

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

Transition Plan for the Return of Local Control to Jersey City Public Schools

Comprehensive Accountability Office Report—November 2019

Prepared by
Bloustein Local Government Research Center
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



RUTGERS
Edward J. Bloustein School
of Planning and Public Policy



SUMMARY

This report is the first of three reports over a 24-month period of the Comprehensive Accountability Office (CAO) concerning the final phase of the transition of the Jersey City Public Schools (JCPS) from being a state supervised school district to full local control. It reports on the district's progress in meeting metrics described in an "Accountability Scorecard that is part of the Transition Plan to local control.

The CAO finds that the JCPS has achieved limited progress on its path to achieving "substantially implemented" to "fully implemented" scores on most of the required metrics. 17 of 23 scorable metrics have been evaluated as *not implemented* or only *partially implemented*. The district must pay attention over the rest of calendar 2020 to meet the Transition Plan's Accountability Scorecard metrics in order to achieve its goal of obtaining full control.

BACKGROUND

After more than nearly two decades under full supervision by the State Department of Education, Jersey City Public Schools (JCPS) began its process of transitioning to local control in 2008 with the return of Governance and Fiscal Management, followed by plans for the return of Personnel and Operations in 2016. Equipped with local control over all NJQSAC components, the district asserted in 2018 that it was ready and willing to fully transition pending the final decision of the State Board of Education in 2020, which is predicated upon the district successfully meeting requirements of the Transition Plan (Plan). Given the evidence supplied by the district of the last year, those initial assertions did not result in actions that met many of the required metrics.

The Plan "is predicated on optimism that progress will continue in the future." Since 2017, 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 Instruction & Planning, and Operations & Personnel; all of which were returned to local control in 2008, 2015, and 2017 respectively. 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 October 18, 2020, but the State Board of Education must find that JCPS has satisfied all components of the Plan before the transition to local control is complete.

To support the transition effort, the state appointed one "Highly Skilled Professional" (HSP) to assist in the implementation of the Plan. 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 Superintendent are expected to lead the way to continued success for the students of Jersey City.

THE COMPREHENSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

The Plan called for the State and the District to work with its Comprehensive Accountability Office (CAO). The CAO 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 JCPS is the third district the CAO is tasked to support (they are preceded by the Newark and Paterson Public School districts).

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 CAOs¹.

The CAO is charged with gathering and analyzing data from the District and State (supported by the HSP) 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.

This report is the first of two required annual reports under the Plan. The CAO is also required to create a website that contains this report and samples of the evidence it relied upon to reach its conclusions. The CAO website is found at: <http://go.rutgers.edu/NJSDScorecard>. This report, a web “dashboard” version of it, including links to documentary evidence is found at that site.

THE SCORECARD AND ITS EVALUATION

The Accountability Scorecard is the core of the CAO’s role. This table represents the expectations contained in the Transition Report on which the CAO conducts its efforts. Specifically, it is “to track and measure the District’s progress toward implementing this transition plan, and a timetable for activities relating to and leading to the withdrawal of State intervention, which identifies and sequences the benchmarks laid out throughout this Plan in the appropriate sections.”

¹ The biography of the CAO’s Principal Investigators, Marc Pfeiffer and Leila Sadeghi are included as an Appendix to the report.

The Scorecard tracks the Plan through five sections:

- Part 1 – Fundamental Considerations
- Part 2 – Governance
- Part 3 – Instruction and Program
- Part 4 – Fiscal Management
- Part 5 - Personnel

The Scorecard covers most, but not all the requirements in the Plan. It includes specific metrics and mechanisms for measurement that are aligned with the Plan. The work of the CAO is built on top of it. The Plan requires the CAO to assess compliance with the metrics through its measurement standards. The CAO's assessment is to be accompanied by documentation that supports its observations.

The Plan notes that it is not only the Scorecard, but that the Plan itself should be "seen as a complimentary process to the QSAC²."

The Plan calls for each metric to be evaluated on the following scale:

- 1 - **Not Implemented:** There is no significant evidence that the standard is implemented.
- 2 - **Partially Implemented:** A partially implemented standard is being met in only a limited way.
- 3- **Substantially Meeting:** Most elements of the metric are being met and are sustainable.
- 4 - **Fully Implemented:** All elements of the standard are substantially implemented, are sustainable, and have a process for ongoing evaluation.

For metrics rated less than 3, the CAO is obligated to provide an explanation of the District's progress and gaps. These explanations are noted in *italics* in the report.

Given the timing of this report and circumstances concerning various metrics, the CAO has added to the list a Not Applicable (NA) category, indicating that the metric is not applicable any more or cannot be measured at this time but is expected to be measurable for subsequent reports.

The full Scorecard with the evaluation results as of this time is provided as Table 1.

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 have 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.

² QSAC, the "Quality Single Accountability Continuum" is the N.J. Department of Education's monitoring and district self-evaluation system for public school districts. www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/qsac/

CAO REVIEW AND OBSERVATIONS

In conducting its task, the CAO relies on the HSP to gather and provide documentation for evaluation, as well as observations on district activities. Judgment was exercised to request supplemental data as determined necessary to make observations. Further, while the Plan anticipated that district officials would provide certain reports, it was found that the routine activities of these individuals did not result in the specific reports anticipated by the Plan.

Communications between the CAO and the HSP were comprised of two meetings and two conference calls in addition to several email communications. Ongoing CAO review of document submissions observed deficiencies that resulted in the district being granted three extensions for them to re-submit documents. The conference calls with the HSP reviewed the incomplete submissions and the CAO's requests for clarification or additional information. Overall, this process involved inconsistent submissions of evidence, mis-identified documents, limited reporting, and repeated requests resulting in several rounds of evidence submission. During this process it became clear to the CAO that the district lacked adequate evidence to document compliance with a number of metrics.

The inability to provide documents relating to the HSP's work and district activities related to the Plan and specific metrics created unnecessary confusion and challenges in evaluating the district's status. This Report highlights this underlying lack of available documentation as a deficiency that can be remedied. Considering the above, the CAO has concluded that Jersey City fell short of achieving acceptable scores in a majority of metrics as evidence was inadequate to allow a higher score.

Although the CAO is unable to identify the precise reason for this lack of corroborating evidence, the district needs to focus time and attention on meeting Scorecard requirements and documenting their compliance with the metrics.

There will be an interim report reflecting compliance as of the end of April 2020, followed by a second (and potentially final) annual report reflecting status as of next October. District personnel and the HSP still have the opportunity to meet the benchmarks leading to substantial or full sustainable implementation for all the metrics. Section 5 of the Transition Plan has a section for "Consequences for Not meeting the expectations of the Full Transition Plan." District officials should review this section of the Plan as part of their review of this report.

During this time, the Board, senior district staff, and the HSP should carefully review this report and the Accountability Scoresheet requirements. They need to take actions to ensure that their efforts going forward will meet expectations. Establishing systems for internal reporting process that creates work plans, tracks actions and reports progress will move the transition documentation forward. This should also include identifying relevant evidence that they can submit to the CAO for the subsequent reports.

EVALUATING AND SCORING EACH METRIC

The 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. Where evidence has been provided the [website](#) contains a documentation list for each metric; these are the documents the CAOs used to reach its observations. In some cases, the table combines two related metrics in the same section (but separately scored) as they are closely linked.

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 1-4 numeric score (referred to earlier) assigned to the metric. *As required, items scored less than 3 have additional information (shown in italics).*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The CAO expresses appreciation of the HSP for his support and assistance in providing information.

The online version of this and other reports in the series and supporting documents are available at:

<http://go.rutgers.edu/NJSDScorecard>

PPS Transition Metric Analysis

Part 1: Fundamental Considerations		Score
<i>Section 2: 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.	2
Mechanism for Measurement	Observation and report by HSP. The CAO may additionally verify this information through conversations with the Superintendent and board members.	
<p>Evaluation Comment: The report by the HSP indicates that there has been extensive interaction with the Board, Superintendent, senior staff, monthly Principal meetings, and a wide range of other meetings. District practices, however, have not involved taking attendance, using agendas, taking minutes or otherwise reporting on these meetings or recognizing the HSPs involvement.</p> <p><i>The district should formalize various meetings to document the involvement of all participants, including the HSP, as well as develop agendas, document attendance, and retain work material related to the meeting..</i></p>		
Finding: This metric is partially implemented.		

Part 1: Fundamental Considerations		Score
<i>Section 5: Consequences for Not Meeting the Expectations of the Full Transition Plan</i>		
Metric # 2	The Board commits zero violations of the School Ethics Act.	1
Mechanism for Measurement	Observation and report by HSP, School Ethics Commission Report.	
<p>Evaluation Comment: The required School Ethics Commission Report has not been submitted. The HSP observation that no ethical violations have been committed in the last six months and a letter submitted by the Superintendent indicating that there was a violation are in conflict, however neither can be considered as evidence.</p> <p><i>The required Ethics report need to be request from the Commissioner and submitted for the next report.</i></p>		
Finding: This metric has not been fulfilled.		

Part 1: Fundamental Considerations		Score
<i>Section 5: Consequences for Not Meeting the Expectations of the Full Transition Plan</i>		
Metric # 3	The Board does not administer the schools, but confines its actions to policy making, planning and appraisal.	1
Mechanism for Measurement	Observation and report by HSP.	
<p>Evaluation Comment: The HSP observation that “Board limits its interactions with District Administrators through sub-committee meetings” is important, but evidence of an adopted policy or meetings and the associated agendas or minutes has not been provided. The HSP made a presentation on the Transition Plan in August of 2019 that included this issue.</p> <p><i>An adopted policy, and a practice of creating meeting agendas, sign-in sheets, and minutes of subcommittee meetings need to be adopted..</i></p>		
Finding: There is no evidence that this metric is being met.		

Part 1: Fundamental Considerations		Score
<i>Section 5: Consequences for Not Meeting the Expectations of the Full Transition Plan</i>		
Metric # 4	The Board maintains appropriate oversight, without inappropriate interference, into personnel decisions.	1
Mechanism for Measurement	Observation and report by HSP.	
<p>Evaluation Comment: The HSP observed that Board members “discuss personnel moves in the HR sub-committee meetings and closed sessions in the Board Meetings.” The observation is important, but evidence of committee meetings has not been provided. Minutes from BOE meeting was provided from February 11, 2019 detailing 20 sub-committees of the board.</p> <p><i>An adopted policy, and a practice of creating meeting agendas, sign-in sheets, and minutes of subcommittee meetings need to be adopted and implemented..</i></p>		
Finding: There is no evidence that this metric is being met.		

Part II: Governance		Score
<i>Section 2: Ethics Training for BOE and Senior Officials</i>		
Metric # 5	All board members complete all the training programs required by N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33 within one month of the applicable deadlines.	2
Mechanism for Measurement	All board members complete all the training programs required by N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33 within one month of the applicable deadlines.	
<p>Evaluation Comment: The School Board Mandated Training Status Report was provided as evidence of board member training. Not all board members completed the required training programs within one month of the applicable deadlines. The documentation does not provide certainty if members ultimately complied. The HSP reports that much of this confusion was due to board turnover and differing attendance issues with some members.</p> <p><i>Given the ongoing turnover with board members, the district should assign a staff member to ensure board members are scheduled and attendance properly documented at training sessions.</i></p>		
Finding: This metric is partially implemented.		

Part II: Governance		Score
<i>Section 2: Ethics Training for BOE and Senior Officials</i>		
Metric # 6	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.	2
Mechanism for Measurement	Training module, Sign-in sheets, observation and report by HSP.	
<p>Evaluation Comment: The HSP reported that the Board Retreat with the HSP addressed the required elements. However, documentation such as an agenda or presentation demonstrating the requirements were fulfilled has not been provided. The sign sheet did not note that all board members attended the full session.</p> <p><i>Full documentation of these sessions must be kept and made available as necessary. Separate sessions should be planned for Board members who did attend the retreat.</i></p>		
Finding: This metric has not been implemented.		

Part II: Governance		Score
<i>Section 3: Professional Development for the BOE and District Leadership Regarding Governance Best Practices</i>		
Metric # 7	All board members, the Superintendent, and senior officials attend a professional development session regarding governance best practices.	2
Mechanism for Measurement	Sign-in sheets, observation and report by HSP.	
<p>Evaluation Comment: Professional development workshops on governance best practices were not attended by all board members, the superintendent, and senior officials. Additionally, the training must address the components outlined on pages 18-19 of Section 3 of the Transition Plan.</p> <p>Full documentation of these sessions must be kept and made available as necessary. Separate sessions should be planned for Board members and senior staff who did attend the retreat.</p>		
Finding: This metric is partially implemented.		

Part II: Governance		Score
<i>Section 6: Search for Successor Superintendent</i>		
Metric # 8	The superintendent search meets all five requirements in conducting the search, as described in the Plan.	NA
Mechanism for Measurement	Observation and report by HSP, observation and report by state representative on search committee, report by selected search firm.	
<p>Evaluation Comment: The district is no longer being evaluated on this metric. The State Commissioner of Education rescinded the search process.</p>		
Finding: None.		

Part II: Governance		Score
<i>Section 6: Search for Successor Superintendent</i>		
Metric # 9	The Board and search committee substantially meet timelines and deadlines laid out in the Plan.	NA
Mechanism for Measurement	Report by state representative on search committee, report by selected search firm.	
<p>Evaluation Comment: The district is no longer being evaluated on this metric. The State Commissioner of Education rescinded the search process.</p>		
Finding: None.		

Part III: Instruction and Program		Score
<i>Section 2: Student Performance Data</i>		
Metric #10	The District analyzes its student achievement data in line with the current NJQSAC Instruction and Program Indicators.	2
Mechanism for Measurement	Meeting agenda(s), observation and report by HSP..	
<p>Evaluation Comment: The HSP report provided little documentation to support compliance with this metric. The two presentations provided as evidence these did not support compliance. No other evidence was provided.</p> <p><i>Documentation supporting the analysis should be provided.</i></p>		
<p>Finding: This metric is partially implemented.</p>		

Part III: Instruction and Program		Score
<i>Section 2: Student Performance Data</i>		
Metric # 11	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
Mechanism for Measurement	District's NJQSAC submission to the County Office or submission of an equivalency to the Commissioner.	
<p>Evaluation Comment: While the documents were submitted late, they are in compliance.</p>		
<p>Finding: The district has fulfilled this metric.</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 # 12a	All trainings are completed on time by a quorum of the board members.	2
Metric # 12b	All trainings are completed by each member of the full BOE within 1 month of the deadline	
Mechanism for Measurement	Sign-in sheets, Observation and report by HSP	
<p>Evaluation Comment: 12a: The state required School Board Mandated Training Status Report was provided as evidence of board member training. All members have not completed the required training programs on time. <i>Given the ongoing turnover with board members, the district should assign a staff member to ensure board members are scheduled and attendance properly documented at training sessions.</i></p> <p>12b: The School Board Mandated Training Status Report was provided as evidence of board member training. All members have not completed the required training programs within one month of the applicable deadlines. <i>Given the ongoing turnover with board members, the district should assign a staff member to ensure board members are scheduled and attendance properly documented at training sessions.</i></p>		
<p>Finding: This metric is partially implemented.</p>		

Part IV: Fiscal Management		Score
<i>Section 2: Basic Fiscal Obligations: Budget Requirements and Best Practices</i>		
Metric # 13a	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
Metric # 13b	The Board approves a balanced budget on time	3
Metric # 13c	The Board engages appropriately with the District in the development of the Budget.	1
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: Re: Metrics 13a-13c Generally: The following requirements for Metrics 13a-13c were not submitted: Board meeting and Finance Committee minutes, ...report by Superintendent, report by School Business Administrator and Chief Financial Officer. The HSP report and observation provided a detailed explanation of the budget process.</p> <p>13a: Sample of individual budget requests were provided, but there is no indication on how budget request decisions were made by the Administration, Board Committee, or the Board as a whole. <i>Evidence showing how budget requests move through the review system and how final decisions are made needs to be provided.</i></p> <p>13b: The budget was approved on time, but minutes and other documents show operating shortfalls resulting in transfers to maintain balance during the school year. <i>From an outcome perspective, the presence of extensive transfers during the year indicates weaknesses in the budget process.</i></p> <p>13c: There is no evidence to support this metric because documents reflecting the Board’s review and decisions concerning the budget were not provided, e.g., Board Budget or Finance committee meeting minutes. <i>Documents supporting the Board’s engagement in decision making need to be provided.</i></p> <p>Findings:</p> <p>13a: This metric is partially implemented.</p> <p>13b: While this metric requires a continuing effort, the district is substantially meeting it at this time.</p> <p>13c: There is no evidence that this metric is being met.</p>		

Part IV: Fiscal Management		Score
<i>Section 2: Basic Fiscal Obligations: Budget Requirements and Best Practices</i>		
Metric # 14	Schools are allocated funding based on school-based budgeting focused on equity and transparency in school allocations.	2
Mechanism for Measurement	Review of District's budget development files and School Business Administrator's board and public presentations.	
<p>Evaluation Comment: Similar to Metric 13, samples of budgets prepared by several schools and general documents explaining the budget process were provided as evidence. While budgets are prepared by schools on district-wide standards, there is no evidence of equity-based decisions. There were no public presentations concerning the budget submitted.</p> <p><i>Evidence showing how budget requests move through the review system and how final decisions are made needs to be provided. Documents supporting the Board's engagement in decision making need to be provided.</i></p>		
<p>Finding: This metric is partially implemented.</p>		

Part IV: Fiscal Management		Score
<i>Section 2: Basic Fiscal Obligations: Budget Requirements and Best Practices</i>		
Metric # 15a	The monthly Board Secretary's report is completed and reconciled without exceptions as described in the Plan.	3
Metric # 15b	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
Mechanism for Measurement	Board meeting minutes.	
<p>Evaluation Comment: 15a: Board secretary reports are provided. Though but no evidence of minutes where they were accepted, we assume there was Board action to accept them.</p> <p>15b: The district prepared one fiscal forecast report and presented it on 9/6/19. No report was filed for SY 18-19. Minutes of the Board meeting were not provided. <i>Two more reports and presentations need to be completed during SY 19-20.</i></p>		
<p>Finding: 15a: While these metrics requires a continuing effort, the district is substantially meeting them at this time.</p> <p>15b: While this metric requires a continuing effort, the district is substantially meeting it at this time.</p>		

Part IV: Fiscal Management		Score
<i>Section 2: Basic Fiscal Obligations: Budget Requirements and Best Practices</i>		
Metric # 16	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.	4
Mechanism for Measurement	Observation and report by HSP, Report by School Business Administrator.	
<p>Evaluation Comment: A cash flow report is prepared, and the Board approves payments regularly. Documents showing timely and regular grant reimbursement requests were provided</p>		
<p>Finding: At this time the district is in full compliance with this metric..</p>		

Part IV: Fiscal Management		Score
<i>Section 2: Basic Fiscal Obligations: Budget Requirements and Best Practices</i>		
Metric # 17	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).	2
Mechanism for Measurement	Review of the district’s budget and financial reporting documentation.	
<p>Evaluation Comment: The Districts CAFR (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report) for SY 18-19 was submitted and reported overall compliance with state law. However, line item transfers that exceeded 10% were made in order to avoid over expenditures.</p> <p><i>The number and amount of transfers made is indicative of inaccurate budget projections. Careful analysis of school and department budget needs will reduce the needs for transfers.</i></p>		
Finding: Finding: This metric is partially implemented. .		

Part IV: Fiscal Management		Score
<i>Section 2: Basic Fiscal Obligations: Budget Requirements and Best Practices</i>		
Metric # 18a	All trainings are completed on time by a quorum of the board members.	2
Metric # 18b	All trainings are completed by each member of the full BOE within 1 month of the deadline	2
Mechanism for Measurement	Sign-in sheets, Observation and report by HSP.	

<p>Evaluation Comment: The School Board Mandated Training Status Report was provided as evidence of board member training. A majority of the members have not completed the required training programs on time.</p> <p><i>Given the ongoing turnover with board members, the district should assign a staff member to ensure board members are scheduled and attendance properly documented at training sessions.</i></p>		
<p>Finding: These metrics are partially implemented.</p>		
<p>Part V: Personnel</p>		<p>Score</p>
<p><i>Section 2: Establishing Expectations for Decision-Making and a Working Relationship between the Board and Staff</i></p>		
<p>Metric # 19</p>	<p>The District submits all contracts (new and amended) to the Executive County Superintendent for review and approval for the following employees in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7-8(j) and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-3.1(a): superintendents, deputy superintendents, assistant superintendents, school business administrators, and any other interim, acting, or person otherwise serving in these positions. The Board does not approve or execute the contracts until the Executive County Superintendent approves the contracts.</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Mechanism for Measurement</p>	<p>Board minutes, approval letters from the Executive County Superintendent.</p>	
<p>Evaluation Comment: Contracts for the Superintendent and School Business Administrator were approved by the Executive County Superintendent were provided as evidence to support this metric. No other contracts approved by the County Superintendent during the transition period were provided</p>		
<p>Finding: While this metric requires a continuing effort, the district is substantially meeting it at this time.</p>		

<p>Part V: Personnel</p>		<p>Score</p>
<p><i>Section 4: Expectations Regarding Additional Personnel Initiatives</i></p>		
<p>Metric # 20</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Mechanism for Measurement</p>	<p>Observation and report by HSP.</p>	
<p>Evaluation Comment: Observation samples, teacher observation schedules, exit reports, BOE action, and presentations from training workshops for teachers and administrators were provided as evidence to support this metric. Additionally, the HSP provided a general statement and opinion that the district meets this metric..</p>		
<p>Finding: While this metric requires a continuing effort, the district is substantially meeting it at this time.</p>		

ACCOUNTABILITY SCORECARD

RESULTS AS OF NOVEMBER 2019 OBSERVATION

The Department of Education anticipated that the JCPS 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			
Section 2: 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.	2
Section 5: Consequences for Not Meeting the Expectations of the Full Transition Plan	2	The Board commits zero violations of the School Ethics Act.	1
	3	The Board does not administer the schools, but confines its actions to policy making, planning and appraisal.	1
	4	The Board maintains appropriate oversight, without inappropriate interference, into personnel decisions.	1
Part II: Governance			
Section 2: Ethics Training for BOE and Senior Officials	5	All board members complete all the training programs required by N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33 within one month of the applicable deadlines.	2
	6	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.	2
Section 3: Professional Development for the BOE and District Leadership Regarding Governance Best Practices	7	All board members, the Superintendent, and Senior Officials attend a professional development session regarding governance best practices.	2
Section 6: Search for Successor Superintendent	8	The superintendent search meets all five requirements in conducting the search, as described in the Plan.	NA
	9	The Board and search committee substantially meet timelines and deadlines laid out in the Plan.	NA

PLAN SECTION	#	METRIC	STATUS
<i>Part III: Instruction and Program</i>			
Section 2: Student Performance Data	10	The District analyzes its student achievement data in line with the current NJQSAC Instruction and Program Indicators.	2
	11	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
Section 4: Professional Development for the BOE and Senior Staff regarding Instruction and Program Best Practices	12a	All trainings are completed on time by a quorum of the board members.	2
	12b	All trainings are completed by each member of the full BOE within 1 month of the deadline.	2
<i>Part IV: Fiscal Management</i>			
Section 2: Basic Fiscal Obligations: Budget Requirements and Best Practices	13a	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
	13b	The Board approves a balanced budget on time.	3
	13c	The Board engages appropriately with the District in the development of the Budget.	1
	14	Schools are allocated funding based on school-based budgeting focused on equity and transparency in school allocations.	2
	15a	The monthly Board Secretary's report is completed and reconciled without exceptions as described in the Plan.	3
	15b	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
	16	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.	4
	17	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).	2

PLAN SECTION	#	METRIC	STATUS
Part IV: Fiscal Management			
Section 3: Professional Development for the BOE and Senior Staff regarding Fiscal Management Best Practices	18a	All trainings are completed on time by a quorum of the board members.	2
	18b	All trainings are completed by each member of the full BOE within 1 month of the deadline.	2
Part V - Personnel			
Section 2: Establishing Expectations for Decision-Making and a Working Relationship between the Board and Staff	19	The District submits all contracts (new and amended) to the Executive County Superintendent for review and approval for the following employees in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7-8(j) and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-3.1(a): superintendents, deputy superintendents, assistant superintendents, school business administrators, and any other interim, acting, or person otherwise serving in these positions. The Board does not approve or execute the contracts until the Executive County Superintendent approves the contracts.	3
Section 4: Expectations Regarding Additional Personnel Initiatives	20	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.	3

PPS Transition Metric Analysis

APPENDIX

Leila Sadeghi, Ph.D.

B.A. in Education, California State University; M.A., in Educational Administration, Saint Peter's University; Ph.D., Urban Education Policy, Rutgers University-Newark

Representative, Comprehensive Accountability Office

Contact

33 Livingston Avenue, Suite 300

(848) 932-2830 (office)

(862) 206-9166 (cell)

sadeghle@rutgers.edu

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

B.S. in Urban Affairs, American University; MPA, New York University

Assistant Director, [Bloustein Local Government Research Center](#)

Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University

Contact

33 Livingston Avenue, Suite 300

(848) 932-2830

marc.pfeiffer@rutgers.edu

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/>.

RUTGERS

Edward J. Bloustein School
of Planning and Public Policy

Bloustein Local Government Research Center
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
33 Livingston Avenue
New Brunswick, N.J. 08901

p. 848-932-5475 blousteinlocal.rutgers.edu

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