

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

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

Operations Management – 67% of indicators met.

Personnel – 22% of indicators met.

Instruction and Program – 11% of indicators met.

Governance – 22% of indicators met.

Fiscal Management - 60% 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 Trenton 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-14, the Commissioner may ask the State Board of Education to place the district under partial state intervention in the three areas where the District has met fewer than 50% of the indicators, Personnel, Instruction and Program, and 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 for Trenton
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: 67 | Possible Points: 100 | Total Score: 67% | |
| Overall Score: Department Recommendation | | | |
| Raw Score: 67 | Possible Points: 100 | Total Score: 67% | |

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

Personnel

| | | | |
|--|----------------------|------------------|--|
| Overall Score: Evaluation Team | | | |
| Raw Score: 22 | Possible Points: 100 | Total Score: 22% | |
| Overall Score: Department Recommendation | | | |
| Raw Score: 22 | Possible Points: 100 | Total Score: 22% | |

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

Instruction and Program

| | | | |
|--|----------------------|------------------|--|
| Overall Score: Evaluation Team | | | |
| Raw Score: 17 | Possible Points: 120 | Total Score: 14% | |
| Overall Score: Department Recommendation | | | |
| Raw Score: 14 | Possible Points: 120 | Total Score: 11% | |

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

Governance

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

Raw Score: 33 Possible Points: 100 Total Score: 33%

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

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

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #F5 because the reviewer confirmed that the school board has a contract with the Chief School Administrator that meets the requirements of this indicator. There is no change to the score.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #I7 because the reviewer clarified that these documents were not made available during the evaluation and therefore cannot be said to be publicly available, decreasing the score by 11 points.

Fiscal Management

Overall Score: Evaluation Team

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

Overall Score: Department Recommendation

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

- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #B1b because the annual audit cited lack of monthly reconciliations as a material weakness in internal controls, decreasing the score by 6 points
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #D1c because grant funds were due back. There is no change to the score.
- Department staff recommends rescoring indicator #D3a because the district did not account for new facilities award as restricted revenue. There is no change to the score.