



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PO Box 500

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
*Governor*

KIM GUADAGNO  
*Lt. Governor*

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF  
*Acting Commissioner*

DATE: July 19, 2011

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Pam Castellanos *PJC*  
Executive Assistant

RE: Amendments to QSAC (Quality Single Accountability Continuum)

During the past year, a QSAC Task Force comprised of district administrators and board members from throughout the state, along with Department staff, reviewed all components of the QSAC regulations, including the District Performance Reviews (DPRs). The Task Force focused on the factors that most affect student achievement and college and career readiness. Emphasis was placed on eliminating indicators that do not directly address the core mission of student achievement, consolidating similar indicators, focusing curricular attention on the Core Content Standards areas of language arts, math, social studies, science and world languages, and eliminating those indicators that are already monitored by the Department, all in an effort to make the QSAC process more streamlined and less cumbersome.

As a result of the Task Force's work, the Department proposed amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:30, "Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts," at the July 13, 2011 State Board of Education meeting. The amendments include a revised QSAC DPR document and new Statement of Assurance (SOA) document. The full proposal that was made to the State Board, including the DPR and SOA documents, can be viewed at the following web site, <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current> and is also posted on the Department's broadcast website at: <http://education.state.nj.us/broadcasts> (search by posting date of 7/15/11).

The DPR will be completed during the school year that the QSAC review will be conducted. The SOA will be completed by all districts annually. Below is a brief summary of the proposed DPR and SOA documents and QSAC implementation for School Year 2011-12.

### **District Performance Review (DPR):**

Districts will use the District Performance Review (DPR) to conduct a self-evaluation of the five key component areas required by statute: instruction and program, fiscal management, governance, personnel and operations. You will note that the number of indicators has been greatly reduced from 345 to 54. The point value for each indicator has also changed according to the number of indicators and depth of information contained in the indicator.

**Statement of Assurance SOA (SOA):**

The Statement of Assurance (SOA) is a supplemental accountability tool that all districts will complete annually. Completion of the SOA should be a collaborative effort with key administrators and staff responsible for the instruction and program, fiscal management, governance, personnel and operations. Both the chief school administrator and the board of education president must sign the SOA and the board must pass a resolution, affirming the information in the document. The SOA will become part of the district's QSAC review for the year in which the district is monitored. For that monitoring year, the scores on the SOA will count towards the scores of the DPR.

In reviewing the SOA, you will note that many of the operations and personnel indicators as well as some instruction and program, fiscal management and governance indicators of the existing DPRs have been relocated to the proposed SOA.

The intent of the SOA is to help districts identify areas for which they might need technical assistance. Through the use of this document, the district will be made aware of possible deficiencies in any of the five DPR areas and will have the opportunity to correct these deficiencies prior to the QSAC monitoring process.

**Districts Scheduled for QSAC Monitoring in School Year 2011-12:**

School districts that are scheduled for QSAC monitoring in the upcoming school year will use both the proposed DPR and SOA documents to begin the self-evaluation process. You should have already established your district QSAC committee in accordance with the requirements of N.J.A.C. 6A:30-3.2(b). The proposed DPR and SOA documents are meant to give you advance notice of revisions and will not be final until adopted by the State Board.

Within the next few weeks, districts will be provided with Excel versions of the DPR and SOA documents. Districts will be required to complete and submit the Excel versions of the DPRs and SOAs to the Department by December 1, 2011. Note that both Excel documents will include a column for districts to enter their responses for each item (1 for yes and N/A and 0 for no). Numerical scores will be automatically translated to percentages (between 0% and 100%).

Following district submission of the Excel DPR and SOA documents, the county offices will conduct a verification of district scores through desk audits and on-site reviews. County scores will be entered for each DPR indicator and the entire Excel file containing both district and county scores will be forwarded to the Commissioner for his review and determination of placement on the QSAC continuum.

Training and technical assistance regarding the DPR and SOA documents will be provided by your county office in September.

**Districts Previously Monitored that Have QSAC Scores Below 80%:**

Districts with scores below 80% will receive interim reviews of progress, conducted by the Executive County Superintendent. The reviews will be based on the implementation of the district improvement plan and on the requirements of failed indicators. The revised DPR document will be used for these interim reviews, following State Board adoption. Your Executive County Superintendent will contact you to schedule an interim review of progress.

If you have any questions about the proposed QSAC amendments, the DPR or SOA, please contact Pam Castellanos at [qsac@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:qsac@doe.state.nj.us) or at (609) 984-6755.

PJC:2011-12/proposed qsac amendments/district memo  
c: Executive County Superintendents