

Commissioner's Evaluation of the Camden School District July 23, 2007

The QSAC process is designed to evaluate the thoroughness and efficiency of all the public school districts in the State. This assessment will provide feedback to New Jersey school districts both in terms of compliance with state and federal requirements and best practices in schools in five key areas – Operations Management, Personnel, Instruction and Program, Governance and Fiscal Management. In accordance with the statutory requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-10 et seq., the Camden School District was evaluated by an evaluation team that made a preliminary determination of the status of the district on each of the indicators contained in the District Performance Review (DPR). That work was then reviewed by senior staff in the Department of Education, who used data and other information available in the department, to recommend a final score in each of the five areas examined by QSAC.

After reviewing the recommendations of the senior staff delineated in the attached memorandum from Deputy Commissioner Willa Spicer, I have adopted those recommendations. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-14 and N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-53, the Commissioner is obligated to review the results of the reports and examine all relevant data to ensure that the final determination of performance in each area is appropriate and accurately reflects the district's achievement of each of the performance indicators. Therefore, some adjustments have been made to the evaluation team's results to reflect information available to the department and to ensure consistency within and among the DPR results. I have made the following determination as to the Camden School District's placement on the QSAC continuum in each of the five areas:

Operations Management - 39% of indicators met.

Personnel – 5% of indicators met.

Instruction and Program – 6% of indicators met.

Governance – 11% of indicators met.

Fiscal Management - 31% of indicators met.

Pursuant to the regulations governing QSAC implementation, you may appeal this decision to the State Board of Education within 30 days by following the procedures outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:30-8.3. In addition, if you disagree with any of these determinations, you may present information to support your position and request that I reconsider my decision within 7 days of the date hereof, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:30-8.3(h).

Because the Camden School District has met fewer than 80% of the indicators in all five areas, the district will be required to prepare an improvement plan for each area. Staff from the Division of School and District Improvement will work collaboratively with you to complete that process. In addition, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-15, the Commissioner may ask the State Board of Education to place the district under full state intervention because the district has met fewer than 50% of the indicators in all five areas. Such determination will be made as this process moves forward.

MEMORANDUM

To: Commissioner Lucille E. Davy
From: Deputy Commissioner Willa Spicer
Re: QSAC Report from Camden
Date: July 20, 2007

The Department of Education's senior staff examined the results of the QSAC review completed by an evaluation team and proposes the following modifications based upon information provided by the evaluation team, as well as from data and other information in the department. A final weighting in each of the five areas examined by QSAC -- Operations Management, Personnel, Instruction and Program, Governance, and Fiscal Management -- is recommended to you as noted below.

Operations Management

Overall Score: Evaluation Team			
Raw Score: 46	Possible Points: 100	Total Score: 46%	
Overall Score: Department Recommendation			
Raw Score: 39	Possible Points: 100	Total Score: 39%	

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B1a because there is no evidence of an annual review. This results in a reduction of 7 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicators # B2a, B2b and B2c as a result of a department review which identified inaccurate reporting on the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System. This does not result in any change in score.

Personnel

Overall Score: Evaluation Team			
Raw Score: 5	Possible Points: 100	Total Score: 5%	
Overall Score: Department Recommendation			
Raw Score: 5	Possible Points: 100	Total Score: 5%	

- Department staff concurs with the findings of the evaluation team.

Instruction and Program

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

Raw Score: 11 Possible Points: 120 Total Score: 9%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

Raw Score: 8 Possible Points: 120 Total Score: 6%

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #E1c because information in the Division of Early Childhood Education indicates that the outreach efforts in Camden are problematic, which results in a reduction of 3 points.

Governance

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

Raw Score: 0 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 0%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

Raw Score: 11 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 11%

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicators #A3, #A4 and #D4 because the documentation noted by the evaluation team (written equity plan existed per #A3, evidence in board minutes regarding professional development expenditures per #A4, and health and safety policies in place per #D4) was sufficient to demonstrate compliance with these indicators. There is no change to the score.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #E4 because the evaluation team failed to cite any clear examples of inappropriate behavior by members of the Board of Education sufficient to demonstrate that the district was not in compliance with this indicator, increasing the total by 11 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #G1 because the organizational chart is not adopted annually. There is no change to the score.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #H1 because the evidence relied upon by the evaluation team highlighting a lack of a gifted and talented program is not relevant to this indicator. There is no change to the score.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #I2 because media reports relied upon by the evaluation team are insufficient to find that confidentiality is not maintained. There is no change to the score.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #I4 because district policies were last changed in 1995 and the Open Public Records Act was adopted subsequently. There is no change to the score.

Fiscal Management

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

Raw Score: 41 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 41%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

Raw Score: 31 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 31 %

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B1b because the annual audit for the past several years indicates that this is a serious problem. The annual audit findings include inadequate maintenance of financial records, lack of reconciliation of general ledger to subsidiary ledgers, records not kept in accordance with GAAP, and transfers not made on a timely basis. Department staff acknowledges the vast improvements which have been made to address these problems since the audit was issued including completion of monthly reconciliations and updating of financial records; however, the district is still finding contracts and purchases that have not been properly recorded. This results in a reduction of 6 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B3a, #B3b, #B3c, #B3d, and #B3e, because although some policies are in place, they are noted by the evaluation team as outdated and not current with existing regulations and statutes. This results in a reduction of 2 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B4e since the use of confirming orders has not yet been eliminated, reducing the total by 1 point.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B4f since the use of blanket purchase orders has not yet been eliminated, reducing the total by 1 point.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B7 because cash flow analyses are being developed regularly as indicated by the reviewer's notes. This results in an increase of 2 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #E4 since the evaluation team found no evidence that this indicator has been met, reducing the total by 2 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicators #B8a and #B8b because Department data shows that the ASSA and DRTRS were submitted on time, though there is no overall change in the point total as a result thereof.