

Highly Skilled Professional Narrative Report

District Current Status

The culture of the district at this point is extremely productive which is demonstrated on a daily basis through the various tasks that are required to run an effective district. Firstly, the Board and Superintendent have a very congenial and professional relationship as well as the district administration. The Board, Superintendent and Administration have developed a very effective leadership team which has produced a high level of morale and cooperation both internally and externally for the district. It has been evidenced on numerous occasions that the various stakeholders including community based organizations, parents, elected officials on every level have fully supported the districts policies and formal actions fully during the time period of this report. It is extremely necessary that a district the size of Jersey City have leadership with the ability to effectively organize and direct the various components to achieve its desired outcomes. I have observed the full workings of all aspects of the district that impact the delivery of the mandated goals and objectives that are required to be in compliance with state guidelines, and my conclusion is that the Jersey City Public Schools is a high functioning organization and is moving in the right direction to be considered as a High Performing District.

The following are some of the accomplishments that the Board and Administration have achieved which demonstrates the positive culture of the district and encourages all stakeholders to go beyond the call of duty.

Board Accomplishments

1. Lorenzo Richardson-

- a. Achieved Master Board Member status with NJ School Boards Association
- b. Member of NJSBA Equity Council
- b. Legislative Committee and Urban Boards
- c. Vice President of Hudson County School Boards Association
- d. Member of National School Boards Association Council of Urban Boards of Education
- e. Established Board Committee Assignments and report out at caucus

2. Joan Terrell-Paige-

- a. Achieved Certified Board Member status with NJ School Boards Association
- b. Member of NJSBA Urban Boards

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3. Marilyn Roman-

- a. Worked with the Career and Technical Education Committee on plans to open the Vocational Middle School to be housed at PS#40.
- b. Took the online NJSBA course for the 2019-2020 school year.
- c. Wrote and submitted to all of the Board members, instructional staff and State Monitor a monthly report of the minutes of the Educational Programs Committee. This report includes all of the resolutions from that meeting and what the Board should know before voting. As part of my work I research any of the subjects of the resolutions which need further information and may require a report by the person submitting the resolution for all matters the Board is not familiar with and for which additional information is needed. This report also includes any other topics we discussed at the meeting particularly those for which we will have to get more information for discussion with the full Board.

4. All Board Members-

- a. Passed three consecutive budgets with no major layoffs 18-19, 19-20, 20-21 and no impact on the classroom
- b. 2020-2021 Budget was designed with equity for the students
- c. Promoted increased trainings for school board members and administration
- d. Approved the implementation of Soudy Phonics Program and Amistad Curriculum
- e. Developed a partnership with the District, Jersey City and JCMUA on lead in water remediation
- f. Achieved savings on employee prescription program
- g. Achieved savings with Self-insured healthcare plan
- h. Successfully completed A. Harry Moore relocation and school rehabilitation
- i. Approved and facilitated with the education committee K-12 1-1 Technology Equity initiative
- j. Approved Superintendent contract on time and unanimously
- k. District kept all students and staff safe during a stay in place incident in December 2019.

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- l. Encouraged and supported a home instructional model and packet for students during the pandemic closing
- m. Approved the implementation a new handwriting program
- n. Implemented a new Middle School Industrial Arts Program
- o. Approved and assisted in the development of a reopening plan on time and met State recommendations
- p. Significantly increased community and parent engagement at meetings
- q. Board working collaboratively with the district to initiate a comprehensive policy review. For the first time the board is working collaboratively with the district.

District Accomplishments

Educating Greatness

We are Generating a vision of doing what is best for all students and making them academically competitive in a global society. Our plans and work focus are to prepare all the students of the Jersey City Public Schools District for bright futures filled with possibility and opportunity. We can achieve our goal if our finance, operations, personnel, and instruction support goals.

The JCPS has seen its fair share of tumultuous times with financial shortfalls, leadership change, and a teacher strike. The leadership has done a tremendous amount of work to mitigate its impact on students and their academic growth.

The District solved a multi-million-dollar budgetary shortfall through efficiencies, reduced staff, and the help of a payroll tax. The reduction in staff caused us to non-renew of approximately 400 employees. We brought back many of the teachers after the District received additional funding. The 2019-2020 school year began with 11 new principals, two new division directors, a new head of human resources, and a completely new cabinet. To support the new leaders, the District entered into a partnership with the Wallace Foundation, Principal Pipeline, to support new leaders and enhance their practice.

The District launched a new website that allows for more accessible communication, more resources for families and staff, and immediate translation into one hundred languages to meet the needs of one of the most diverse cities in the nation. The new website offers pages for each school as well as every department. For example, the Curriculum and Instruction webpage contains resources and a wealth of information for parents and staff alike. Similarly, the Intranet has all the Professional Development offered over the last year for teachers and staff to review at their convenience as well large amounts of instructional resources.

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The District instituted community outreach with scheduled meetings between district leaders and community leaders. The stakeholders represent parents, religious leaders, principals, teachers, principals, directors, assistant superintendent, and the Superintendent. These opportunities allow the participants to address diverse issues through questions and answers in a friendly atmosphere.

The District had to deal with two ample facilities issues when a district-owned building, Harry Moore School, operated by New Jersey City University, sustained damage to its portico two days before classes in September. This accident brought attention to the documented needs for new facilities in an urban district. Most of the students who attend the school are Jersey City residents, so we facilitated the G. Dynes Regional Day School to house both schools. The repairs to the building are estimated to cost approximately five million dollars. However, the students will have an updated facility, and the District reached an agreement with NJCU to continue operating the school. The second incident damaged the Administration Building's fifth floor and caused significant damage to elevators, walls, carpets, and furniture and displaced the two most considerable administration building departments.

On December 10, 2019, a horrific incident of anti-Semitic violence paralyzed Jersey City as the nation watched. All eyes focused on the District dealt with the safety of 30,000 students and staff during the crisis. Through experienced leadership, the District kept everyone safe and informed. The District's Communication Office maintained ongoing dialogue between the Office of Emergency Management, the Superintendent, staff, and families. The District was able to send 182,132 calls to parents and staff, about 10,000 emails to staff, and interviews with various news organizations. The goal was to assure everyone that while the violence in a particular area of the City was terrible, the students and staff within the schools were safe without injuries.

Then, in early March of 2020, the District prepared a closure Plan in case of a health emergency meeting the guidelines of the NJDOE. The District engaged in communication with the Health Department, the Mayor's Office, and Early Childhood providers to make sure we met our students' needs. The Closure Plan addressed our academic obligation using a home instruction model, delivered meals to all students, and allowed the District to meet its operational commitments. The JCPS District met all the recommendations outlined by Executive Order and NJDOE directive through June 2020. Then, the District began the arduous task of creating a Reopening Plan and met all the specifications outlined in The Road Back Reopening Plan issued by Governor Murphy in July.

Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic, the JCPS District passed a budget that met its 29,000 students' academic needs.

Curriculum and Instruction

Seven instructional specialists have brought a new wave of support and professional development in Math and Language Arts core areas directly into where it counts most, the classroom. We have remodeled the delivery of instructional support by establishing an efficient

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and effective protocol. Administrators and teachers are involved in the requests for needed help. Teachers are receiving support when and where they need it most.

The updated 2020-2021 Approved Textbook/Instructional Resources List for Elementary and High School Levels is the official guide to textbooks, instructional resources, and materials presented to the board of education members at the June meeting.

We reformatted the Educational Program Committee Meetings. They provided an in-depth vetting of ongoing and new initiatives. Individual and small group presentations were made to the Education Committee's Co-Chairs: Mrs. Marilyn Roman and Mr. Gerald Lyons. The supervisors and instructional specialists ensure that all major stakeholders can gain information regarding our program initiatives.

We increased the collective productivity of our teachers by providing relevant valued skills that increase their knowledge base, encourage continued learning, and are building confidence among staff to implement best practices immediately. District Administrators offered professional development opportunities based on requests and the needs of teachers based on district-wide.

Special Education

The JCPS had the following accomplishments for students with a disability during the 2019-2020 school year to improve achievement in all schools for both Special Educations students and at-risk students through Intensive Interventions and support

The District's Special Education Staff provided numerous (110) professional development opportunities to all special education teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals. One of these workshops' main themes was to guarantee an understanding of the process for appropriately placing students into interventions. Supervisors provided thirty Intervention Lesson Studies throughout the District. Approximately 6,100 support visits were provided by the LINKS lead teachers.

Implemented an intervention protocol using Souday System Essentials, Souday System, Adaptive Readers, Moving with Math, Connections, Connecting Math Concepts, iReady, Smarty Ants, Acellus, Reading Mastery, and Explode the Code.

We developed a Professional Development Plan and best practices used for interventions. The Intervention and program data were analyzed to draw conclusions and recommendations to improve and enhance the benefits during the 2020-2021 school year using the Intervention Plan.

Continued to develop a comprehensive CHAMPS and TEACH program to meet the needs of students with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities, severely learning disabled and students with Autism and their teachers. The Special Education Department provided professional development opportunities for teachers, paraprofessionals, and other staff working with teachers' self-contained classes. The CHAMPS Staff provided 26 professional development opportunities and 888 support activities.

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Data Collection for students in the CHAMPS Program assisted teachers with tracking student progress, Targeting areas of instruction, Identifying goals and objectives for IEP development, Placing students in the appropriate interventions.

Teachers utilized the following assessments:

Brigance Inventory of Early Development III (K-8), Brigance Transition Skills Inventory (High School), Styer-Fitzgerald Functional Academics (K-5 Moderate) DORA was used to assist in intervention placement as well as a student as to identify student growth in Math and Reading.

Students continue to utilize the following interventions for Language Arts:

Sunday, Language for Learning, Early Reading Intervention, My Sidewalks, and Adapted Interactive Readers.

Students continue to utilize the following interventions for Math:

Moving with Math-Connections, Moving with Math-Extensions, and Moving with Math-Foundations

The Leaps and Bounds Program housed at Ferris High School Junior Academy is a specialized program designed to meet students' needs at their functional levels while providing grade-modified grade-level work. Students in the Leaps and Bounds Program participate in a Structured Learning Program that focuses on career awareness and exploration.

The District utilized data from district assessments and interventions to track student progress in Language Arts and Mathematics. Reviewed data from DORA, VB-MAPP, Secondary School Success Assessment, i-Ready Diagnostic, Moving with Math screening, Reading Mastery, Language for Learning, Connecting Math Concepts, and Corrective Reading. The Special Education Department developed Language Arts and Math Guidance Curriculum documents to support and assist in developing appropriate placement and interventions for Autism students. Teachers attended professional development opportunities, participated in lesson studies, and received on-site support visits (1,963) to improve implementation and fidelity to the recommendations.

The special education department offers two core programs at the secondary level: STARS (Students Transitioning into Adult Readiness) and PLACE (Program of Language, Academics, and Community Experiences). Each program is specifically designed to meet students' needs beyond high school and created mid-year reports for each program to track student progress and identify adjustments needed.

The District ensures compliance with state and federal regulations regarding student's IEPs. An audit by NJDOE found the Department 99% compliant.

New Jersey Department of Education
Jersey City Public Schools
Interim Accountability Scorecard
October 2019-October 2020 Report Period
Date Submitted: October 13, 2020

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Board and District Accomplishment

Implemented the Standardized Meeting Protocol Process for the monthly meeting with the Superintendent and Board President