

ANNOUNCEMENT

To Parents and Guardians of Students Enrolled in the New Rochelle Public Schools:

Consistent with Education Law §3012-c(10)(b), parents and guardians of students currently enrolled in the New Rochelle Public Schools will be able to receive the final quality rating and composite effectiveness score for their child(ren)'s present teachers and building principal. This information will be available beginning on Monday, December 2, 2013.

The composite effectiveness score for the 2012-13 school year is comprised of three components. These are: 1) written direct observations of professional practice conducted by certified supervisors and, in some cases, individual or group projects; 2) a State measure of student growth; and 3) a locally-determined measure of student growth. Each teacher or principal's composite effectiveness score is based on a 100 point scale. If an educator receives between 91 and 100 total points, they are placed in the "Highly Effective" rating category. Composite scores between 75 and 90 fall within the "Effective" rating category. Individuals with composite scores between 65 and 74 are placed in the "Developing" rating category. Finally, composite scores less than 65 indicate that the educator is categorized as "Ineffective."

Local school districts were required to negotiate a number of the aspects of the new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) for teachers and principals with their local bargaining units. Important decisions that were made by our District with the agreement of either the Federation of United School Employees (FUSE) or the New Rochelle Administrative and Supervisory Association (A&S) included: the selection of the Charlotte Danielson "Enhancing Professional Practice" rubric for the direct observation of teachers; the adoption of the Multi-Dimensional Principal Performance rubric for the direct observation of principals; and the inclusion of AIMSweb and the STAR Renaissance computer-based reading and math tests as some of the growth measures for elementary and middle school students.

Parents and guardians of students currently enrolled in the New Rochelle public schools can come to the Main Office of their child(ren)'s school(s) to request the composite scores and quality ratings for their child(ren)'s present teachers and principal beginning on Monday, December 2. We would ask that residents try to arrive between 9:00 AM and noon daily, although schools will not turn away individuals who present themselves at other times during regular school hours. Printed forms will be readily available to fill out in order to formally request this information. This form can be downloaded from this web page and completed beforehand to expedite this process. Parents and guardians will need to show an official form of identification to the office staff in order to receive the information. The information will only be released to parents and guardians of record. Should parents or guardians be unable to pick up this information during regular school hours as described above, please contact the Superintendent's Office at 576-4200 so alternate arrangements can be made. Sealed envelopes with the name of every student and the scores and ratings of their present teachers and principal will be prepared in advance. This process is designed to be quick and efficient, but we anticipate that there may still be delays the first few days depending on the number of requests.

It is particularly important for parents and guardians to understand that the reason why the release of this information is limited by law is because it is regarded as highly confidential. It is being provided to you as a consumer of public education. However, there are harsh sanctions that can be leveled against local school districts if we do not manage this process in a way that protects the confidential nature of the information being shared. In this same way, we strongly request that individual families take sensible steps to insure that what is intended to be confidential information does not become public.

Additional information about this release of composite scores and quality ratings for teachers and principals can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions section that follows.

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Interim Superintendent of Schools

1) What information about teacher and principal evaluations from the 2012-13 school year can parents and guardians request?

This information, by law, is limited to the composite scores and quality ratings for their child(ren)'s present teachers and school principal.

2) Can information about your child(ren)'s previous teachers and principal be requested?

No. The law does not permit local districts to release this information.

3) How is a teacher or principal's score on the direct observation portion determined?

These scores are determined through the use of rubrics, which rate educators on important aspects of their practice. The teacher rubric, Charlotte Danielson's "Enhancing Professional Practice," examines the quality of a teacher's work across four domains: planning and preparation, the classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. The principal rubric, the Multi-Dimensional Principal Performance Rubric, evaluates the quality of a principal's work across six domains: shared vision of learning; school culture and instructional program; safe, efficient, effective learning environment; community; integrity, fairness, ethics; and political, social, economic, legal and cultural context. Ratings are awarded in each of these categories after a period of direct observation by a certified supervisor and a score of up to 60 points is awarded.

4) How is a teacher's score on the State growth measure determined?

For teachers of English Language Arts and Mathematics in grades 4 to 8, these scores are generated by the State Education Department based on the level of improvement in the performance of their students on the respective NYS assessments over the previous two-year period. For all other teachers, their scores are computed based on the level of improvement of their students on Student Learning Objectives, or SLOs, where pre and post-tests are designed to measure progress on the most important aspects of the courses they teach. "Adequate student progress" is defined and the percentage of their students who attain this progress translates into their score of up to 20 points. In some cases, a teacher's State growth score is a school score rather than an individual score.

5) How is a teacher's score on the locally determined measure calculated?

For the most part, these scores reflect the extent of student progress for the teacher's class(es) on locally negotiated standardized assessments. At the elementary and middle school levels, these included the STAR Renaissance reading and math adaptive on-line assessments. At the high school level, the local score for teachers was derived as a building score based on student performance on all of last year's Regents exams. Here again, a teacher's score is based on the extent to which students demonstrated growth on locally-selected assessments or how well high school students performed on Regents exams.

6) How is a principal's score on the state growth measure and locally-determined measure determined?

For the most part, the principal's score on both of these measures is the average or mean score of the ratings received by the teachers in their building.

7) How do the composite scores for teachers and principals translate into their quality rating?

Both teachers and principals who receive a composite or total score of between 91 and 100 are placed in the "Highly Effective" rating category. Those who receive a composite score of 75 to 90 fall within the "Effective" rating category. All of these educators are deemed to be meeting standard. Teachers and principals with composite scores of 65 to 74 are rated as "Developing" and those with composite scores of less than 65 points are categorized by the State Education Department as "Ineffective."

8) Why are the composite scores consolidated into quality rating bands?

To us, this would seem to suggest that teachers with composite scores which place them in a particular band have exhibited a level of professional performance that is similar to others in this same category.

9) Are there any consequences for teachers and principals who are rated as either "Developing" or "Ineffective"?

Yes. These educators are required to develop prescriptive improvement plans, which need to be reviewed and approved by the District. The implementation of these personal improvement plans are monitored by the District during the following year.

10) Are there any consequences for educators who do not show improvement and receive a "Developing" or "Ineffective" rating for successive years?

Yes. The District may take a variety of actions including, after several years, bringing such an educator to an expedited dismissal hearing.

11) Can parents or guardians, especially those who have already signed up for Home Access, receive their child(ren)'s teacher and principal composite scores and rating categories electronically?

No. We are required by law to insure that this information is only made available for viewing by parents or guardians who we can identify and who request it. This is not possible when such requests are made electronically or over the phone.

12) Do I need to bring my child to the Main Office when making my request?

No. We will have prepared lists available to office staff to indicate which student envelopes to give to authorized adults making such a request.

13) Does the District expect long lines of parents and guardians requesting this information during the first few days?

Since this is the first year when this information is to be released to specified adults who request it, we truly do not know the extent of this interest. Therefore, it is difficult to predict how many people will be interested in receiving it.

14) Why isn't the District just publishing this information on its websites?

The simplest answer is because the law does not allow us to do this. The decision by New York State to release these scores to the public was viewed as a delicate balance between the right of parents and guardians to know more about the past performance of their child(ren)'s present teachers and principal *and* the privacy interests of these educators. Therefore, it is particularly important to everyone involved that this information being released is viewed and held as confidential.