

Commissioner's Evaluation of the Elizabeth School District August 20, 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 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 Elizabeth School District was assessed 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 Elizabeth School District's placement on the QSAC continuum in each of the five areas:

Operations Management - 94% of indicators met.

Personnel – 63% of indicators met.

Instruction and Program – 52% of indicators met.

Governance – 34% of indicators met.

Fiscal Management –82% 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 Elizabeth School District has met fewer than 80% of the indicators in three areas, the district will be required to prepare an improvement plan. 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-11, the Commissioner may take steps to place the district under partial state intervention in the area where the District has met fewer than 50% of the indicators, Governance. 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 Elizabeth
Date: August 16, 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: 94 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 94%
Overall Score: Department Recommendation
Raw Score: 94 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 94%

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

Personnel

Overall Score: Evaluation Team
Raw Score: 63 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 63%
Overall Score: Department Recommendation
Raw Score: 63 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 63%

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B5c because evidence indicates that all medical records are kept in the school nurse's office. While the district has a process to maintain the confidentiality of annual health updates, personnel files with other medical information should not be available to the school nurse and principal. This results in no change in the score.

Instruction and Program

Overall Score: Evaluation Team
Raw Score: 62 Possible Points: 120 Total Score: 52%
Overall Score: Department Recommendation
Raw Score: 62 Possible Points: 120 Total Score: 52%

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

Governance

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

Raw Score: 45 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 45%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

Raw Score: 34 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 34%

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B3 because Ethics Commission records indicate that the disclosure forms were not filed on time. This results in a reduction of 11 points.

Fiscal Management

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

Raw Score: 92 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 92%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

Raw Score: 82 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 82%

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #A2c because the evaluation team notes indicate that the position control roster is insufficient to ensure accurate payroll estimates and projections. Department information supports this assessment. This change reduces the total by 1 point.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicators #B3a and #B3b because the evaluation team notes indicate that the policies are out of date and therefore need revision, reducing the total by 2 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B4b because the evaluation team notes indicate that the position control roster is generated from the payroll system and therefore, it does not serve as a crosscheck to ensure accurate payroll estimates and projections. Department information supports this assessment. This change reduces the total by 1 point.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #D1c because the annual audit for FY '06 shows that grant funds are due back, reducing the total by 3 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #D3a, because Department information shows that the district is not accounting for state restricted awards separately, reducing the total by 3 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #E1b because the evaluation team review indicates documentation exists to verify the district's participation in the ACES program. There is no change in the total score.