

Commissioner's Evaluation of the Paterson School District July 30, 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 Paterson 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 Paterson School District's placement on the QSAC continuum in each of the five areas:

Operations Management - 73% of indicators met.

Personnel – 60% of indicators met.

Instruction and Program – 22% of indicators met.

Governance – 11% of indicators met.

Fiscal Management – 41% 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 Paterson 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.

MEMORANDUM

To: Commissioner Lucille E. Davy
From: Deputy Commissioner Willa Spicer
Re: QSAC Report from Paterson
Date: July 30, 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: 73 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 73%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

Raw Score: 73 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 73%

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B2e because the district is non-compliant with the requirements of *N.J.A.C. 6A:165.3(i)* and the Unsafe School Choice Option Policy, pursuant to *Title IX, Part E, Subpart 2, SEC. 9532* of the *No Child Left Behind Ac.*, The Department has requested, but has not received, documentation that the district has implemented the corrective action plan (CAP) components and achieved the measurable performance indicators of the CAP for Eastside High School in response to its designation as a persistently dangerous school (PDS). Department records indicate that the district was provided with guidance on the required components of the CAP and the submission requirements of the CAP both in the PDS notification letter and by department staff subsequent to the issuance of the letter. This does not result in any change in the score.

Personnel

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

Raw Score: 70 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 70%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

Raw Score: 60 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 60%

- The Department staff recommends rescoring #A3c because the district does not appear to have a plan that addresses the recruitment and retention of teachers in a focused, cohesive way. This is especially critical since the district usually has about 225 vacancies each year. There is some evidence of individual activities to recruit teachers, but no evidence of efforts to retain teachers once they are hired to teach in Paterson, reducing the score by 10 points.

Instruction and Program

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

Raw Score: 29 Possible Points: 120 Total Score: 24%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

Raw Score: 27 Possible Points: 120 Total Score: 22%

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicators #D2a and #D2b, because department monitoring information indicates that although the district is currently making progress in implementing the activities in the Special Education Improvement Plan, it has not met the required timelines and continues to have systemic noncompliance, reducing the score by 2 points.

Governance

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

Raw Score: 22 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 22%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

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

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #F3, because the superintendent has not been evaluated once each year, as required. This does not change the score.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #H5, because according to the Fiscal Monitor, reports are not reviewed within 60 days, reducing the total by 11 points.

Fiscal Management

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

Raw Score: 63 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 63%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

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

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #A1a and #A1c because of information provided by the Fiscal Monitor that the budget policies have not been updated since 2002 and the district does not have a specific curriculum development plan within budget objectives, reducing the total by 6 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #A2c because of information provided by the Fiscal Monitor that the position control roster does not ensure accurate payroll estimates and projections, reducing the total by 1 point.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B1a because of information provided by the Fiscal Monitor that the monthly Board Secretary's report is not completed as required within the required time frame, reducing the total by 3 points.

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B2 because of information provided by the Fiscal Monitor that the monthly Board Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports are not reconciled within the required time frame, reducing the total by 3 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicators #B3d and #B3f because of information provided by the Fiscal Monitor that the work order system is not maintained or updated to adequately track work orders as required (#B3d) and there is a policy for fiscal oversight of student activity funds (#B3f). There is no change in score.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B4b because of information provided by the Fiscal Monitor that an accurate position control roster does not exist, reducing the total by 1 point.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B5a because of information provided by the Fiscal Monitor that purchases have been made that exceed the bid thresholds, and #B5d because of information provided by the Fiscal Monitor that numerous purchase orders (POs) have had to be adjusted because they did not agree with the bid or state contract. The annual audit also found 50% of the POs tested had modifications to the PO amount in excess of 10 percent of the original approved amount, reducing the total by 4 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #D1c because the annual audit shows the grant funds are due back, reducing the total by 3 points.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #D2c because of information provided by the Fiscal Monitor that carryover requests are not timely, reducing the total by 1 point.