EQUIVALENCY APPLICATION
N.J.A.C. 6A:5

COUNTY <u>SOMERSET</u>   COUNTY CODE # 35

SCHOOL DISTRICT <u>MONTGOMERY</u>   DISTRICT CODE # 3320

"EQUIVALENCY" means approval to achieve the intent of a specific rule through an alternate means that is different from, yet judged to be comparable to or as effective as, those prescribed within the rule.

1. List the Administrative Code citation(s) that necessitates the proposed equivalency. As the Department cannot approve an equivalency to an entire chapter, subchapter or section (e.g., N.J.A.C. 6A:5; N.J.A.C. 6A:5-1; or N.J.A.C. 6A:5-1.1, respectively), all applications must include a citation at least at the subsection level (e.g., N.J.A.C. 6A:5-1.1(a)).

   6A:10-4.4(d)3

2. Describe what the school district intends to accomplish that is currently prevented or disallowed by the existing rule(s).

   <u>Our proposed changes</u> are for <u>tenured</u> teachers who are effective or highly effective only:

   Our proposal is to conduct one (1) long evaluation that would be greater than 40 minutes, one (1) short evaluation of 20 minutes, and an informal instructional classroom walkthrough. The State requires three (3) short 20 minute evaluations for tenured staff. We are currently engaging in two (2) short evaluations of 20 minutes each and one (1) long evaluation of more than 40 minutes, which exceeds the requirements set forth by the State.

   The targeted walkthrough would include providing feedback in a documented conversation with the teacher/staff member. This would substitute for (1) one short evaluation by adding a third touch point and reflective conversation.

   Our current process exceeds 60 minutes combined and our proposed changes will, as well.

3. Describe why an equivalency is necessary to accomplish the desired or measurable result(s). Describe the proposed equivalent.

   For tenured teachers, we feel the time spent in the observation process crucial for all of our teachers/staff and is not only beneficial for the pre-tenured teachers/staff, that the observer can garner more than a snapshot of the engagement among the educator and students. Our staff appreciate the time spent with our administrators and are stimulated by the deep reflective discussions that ensue prior to and following a lesson. Time is always an issue in school, but we feel that if the main purpose for teacher evaluation is teacher growth, then a long observation is necessary.

We have embraced Lipton and Wellman's <u>Learning-focused Supervision</u> model. It is used by all of the administrators in Montgomery. We are spending a great deal of time in conversation with our staff. Our emphasis in Montgomery is on the developmental, standards-driven, data-based discussions with our staff, as well as the ability to customize our feedback and assistance based upon the level of the staff member. This model practice has received positive reviews from our tenured staff and pre-tenured staff alike.

What we are currently doing in our district is greater than the State's requirements. Our administrators and teachers feel that the third short evaluation is not as beneficial to their growth as a professional as the long evaluation process. Our administrators are choosing to complete a longer process and our teachers want the longer process.

4. Describe the process, including solicitation of input and public comment, employed to inform the community, parents, district board of education members, administrators, and staff in the proposal's development.

The District's leadership team, which includes Central Office administrators, principals, supervisors, DEAC (inclusive of parents/BOE), and the leadership of the Montgomery Township Education Association have provided input and are in support of this waiver.

This proposal will be recommended to the Board of Education for approval where public comment and board discussion are permitted.

5. List the date the district board of education adopted a resolution supporting the proposed waiver: <u>October 20, 2015.</u>

I, <u>Nancy H. Gartenberg</u>, certify the information presented in this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.