

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

The QSAC process is designed to evaluate the thoroughness and efficiency of all of 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 Newark 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 Newark School District's placement on the QSAC continuum in each of the five areas:

Operations Management – 86% of indicators met.

Personnel – 32% of indicators met.

Instruction and Program - 39% of indicators met.

Governance – 45% of indicators met.

Fiscal Management - 66% 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 Newark School district has met more than 80% of the indicators in one of the five areas, Operations Management, I will recommend to the State Board of Education that the process for initiating transition to local control of that component be

initiated pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:30-7.2. An improvement plan will be required for the other four areas for which less than 80% of the indicators were met and staff from the Division of School and District Improvement will work collaboratively with the district to complete that process.

MEMORANDUM

To: Commissioner Lucille E. Davy
From: Deputy Commissioner Willa Spicer
Re: QSAC Report for the Newark School District
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

Overall Score: Evaluation Team			
Raw Score: 86	Possible Points: 100	Total Score: 86%	
Overall Score: Department Recommendation			
Raw Score: 86	Possible Points: 100	Total Score: 86%	

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

Personnel

Overall Score: Evaluation Team			
Raw Score: 32	Possible Points: 100	Total Score: 32%	
Overall Score: Department Recommendation			
Raw Score: 32	Possible Points: 100	Total Score: 32%	

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

Instruction and Program

Overall Score: Evaluation Team			
Raw Score: 47	Possible Points: 120	Total Score: 39%	
Overall Score: Department Recommendation			
Raw Score: 47	Possible Points: 120	Total Score: 39%	

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

Governance

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

Raw Score: 67 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 67%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

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

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B3 because the records in the Department from the Ethics Commission show over 170 late filings of financial and personal/relative disclosure statements in the past three years. This reduces the total by 11 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #C2 because the Ethics Commission records also indicate several instances of ethics violations by administrative staff, although this does not change the overall score.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #G1 because the evaluation team found that the organizational chart has not been adopted yearly, and that it was last adopted in 2005. This reduces the total by 11 points.

Fiscal Management

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

Raw Score: 88 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 88%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

Raw Score: 66 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 66%

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #C1, because the annual audit was late, reducing the score by 2 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #C2 because the annual audit includes five repeat audit findings, at least four of which are substantive. This change results in a reduction of 20 points.