

New Jersey Department of Education
Comprehensive Accountability Office for State Supervised School Districts

Transition Plan for the Return of Local Control to Paterson Public Schools

Comprehensive Accountability Office Report—April 2020 Report

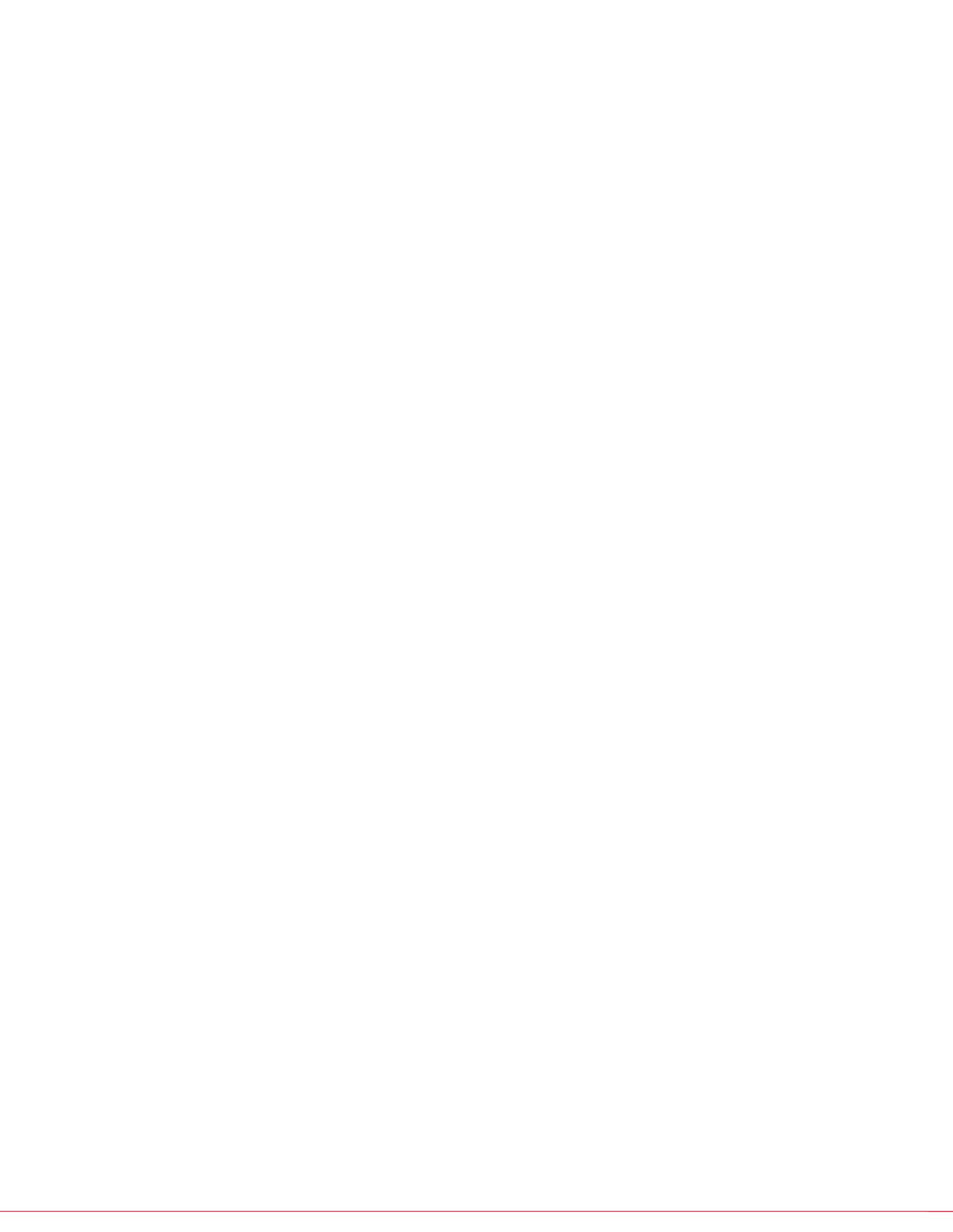
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STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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SUMMARY

This report is the second of three reports of the Comprehensive Accountability Office (CAO) concerning the final phase of the transition of the Paterson Public Schools (PPS) from being a state supervised school district to full local control. This report is a six-month *Interim Report* covering the period of October 1, 2019 through March 31, 2020. It follows the *1st Annual Report* that covered the period October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019. It reports on the district's progress in meeting metrics described in the *Accountability Scorecard* that is part of the Transition Plan to local control. The CAO finds that the PPS is on its way to achieving "substantially implemented" to "fully implemented" scores on the required metrics and has shown important improvements since the first report was published. A final report will be issued later in 2020 to reflect the full year starting in October 2019.

For a history of the program, the role of the Comprehensive Accountability Office, and explanation of the Scorecard and its Evaluation, readers will find a Background section in the Appendix to this report.

CAO REVIEW AND OBSERVATIONS

The Plan requires the CAO report to "score" the District's efforts toward maintaining "substantial and sustained" progress toward meeting the expectations of the Plan. In its agreement with the Department, the work of the CAO does not include any interpretation or analysis of the data (i.e., could something had been done differently, or evaluating the quality of a presentation). It further reflects that the CAO "must remain neutral and not engage in interpretation, other than its role to ensure, to the extent reasonably possible, the reliability of the data."

While the Plan's expectation of the CAO to not interpret data is conceptually well-intended, in practice, the obligation to evaluate the status of each metric requires some level of limited judgment. Judgment, however, is inherent when it comes to meeting the intent and requirements of the project. The CAO has taken care to remain neutral in making these assessments. Upon review of the online documentation, interested parties may have different interpretations, as reasonable people may view content, data and observations from different perspectives.

In conducting its task, the CAO relies on the HSPs to gather and provide documentation for evaluation, as well as observations on district activities. Due to the COVID pandemic, in March 2020, the PPS district was physically closed for learning, shifting to technology-driven remote learning. As a result, the district experienced understandable delays in providing the requisite documentation which accounts for the timing of this report. The closing also required that all communications between the CAO and the three Highly Skilled Professionals (HSP) were conducted through telephone or email inquiries and responses. For this report, the CAO's evaluation is based on its review of PPS documentation provided by the HSPs, the HSP report, and supplemental information requested by the CAO, all intended to reflect the "Mechanism for Measurement" for each metric.

EVALUATING AND SCORING EACH METRIC

The specific observations of the CAO are reflected on the following tables. There is a separate table for each metric. Each metric is shown by category and Plan element, along with the associated Mechanism for Measurement. In some cases, the table combines several related metrics in the same section (but separately scored) as they are closely linked. Documentation supporting the observations can be viewed on the [CAO website](#).¹

Each metric includes an “Evaluation Comment” and “Finding” on the metric; this is the CAO’s observation on the information and the conclusion reached. This is reflected in the 1 thru 4 numeric score assigned to the metric. This and the previous evaluation are found at the [CAO website](#).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The CAO expresses its appreciation of the HSPs and District senior staff in their support and assistance in providing information.

¹ <https://go.rutgers.edu/NJSDScorecard>

PPS Transition Metric Analysis

Part 1: Fundamental Considerations		Score	
<i>Section 4: State Engagement with the District During Transition</i>			
Metric # 1	The Board and Superintendent provide the HSP with a sufficient level of access and transparency into decision-making activities such that the HSP can monitor the progress of plan implementation and have adequate information to meet its responsibilities as liaison to the state regarding the Board's ethics practices.	1st A*	Int.*
		4	4
Mechanism for Measurement	Observation and report by HSP. The CAO may additionally verify this information through conversations with the Superintendent and board members.		
Evaluation Comment: The HSPs continue to have regular access to regularly scheduled meetings with district leadership, school staff under their assigned areas, and monthly board and fiscal meetings. The HSPs participated in 3 board retreats (once in November, and twice in January).			
Finding: The district is fully compliant at this time.			

Part 1: Fundamental Considerations		Score	
<i>Section 7: Consequences for Not Meeting the Expectations of the Full Transition Plan</i>			
Metric # 2	The Board commits zero violations of the School Ethics Act.	1st A	Int.
		3	3
Mechanism for Measurement	Observation and report by HSP, School Ethics Commission Report.		
Evaluation Comment: All new and continuing Board members have received and signed a new 2020 Code of Ethics for School Board Members and previously participated in and received governance and ethics training by the NJSBA. The pending ethics charge that was filed against the one BOE member was decided by the School Ethics Commission and is now under appeal by the member.			
Finding: As this metric requires a continuing effort, the district is substantially meeting it at this time.			

Part 1: Fundamental Considerations		Score	
<i>Section 7: Consequences for Not Meeting the Expectations of the Full Transition Plan</i>			
Metric # 3	The Board maintains appropriate oversight, without inappropriate interference, into personnel decisions.	1st A	Int.
		3	3
Mechanism for Measurement	Observation and report by HSP.		
Evaluation Comment: The Board appears in compliance as there is no reported evidence that members engage in inappropriate interference with personnel decisions. An HSP attends the board's personnel committee meeting on a monthly basis with the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Labor Relations and Affirmative Action to discuss personnel matters prior to each board meeting. The committee met regularly through February.			
Finding: As this metric requires a continuing effort, the district is substantially meeting it at this time.			

* 1st A = First Annual Report (October 2019) Int. = This Interim Report (April 2020)

Part II: Governance		Score	
<i>Section 2: Ethics Training for BOE and Senior Officials</i>			
Metric # 4	All board members complete all the training programs required by N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33 within one month of the applicable deadlines.	1st A	Int.
		4	4
Mechanism for Measurement	Sign-in sheets, transcripts from New Jersey School Boards Association, observation and report by HSP.		
Evaluation Comment: Board members have met their requirements to attend NJ School Board Association Governance training in the first, second and third years of a board member's first term, and in the first year of a reelected or reappointed term.			
Finding: At this time the Board remains in full compliance with this metric.			

Part II: Governance		Score	
<i>Section 2: Ethics Training for BOE and Senior Officials</i>			
Metric # 5	The Superintendent, in cooperation with the HSP, develops a training module to be provided to all board members at a retreat that addresses the components and subject areas listed on pages 17-18 of Section 2 of the Plan.	1st A	Int.
		4	4
Mechanism for Measurement	Training module, Sign-in sheets, observation and report by HSP.		
Evaluation Comment: Board members participate in scheduled training modules focused on aspects of Governance training. The Board president is committed to the NJSBA Board Certification program which consists of specialized training modules.			
Finding: At this time the Board remains in full compliance with this metric.			

Part II: Governance		Score	
<i>Section 3: Professional Development for the BOE and District Leadership Regarding Governance Best Practices</i>			
Metric # 6	All board members, the Superintendent, and Senior Officials attend a professional development session regarding governance best practices.	1st A	Int.
		4	4
Mechanism for Measurement	Sign-in sheets, observation and report by HSP.		
Evaluation Comment: Board members, the Superintendent and senior officials attend professional development seminars year-round on a variety of topics including governance best practices. In January, the BOE President sent a letter to all members with revised standing committees and procedures for communication with the district.			
Finding: At this time the Board remains in full compliance with this metric.			

Part II: Governance		Score	
<i>Section 7: Search for Successor Superintendent</i>			
Metric # 7	The superintendent search met all requirements in conducting the search, as described in the Plan.	1st A	Int.
		4	4
Mechanism for Measurement	Information provided by the District to the Department.		
Evaluation Comment: This metric has been previously fulfilled.			
Finding: This metric has been fully implemented.			

Part II: Governance		Score	
<i>Section 7: Search for Successor Superintendent</i>			
Metric # 8	The Board and search committee <u>substantially</u> meet timelines and deadlines laid out in the Plan.	1st A	Int.
		4	4
Mechanism for Measurement	Board minutes, information provided by the District to the Department.		
Evaluation Comment: This metric has been previously fulfilled.			
Finding: This metric has been fully implemented.			

Part III: Instruction and Program		Score	
<i>Section 2: Student Performance Data</i>			
Metric # 9	The District analyzes its student achievement data in line with the current NJQSAC Instruction and Program Indicators.	1st A	Int.
		3	4
Mechanism for Measurement	Meeting agenda(s), observation and report by HSP.		
Evaluation Comment: The district continues to use performance data to improve teaching and learning, and to align curriculum and instruction to the NJSLs. The District’s response to the NJSLA is also captured and formatted in an annual report presented to the Board, staff members, and stakeholders.			
Finding: District is in full compliance with this metric.			

Part III: Instruction and Program		Score	
<i>Section 2: Student Performance Data</i>			
Metric #10	The District makes a decision and communicates to the State by November 1, 2019 about whether to apply for an extension of its equivalency or its intention to be evaluated going forward by the current NJQSAC Instruction and Program Indicators.	1st A	Int.
		4	4
Mechanism for Measurement	District's NJQSAC submission to the County Office or submission of an equivalency to the Commissioner.		
Evaluation Comment: The district submitted an equivalency application to the state Department of Education that includes a set of proposed equivalency adjustments under NJQSAC in 2017. A subsequent equivalency application was approved by the board and submitted to the State Department of Education in November of 2019.			
Finding: This metric has been fully implemented.			

Part III: Instruction and Program		Score	
<i>Section 3: Expectations for Continued Focus on Academics</i>			
Metric # 11	The District has a process in place for the ongoing review of district curricula that is based on: 1) student performance data; 2) a monitoring process; and, 3) a system of continual feedback.	1st A	Int.
		3	3
Mechanism for Measurement	District policy, observation and report by HSP.		
Evaluation Comment: The district maintains its Standard Operating Procedures as a curriculum review process and uses a protected online curriculum data warehouse that consists of K-12 curricula that is accessible to school personnel. The district's assessment department analyzed Units 1 & 2 assessments for Math and ELA, however, they were unable to analyze Units 3 & 4 due to the COVID pandemic district closure. The Department was able to review portfolio data needed for graduation.			
Finding: While this metric requires continuing efforts, the district is substantially meeting it at this time.			

Part III: Instruction and Program		Score	
<i>Section 3: Expectations for Continued Focus on Academics</i>			
Metric # 12	All Board approved curricula contain the components required by N.J.A.C. 6A:13-2.1.	1st A	Int.
		4	4
Mechanism for Measurement	Curricula, observation and report by HSP.		
Evaluation Comment: The district's curriculum guides are aligned with NJSL as required. Typically, the school district prepares its curriculum during the summer months and requires board approval at the scheduled August meeting. At the onset of the school year, teachers are provided professional development with any new curriculum as well as any changes made to existing curriculum. The district anticipates that the BOE will approve new and existing curriculum, and any modifications to curriculum at the August 2020 BOE meeting.			
Finding: The district remains fully compliant at this time.			

Part III: Instruction and Program		Score	
<i>Section 3: Expectations for Continued Focus on Academics</i>			
Metric # 13	The District has a process in place to continually collect, analyze and utilize student performance data to make data informed decisions.	1st A	Int.
		3	4
Mechanism for Measurement	District policy, observation and report by HSP.		
<p>Evaluation Comment: The district continuously collects and makes accessible student data through the use of a digital data warehouse for all teachers and administrators. The data warehouse remains accessible, and contains a variety of reports including NJSLA results, and running records data. Additionally, the district prepares and analyzes NJSLA results, and presents them to the BOE and principals. The district uses these dates to identify targeted interventions.</p>			
<p>Finding: The district is fully compliant at this time.</p>			

Part III: Instruction and Program		Score	
<i>Section 3: Expectations for Continued Focus on Academics</i>			
Metric # 14	The District is implementing a system to identify causal factors for achievement gaps for student groups and individual students and to provide targeted interventions to remedy them.	1st A	Int.
		4	4
Mechanism for Measurement	District policy, observation and report by HSP.		
<p>Evaluation Comment: The district regularly uses student achievement data to provide targeted interventions to remedy achievement gaps. As part of the intervention process, schools provide designated intervention periods, and use targeted intervention programs to meet students' specific needs. The district supports schools by providing funding for additional programs if needed. During the COVID pandemic physical school closure, students with digital access at home were able to continue to access their intervention programs remotely.</p>			
<p>Finding: The district remains fully compliant at this time.</p>			

Part III: Instruction and Program		Score	
<i>Section 3: Expectations for Continued Focus on Academics</i>			
Metric # 15	The District continues to review and improve its procedures to meet the needs of students with IEPs and Section 504 Plans.	1st A	Int.
		3	3
Mechanism for Measurement	Observation and report by HSP, status of corrective action plans.		
<p>Evaluation Comment: The district continues to provide I&RS, Section 504, and IEP services to students. More professional development opportunities, in addition to potential transition programs for special education students (ages 18-21) at William Paterson University are being explored. The district's SOPs reflect back to 2013 and consideration should be given to update these.</p>			
<p>Finding: While this metric requires a continuing effort, the district is substantially meeting it at this time.</p>			

Part III: Instruction and Program		Score	
<i>Section 4: Professional Development for the BOE and Senior Staff Regarding Instruction and Program Best Practices</i>			
Metric # 16a	All trainings are completed on time by a quorum of the board members.	4	4
Metric # 16b	All trainings are completed by each member of the full BOE within 1 month of the deadline.	4	4
Mechanism for Measurement	Sign-in sheets, observation and report by HSP.		
<p>Evaluation Comment: 16a) Board members are current in terms of completion of training programs as prescribed by the NJ School Boards Association. Two new board members were provided one year to complete their initial workshop requirement.</p> <p>16b) Board members are completing their required training on time. The district maintains internal tracking of compliance.</p> <p>Finding: At this time the Board is in full compliance with both metrics.</p>			

Part IV: Fiscal Management		Score	
<i>Section 2: Basic Fiscal Obligations: Budget Requirements and Best Practices</i>			
Metric # 17a	The District prepares a balanced annual budget based on expense analysis, discussions with individual departments, and incorporation of anticipated new needs and cost increases.	2	3
Metric # 17b	The Board approves a balanced budget on time.	3	3
Metric # 17c	The Board engages appropriately with the District in the development of the Budget.	2	3
Mechanism for Measurement	Board meeting and Finance Committee minutes, observation and report by HSP, report by Superintendent, report by School Business Administrator and Chief Financial Officer.		
<p>Evaluation Comment: 17a) For the upcoming SY 20/21 budget cycle the district actively engaged stakeholders including the Superintendent, the district budget team, the BOE, the community, and students. A budget calendar was prepared and distributed to appropriate parties, multiple meetings and hearings were held with the district and the board, and the community is also engaged in the process via focus groups and presentations. Throughout the process the district budget team meets twice monthly to ensure engagement with various groups.</p> <p>17b) While the district has provided evidence that the budget process was in place, this report is reflective through March 2020 and therefore does not review the BOE's final activities on the budget.</p> <p>17c) At this time, evidence suggests that the BOE is working appropriately with the district on the development of the budget.</p> <p>Finding: This metric is partially implemented. The district is currently engaged in activities that will eventually fulfill the metric.</p>			

Part IV: Fiscal Management		Score	
<i>Section 2: Basic Fiscal Obligations: Budget Requirements and Best Practices</i>			
Metric # 18	Schools are allocated funding based on school-based budgeting focused on equity and transparency in school allocations.	1st A	Int.
		2	3
Mechanism for Measurement	Review of District’s budget development files and School Business Administrator’s board and public presentations.		
Evaluation Comment: The HSP reports that the district continues to use the weighted student funding formula. Evidence to support this includes the school allocation per student and the weighted student enrollment.			
Finding: The district is meeting the requirements of this metric at this time.			

Part IV: Fiscal Management		Score	
<i>Section 2: Basic Fiscal Obligations: Budget Requirements and Best Practices</i>			
Metric # 19a	The monthly Board Secretary’s report is completed and reconciled without exceptions as described in the Plan.	1st A	Int.
		4	4
Metric # 19b	Three times a year the District presents a fiscal forecast for the remainder of the year to the Board, as described in the Plan.	1st A	Int.
		2	3
Mechanism for Measurement	Board meeting minutes.		
Evaluation Comment: 19a) The district met the required monthly reporting requirements. 19b) The fiscal forecast was presented before the full board two times during the reporting period.			
Finding: The district is meeting the requirements of this metric at this time.			

Part IV: Fiscal Management		Score	
<i>Section 2: Basic Fiscal Obligations: Budget Requirements and Best Practices</i>			
Metric # 20	At least monthly, the district prepares and analyzes fiscal year cash flow management for all funds, all payments are made on a prompt basis, and reimbursement requests for federal grant awards are submitted in a timely manner for the actual amount of incurred expenditures.	1st A	Int.
		3	3
Mechanism for Measurement	Observation and report by HSP, Report by School Business Administrator.		
Evaluation Comment: The district continues to prepare monthly cash flow analysis statements to monitor cash flow and payment obligations. The School Business Administrator continues to meet with the business services and grants teams (virtually during the COVID pandemic), to review accounts. The monthly report is generated and emailed to the Department as evidence of federal reimbursement requests for grant awards.			
Finding: The district is meeting the requirements of this metric at this time.			

Part IV: Fiscal Management		Score	
<i>Section 2: Basic Fiscal Obligations: Budget Requirements and Best Practices</i>			
Metric # 21	The District ends the year with no deficit balances and no line item over appropriated expenditures by more than 10% in the general fund, special revenue fund, capital projects fund or debt service fund (other than permitted under state law and GAAP).	1st A	Int.
		N/A	4
Mechanism for Measurement	Review of District’s budget files.		
Evaluation Comment: The District’s CAFR (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report) for SY18-19 was submitted and is in overall compliance with state law. Mid-year transfers from fund balance were made to address unanticipated spending in some categories; the practice highlights insufficient revenues to meet the district’s operating needs, or a need for additional efficiencies, economies of scale, or staff and services reductions. The CAO recognizes the challenges facing the district and the state to resolve this.			
Finding: The district is fully compliant at this time.			

Part IV: Fiscal Management		Score	
<i>Section 3: Professional Development BOE and Senior Staff Regarding Fiscal Management Best Practices</i>			
Metric # 22a	All trainings are completed on time by a quorum of the board members.	1st A	Int.
Metric # 22b	All trainings are completed by each member of the full BOE within 1 month of the deadline.	3	3
Mechanism for Measurement	Sign-in sheets, Observation and report by HSP.		
Evaluation Comment: 22a) Board members have attended fiscal management best practices training according to state requirements. According to the district’s training status tracker, the Finance course is taken by board members during 1st term, 2nd full year of service.			
22b) The NJSBA School Board Mandated Training Status reports that all board members have taken the course except for two, who have the remainder of 2020 to complete the module.			
Finding: The district is meeting the requirements of this metric at this time.			

V: Personnel		Score	
<i>Section 4: Expectations Regarding Additional Personnel Initiatives</i>			
Metric # 23	The District continues to implement AchieveNJ. This includes training school leaders to rigorously and fairly evaluate teachers, supporting teachers based on their evaluations, and exiting low-performing staff when appropriate.	1st A	Int.
		4	4
Mechanism for Measurement	Observation and report by HSP.		
Evaluation Comment: The district continues to implement Achieve NJ to monitor teacher performance. Supervisors and teachers receive training and evaluation and additional support throughout the process. Due to the COVID pandemic, the NJ Department of Education issued a series of Executive Orders regarding how teachers are to be evaluated for the remainder of the school year given school districts were closed.			
Finding: The district remains fully compliant at this time.			

ACCOUNTABILITY SCORECARD

RESULTS AS OF APRIL 2020 OBSERVATION

The Department of Education anticipated that the PPS was moving ahead to implement the Plan and anticipated progress on the metrics. The scores bear out this anticipation.

PLAN SECTION	#	METRIC	STATUS	
Part I: Fundamental Considerations			<i>10/19</i> Annual	<i>4/20</i> Interim
Section 4: State Engagement with the District During Transition	1	The Board and Superintendent provide the HSP with a sufficient level of access and transparency into decision-making activities such that the HSP can monitor the progress of plan implementation and have adequate information to meet its responsibilities as liaison to the state regarding the Board's ethics practices.	4	4
Section 7: Consequences for Not Meeting the Expectations of the Full Transition Plan	2	The Board commits zero violations of the School Ethics Act.	3	3
	3	The Board maintains appropriate oversight, without inappropriate interference, into personnel decisions.	3	3
Part II: Governance			<i>10/19</i> Annual	<i>4/20</i> Interim
Section 2: Ethics Training for BOE and Senior Officials	4	All board members complete all the training programs required by N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33 within one month of the applicable deadlines.	4	4
	5	The Superintendent, in cooperation with the HSP, develops a training module to be provided to all board members at a retreat that addresses the components and subject areas listed on pages 17-18 of Section 2 of the Plan.	4	4
Section 3: Professional Development for the BOE and District Leadership Regarding Governance Best Practices	6	All board members, the Superintendent, and Senior Officials attend a professional development session regarding governance best practices.	4	4
Section 7: Search for Successor Superintendent	7	The superintendent search met all requirements in conducting the search, as described in the Plan.	4	4
	8	The Board and search committee <u>substantially</u> meet timelines and deadlines laid out in the Plan.	4	4

PLAN SECTION	#	METRIC	STATUS	
			10/19 Annual	4/20 Interim
Part III: Instruction and Program				
Section 2: Student Performance Data	9	The District analyzes its student achievement data in line with the current NJQSAC Instruction and Program Indicators.	3	4
	10	The District makes a decision and communicates to the State by November 1, 2019 about whether to apply for an extension of its equivalency or its intention to be evaluated going forward by the current NJQSAC Instruction and Program Indicators.	4	4
Section 3: Expectations for Continued Focus on Academics	11	The District has a process in place for the ongoing review of district curricula that is based on: 1) student performance data; 2) a monitoring process; and, 3) a system of continual feedback.	3	3
	12	All Board approved curricula contain the components required by N.J.A.C. 6A:13-2.1.	4	4
	13	The District has a process in place to continually collect, analyze and utilize student performance data to make data informed decisions.	3	4
	14	The District is implementing a system to identify causal factors for achievement gaps for student groups and individual students and to provide targeted interventions to remedy them.	4	4
	15	The District continues to review and improve its procedures to meet the needs of students with IEPs and Section 504 Plans.	3	3
Section 4: Professional Development for the BOE and Senior Staff Regarding Instruction and Program Best Practices	16	All trainings are completed on time by a quorum of the board members.	4	4
		All trainings are completed by each member of the full BOE within 1 month of the deadline.	4	4
Part IV: Fiscal Management				
Section 2: Basic Fiscal Obligations: Budget Requirements and Best Practices	17	The District prepares a balanced annual budget based on expense analysis, discussions with individual departments, and incorporation of anticipated new needs and cost increases.	2	3
		The Board approves a balanced budget on time.	3	3
		The Board engages appropriately with the District in the development of the Budget.	2	3
	18	Schools are allocated funding based on school-based budgeting focused on equity and transparency in school allocations.	2	3

PLAN SECTION	#	METRIC	STATUS	
Part IV: Fiscal Management			10/19	4/20
			Annual	Interim
Section 2: Basic Fiscal Obligations: Budget Requirements and Best Practices	19	The monthly Board Secretary's report is completed and reconciled without exceptions as described in the Plan.	4	4
		Three times a year the District presents a fiscal forecast for the remainder of the year to the Board, as described in the Plan..	2	3
	20	At least monthly, the district prepares and analyzes fiscal year cash flow management for all funds, all payments are made on a prompt basis, and reimbursement requests for federal grant awards are submitted in a timely manner for the actual amount of incurred expenditures.	3	3
	21	The District ends the year with no deficit balances and no line item over appropriated expenditures by more than 10% in the general fund, special revenue fund, capital projects fund or debt service fund (other than permitted under state law and GAAP).	N/A	4
Section 3: Professional Development for the BOE and Senior Staff regarding Fiscal Management Best Practices	22a	All trainings are completed on time by a quorum of the board members.	3	3
	22b	All trainings are completed by each member of the full BOE within 1 month of the deadline.	3	3
Part V - Personnel			10/19	4/20
			Annual	Interim
Section 4: Expectations Regarding Additional Personnel Initiatives	23	The District continues to implement AchieveNJ. This includes training school leaders to rigorously and fairly evaluate teachers, supporting teachers based on their evaluations, and exiting low-performing staff when appropriate.	4	4

PPS Transition Metric Analysis

APPENDIX A

Background of State Supervision of Paterson Public Schools

After more than nearly two decades under full supervision by the State Department of Education, Paterson Public Schools (PPS) continued its migration to full local control with the New Jersey State Board of Education's approval of a transition plan that took effect on September 6, 2018. The return of full local control, however, is predicated upon the district successfully meeting requirements of the Transition Plan (Plan).

The Plan "is predicated on optimism that progress will continue in the future." Since 1991, the District has demonstrated academic progress and improvements across the five areas measured by the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC) evaluation system. This has led to progress in all of the NJQSAC areas, more specifically in the areas of Operations, Fiscal Management, and Personnel; all of which were returned to local control in 2014 and 2016 respectively. However, it also acknowledges that focus is heavily emphasized in the areas of Governance and Instruction & Program, each returned by the NJSBOE on May 2, 2018 subject to the completion of this Plan. The plan created an "Accountability Scorecard" to measure the district's success in implementing these improvements.

The Plan notes that over the last few years the District has seen significant success in achieving its goals and demonstrating that progress is sustainable. At the end of the long process, the Plan requires the Department to continue its monitoring to ensure the plan is successfully implemented and is sustainable. The Plan is scheduled to expire on September 6, 2020, but the State Board of Education must find that PPS has satisfied all components of the Plan before the transition to local control is complete.

To support the transition effort, the state has appointed three "Highly Skilled Professionals" (HSPs) to assist in the implementation of the plan. The State has appointed a Technical HSP (Governance), an Instruction & Program (I&P) HSP, and a Special Education (SPED) HSP. In addition, the State has placed a school business administration professional in the District to assist the School Business Administrator to oversee District finances.

A final element of support is the State's "Comprehensive Accountability Office" role in monitoring the Accountability Scorecard. Taken together, these elements, working in concert with the District and its Board of Education and the board-appointed Superintendent are expected to lead the way to continued success for the students of Paterson.

The Comprehensive Accountability Office

The Plan called for the State and the District to work with its previously established Comprehensive Accountability Office (CAO) that has "the capacity to collect, analyze, and publish data regarding the ongoing operations and performance of school districts and boards recently exited from State intervention and returned to local control." The PPS is the second district the CAO is tasked to support (Newark Public Schools was the first one).

In 2018 the Commissioner of Education, who oversees the work of the CAO, engaged the Bloustein Local Government Research Center, a unit of the Rutgers University Bloustein School of Planning and

Public Policy to serve as the CAO under a contract with the Department. Bloustein Local is composed of individuals with deep experience in New Jersey state and local government activities, along with an understanding of public school administration that enables them to perform this task. The Commissioner has expressed full confidence in the capacity of Bloustein Local to fulfill the unique position of the CAOs².

The CAO is charged with gathering and analyzing data from the District and State (supported by the HSPs) to monitor progress and compliance with the metrics established in the Plan's Accountability Scorecard "to determine if the expectations for sustained progress and continual improvement continue to be met."

Specifically, the CAO is responsible to:

1. Compile relevant data and information to establish the annual status of the District compared to the Scorecard metrics and providing information necessary to assess annual progress on the Plan.
2. Publish and present the data to the Department and to the public in a credible, digestible, and actionable way, such as through the development of an easy to understand dashboard of District performance that will be publicly available.

The CAO is to present observations and findings based on evidence, but not to express value interpretations concerning Scorecard compliance. Under the Plan, the CAO report findings (along with other inputs), if warranted, allows the Department to establish interventions to address concerns or deficiencies.

² The biography of the CAO's Principal Investigators, Marc Pfeiffer and Leila Sadeghi are included as an Appendix to the report

PPS Transition Metric Analysis

APPENDIX

Leila Sadeghi, Ph.D.

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Leila Sadeghi is a New Jersey based consultant with over 15 years of experience in education spanning K-12 and higher education. Dr. Sadeghi has published extensively in education policy over the years and taught graduate courses in teacher and administrative training in state higher education systems. She most recently headed a government affairs institute for a former Congressman, and is currently in her second career as a business development consultant where she works for clients in a variety of sectors.

Marc H. Pfeiffer, Senior Policy Fellow

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Research Interests

Municipal Governments

Finance and Property Taxation

Public Contracting

Shared Government Services

Technology

Energy management

Marc H. Pfeiffer retired in 2012 from a 37-year career in New Jersey local government administration, having served as a municipal administrator in several municipalities, and 26 years of service in the State's local government oversight agency, the Division of Local Government Services. At DLGS he served as Deputy Director for 14 years, and periodically as Acting Director. He is now in this third public service career at the Bloustein School where he continues to assist state and local government officials and the public on a range of public policy and administrative matters.

Marc has broad experience in many areas of local government policy and administration, including specific expertise in areas such as finance and property taxation, public procurement, shared services and consolidation, technology, energy, labor relations, and general local and state government administration. He also has deep experience in the legislative process and as a regulatory officer.

In addition to participating in Bloustein Local, Marc makes his extensive government experience available as a guest lecturer, conference presenter, and other collaborative efforts. He is also assisting the Rutgers School of Public Affairs and Administration with the State's Certified Public Manager Program in curriculum development and instruction.

He also serves as the Principal Investigator for Bloustein Local in its capacity as the N.J. Department of Education's Chief Accountability Office for state supervised school districts in the process of exiting state supervision.

The Bloustein Local Government Research Center

New Jersey is served by more than 1,500 distinct local government agencies: municipalities, school districts, utilities, counties, and more. Yet, even with this wealth of opportunity, precious little substantive research has been done within the local government environment to inform some of our state's most pressing policy issues.

The **Bloustein Local Government Research Center**, or **Bloustein Local** <http://blousteinlocal.rutgers.edu/> serves as a focal point and engages in a range of services, including:

- Encouraging and conducting applied and academic research on local government fiscal and administrative issues, emphasizing application and support to New Jersey local government.
- Developing resources that can assist others in conducting research and analysis.
- Organizing and hosting conferences and symposia on New Jersey local government fiscal and administrative issues.
- Supporting New Jersey local government fiscal and administrative policy development, implementation, and analysis through contract research and on-call advice for organizations and institutions that engage in local government policy setting and policymaking.
- Promoting and increasing public understanding of local government issues by partnering with and supporting civic and media organizations that inform and educate the public on local government matters.

A list of the Center's current projects may be found online at <http://blousteinlocal.rutgers.edu/projects/>.

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