

# New Jersey Department of Education/Newark Board of Education

## TRANSITION TO LOCAL CONTROL REPORT

JULY 1, 2019

### OVERVIEW

This report covers the period from January 30, 2019 – June 30 2019. Working very closely with Superintendent Leon and his Executive Staff, the work for the transition to full control continued with a sense of confidence that this administration would pull this through. The momentum was sparked by the “*Transition Plan for the Return of Local Control to Newark Public Schools 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Accountability Scorecard Report – January 30 2019*”, dated March 2019 from the Bloustein Local Government Research Center, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey (Report on the District’s website). In a memorandum from Commissioner Repollet, Ed.D., to Superintendent Leon, it is stated that “It is significant to note that neither the CAO nor the HSP identified any concerns with the District’s implementation of the Transition Plan.”

The Scorecard has 23 metrics, 3 were not applicable at this time. Of the remaining 20 metrics, 12 were fully implemented, 7 were being substantially met and 1 was partially implemented. The District has the potential to fully implement these metrics which will be addressed in this report.

At the June Board meeting, the Highly Skilled Professional reported to the Board and the public the results of the CAO’s report, providing specific language that was included in the report. It was also communicated that the full documents (the CAO’s report and the HSP’s report) were on the District’s website for review.

### FUNDAMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the Comprehensive Accountability Office’s (CAO) report, it was stated that some of the metrics are ongoing requirements (e.g., adhering to the conflicts of interest laws and nepotism policy) and must continue to be monitored. A statement has been submitted by Legal Counsel and Executive Director of Human Resource Services informing the CAO of no known violations for this period. The Highly Skilled Professional (HSP) also has not received any notification of complaints filed or pending from the Ethics Commission for this period.

### GOVERNANCE

#### Training for Board of Education and Senior Administration

New Board Orientation was held on May 9<sup>th</sup> and May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at the District Office. The two newly elected board members were in attendance for both sessions. Day 1 topics included Roles and Responsibilities, Transition Plan, Clarity 2020, Attendance Update, Student Achievement Data, Legal and School Ethics, Enrollment Update. Day 2 topics were Finance and Operations, Human Resources, Curriculum, Travel Guidelines, Board Relations, and Meeting Protocols.

To ensure that Board members and Senior staff are continuously trained so that the appropriate approach to potential conflicts of interest is known, the District continues to provide ongoing training. The last

training was held on May 18, 2019. Twelve Senior staff members and 8 Board members were trained at that session. All other Senior staff, including newly appointed staff members to date, and the one Board member who was absent on May 18<sup>th</sup>, were trained Friday, July 26, 2019 at Central Office. Senior staff members were trained and the one Board member.

### Evaluating the Successor Superintendent

In preparation for the evaluation of the Superintendent, additional training was provided to the Board members on May 29, 2019 by New Jersey School Board Association (NJSBA). At the session, the *Guide to the Chief School Administrator Evaluation Process* was provided by NJSBA and used as the training tool for Board members and Senior staff. The process, as outlined in the document, was followed by the Superintendent and Board members:

- Written comments that offered targeted evidence to the Board to support the Superintendent's self-assessment rating of the achievement of the District goals. Documents were uploaded on the District's Google Drive and into the NJSBA drive, allowing each Board member to view the evidence on line.
- Board members each reviewed the documents compiled by the Superintendent for each standard and completed their ratings with supporting comments, where appropriate.
- NJSBA compiled the individual Board member responses into one document.
- Board members reviewed the compilation of all responses and determined the majority opinion from which the Annual Performance Report was developed.
- Special meeting advertised and held on July 1, 2019 where the Annual Summary Conference was held with Board members and Superintendent to discuss the Annual Performance Report.

Refer to attached Part II: Governance – Metric #6

### Strategic Planning Expectations

NPS Clarity 2020 Strategic Planning process included the implementation of NPS Clarity 2020 Advisory Committee, Stakeholder Roundtables, Student Conference, and NPS Clarity 2020 Community meetings at each comprehensive high school. Teachers, principals, students, parents, community leaders, local organizations, elected officials, and valued partners contributed their time, expertise, and ideas to the development of the strategic plan. The strategic planning process launched with a community meeting held on January 16, 2019, at Central High School and was followed with a series of forums designed to integrate the knowledge and voice of all stakeholders into the development of the plan. Twenty-seven Roundtable Meetings led by two co-conveners (a district expert and an external expert), Community Meetings held at each of the comprehensive high schools, a Student Conference for 250 students in grades six through twelve, and two meetings with the NPS Clarity 2020 Advisory Committee occurred. During these meetings, participants engaged in root cause analysis of District data, as well as the development and review of priorities and strategies to inform the educational ecosystem represented in the NPS Clarity 2020 Logic Model. Over 750 participants engaged in one or more of these planning activities. Protocols and materials for all of the forums, including presentations, and planning templates were developed. The output of each forum was analyzed using qualitative data analysis methods and used to develop the content for the strategic plan.

The strategic plan was written and reviewed in collaboration with the Superintendent, the Executive Leadership Team, and the State appointed Highly Skilled Professional. Additionally, participants from the roundtables were invited to review and provide feedback on the strategic plan. The final plan was unveiled and presented on June 13, 2019 at a community meeting held at Science Park High School, where attendees received a copy of **NPS CLARITY 2020**.

## **INSTRUCTION AND PROGRAMS**

The purpose of this section, as stated in the Transition Plan, is to document processes, actions and commitments to be taken by the Board and District in order to successfully implement this Instruction & Program (I & P) area. The District's present Equivalency waiver is in place through the 2018-2019 school year. In January 2020 the District must express intention to renew the Equivalency waiver or move to revised QSAC measures. The Office of Policy, Planning, Evaluation and Testing has completed the calculation and data analysis for the Instruction and Program Equivalency for 2017-2018 school year with a self-score of 30 out of the possible 36 points. The science measures for 2017-2018 are not applicable because Newark participated in the State's pilot test and results cannot be used for accountability purposes, thereby explaining Newark's drop in total available points from 38 to 36, with no points allowable for Science for 2017-2018.

The two subject areas targeted as priorities in the District were English Language Arts and Mathematics. Both departments have submitted a narrative which have been submitted to the Comprehensive Accountability Office and are attached to this report.

## **FISCAL MANAGEMENT**

In the "Transition Plan for the Return of Local Control to Newark Public Schools – 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Accountability Scorecard Report – January 30 2019", Fiscal Management received a score of 3 (Substantially Meeting) in the following areas:

METRIC	SCORE
The Board approves a balanced budget on time.	3
The Board engages appropriately with the District in the development of the Budget.	3
Schools are allocated funding based on school-based budgeting focused on equity and transparency in school locations.	3
All trainings are completed on time by a quorum of the board members.	3
All trainings are completed by each member of the full BOE within 1 month of the deadline.	3

In the “Findings” section of the report, it was noted:

“As the SY 2019-2020 budget process is underway as the report is written, a full evaluation cannot be made.”

“The process used by the District is focused on transparency, compliance, equity, and consistency.”

“Maintained over time, this model can effectively meet the wide variety of needs reflected by students, parents, administrators, front-line instructors, specialists, and support employees.’

“As this is an ongoing activity (training), it is found that the Metric is Substantially implemented.”

The Highly Skilled Professional attended, observed, and documented all Board meetings, selected Finance meetings and all trainings (except those held at School Boards off-site sessions), historically throughout this process. All Board members have attended mandatory yearly required trainings and are in compliance. Documentation has been submitted previously and is available for review. To supplement trainings, as identified, the School Business Administrator has provided additional training to Board members. The District will continue to provide training in these areas as it builds more capacity for its Board and Senior staff.

The Department of the School Business Administrator, Office of Budget, submitted to the Comprehensive Accountability Office, documents that support the sustainability of practices for the fiscal metrics referenced above. Documentation was submitted electronically and in a binder. It is the opinion of the Highly Skilled Professional that the metrics should be satisfied. Additionally, for the 2018-2019 school year, The Newark Public Schools received from the Association of School Business Officials International the Meritorious Budget Award for excellence in the preparation and issuance of its budget for the Fiscal Year 2019-2019.

As is stated in the Transition Plan, all districts within New Jersey are required to complete and submit a Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) every five years for approval by the Commissioner. Newark’s current LRFP extends through SY 2019-2020. The process for the development of a new LRFP should commence no later than 180 days before the deadline of the current LRFP (July 1, 2020). The District has engaged an architect to develop an amendment to the plan which will be submitted during SY2019-2020, as requested by the Department of Education, and is also in the process of engaging a demographer after having reviewed bids and selected a vendor.

In April of 2019, the Office of School Facilities Planning forwarded correspondence to school districts in New Jersey titled “LRFP Major Amendment Submission Requirements”. The document is very specific about the requirements and tasks. Following the major amendment reporting tasks is important because districts much have fully updated Long Range Facilities Plans in place before project applications will be accepted. The District is on target and will meet deadlines.

## **PERSONNEL**

In the January report from the CAO, it was noted that “It is too soon to gauge the effectiveness of the training programs. A subsequent evaluation by the HSP will be required to determine the effect of the

training and its sustainability.’ This section of the Accountability Scorecard received a score of 2 (Partially Implemented).

During the entire year, documents were forwarded to the HSP that allowed her to monitor completed evaluations by school principals/vice principals and other instructional departments heads who were responsible for evaluations. Assistant Superintendents received bi-weekly reports (weekly at critical times) that summarized district progress and the progress of their schools. Using these reports Assistant Superintendents were able to target schools and administrators in need of support.

Listed below are areas that are clearly documented in the reports submitted to the CAO that support the effectiveness of the work done in the district:

- Evaluation Progress Summaries
- New Teacher Center Mentor Development
- New Teacher Induction
- School Based Administrator Training
- SLT Training
- Year to Year Comparison of Evaluations

Included as an attachment is the Personnel Narrative that was submitted to the CAO. All other documents were submitted to the CAO’s office electronically.

#### **SUMMARY**

With the submission of this report and the documentation submitted to the Comprehensive Accountability Office, the HSP anticipates that all metrics will be satisfied as being implemented and the District would only need to maintain consistency for continuous sustainability.

Professionally submitted,

Anzella King-Nelms  
Highly Skilled Professional