



## NJDOE News

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**For Release : September 28, 2005**

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### **DOE to Implement the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC)**

Acting Governor Richard J. Codey has signed a new law that allows the New Jersey Department of Education to revise the state's existing school district monitoring system to reduce redundancy for the districts, identify and address problems earlier and create a process by which the three state-operated districts can eventually be returned to local control.

The law creates the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJ QSAC), under which DOE officials will be able to tailor state responses and levels of intervention to the needs of specific districts. Districts that are performing well will see less state presence, while underperforming districts will receive increased state assistance.

"This is a significant step forward for quality education and improving student achievement in New Jersey," said Acting Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy. "I thank Senator Ronald Rice and Assemblyman Craig Stanley for their extraordinary leadership in this effort, Senators Wayne Bryant and Thomas H. Kean, Jr. and the other co-sponsors for realizing the importance of the bill and working for its approval and Acting Governor Codey for signing it into law.

"With this new system, we will be able to evaluate districts in a way that is simpler and more streamlined than the current monitoring system and fairer and more flexible than the federal *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*," she said. "We think this is vital in New Jersey.

"QSAC will allow DOE to work collaboratively with districts to identify critical areas of need before they become crises and then quickly find the best solution," she said. "We will also be able to craft a state exit strategy for the three state-operated districts. DOE wants to make sure the districts are accountable, but we think they should be operated locally, not by the state."

DOE staff has begun to draft the regulations necessary to implement the new system, which must be approved by the State Board of Education.

The new system will integrate all of the requirements of existing code and statute, Abbott mandates, the state takeover law and *NCLB*. It will also simplify the monitoring process for school districts by incorporating the Quality Assurance Annual Report (QAAR) and many of the other annual reports that districts must file into one document.

Under the NJQSAC law, the Department will evaluate the performance of school districts as they improve student achievement through addressing five key areas of school operations: Program and instruction, personnel, fiscal management, operations and governance.

While the DOE develops the regulations with input from the public, the education community and other stakeholders, department officials are working with a number of districts that agreed to pilot the evaluation system during the current school year.

In addition, once the State Board conducts a first discussion on the regulations, several public meetings will be held to gather additional feedback.

While part of the law focuses on school district performance in operations and management, Acting Commissioner Davy noted that the main focus of the new monitoring system is improving student achievement.

"We want our students to have the skills necessary to compete in a 21<sup>st</sup>-century workforce. This new system will allow us to take significant steps forward in doing that," she said.

