associated effectiveness ratings using a consistent scale. Learn more about state selected growth measures here:

<http://www.engageny.org/resource/resources-about-state-growth-measures>.