



Education Law Center

Standing Up for Public School Children

**STATEMENT OF EDUCATION LAW CENTER
ON QSAC AND STATE-OPERATED SCHOOL DISTRICTS
TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OCTOBER 5, 2010**

Education Law Center has been a longtime and tireless advocate for schoolchildren in the three State-operated school districts, Jersey City, Newark and Paterson. We welcome the attention that the Joint Committee on the Public Schools now brings to the status of these districts, as determined by the NJ Department of Education's evaluation protocol, QSAC. District evaluation results and improvement plans and NJDOE supports under QSAC provide the framework for the planned return to local control of these three districts.

We respectfully submit the following questions about QSAC and the State takeover districts for Committee consideration:

- 1) Under QSAC, if a district does not obtain a score of 80% or greater on each of the five components of school district effectiveness, the NJDOE will require that the district prepare an **improvement plan**. The NJDOE will also: a) review the plan for efficacy [NJAC 6A:30-5.5(c)]; b) ensure that sufficient resources have been allocated for plan implementation [NJAC 6A:30-5.5(d)]; and c) review plan implementation every six months, including an on-site visit [NJAC 6A:30-5.6(b)].

Proposed Question for NJDOE: Have improvement plans been created, implemented and reviewed appropriately in the areas of school district effectiveness in which the three takeover districts have been found to be lacking?

- 2) According to the QSAC statute, after two years the NJDOE will make a determination whether a district's **improvement plan should be amended**. The Department "shall work collaboratively with the in-district team" to amend the plan [NJAC 6A:30-5.6c].

Proposed Question for NJDOE: Since the QSAC evaluation of the Newark Public Schools occurred in 2007, and the QSAC evaluations of the Jersey City and Paterson Public Schools occurred in 2008, have the two-year reviews of the districts' implementation plans occurred, and if so, have the plans been amended and how?

- 3) School districts are entitled to receive technical assistance to improve performance and increase local capacity in areas of need as identified under

QSAC [NJAC 6A:30-5.7]. This **technical assistance** is to be provided by Department personnel and/or by one or more highly skilled professionals.

Proposed Question for NJDOE: Have the three takeover districts received technical assistance under QSAC, and if so, is information available concerning the nature of and results obtained from the assistance provided?

- 4) When a school district has reached a score of 80% on any of the five components of school district effectiveness under QSAC, the Commissioner will recommend to the State Board of Education that withdrawal from intervention commence. The Department and the district will work collaboratively to develop a transition plan [NJAC 6A:30-7.2].

Proposed Question for NJDOE: In those areas under QSAC in which the three State takeover districts have scored 80% or higher, have steps been taken to ensure transition to local control? Does the Department have a proposed timeline for State withdrawal from the other areas in which the districts have not yet achieved a score of 80%?