



**Pathway to Local Control**  
**Newark Education Success Board (NESB) Report**  
August 2016

## Message from the NESB Chair

Thank you, Mayor Baraka for selecting me to serve on the Newark Education Success Board (NESB). It was a surprise and a challenge. Thank you, fellow members for giving of your time and energy to this yearlong effort.

Al Koeppe, Chris Cerf, Don Katz, Grace Sergio, Jose Leonardo, Re. Perry Simmons, Jr., Ross Danis, Shane Harris and Rochelle Hendricks all supported the process and respected the norms we set for our work. We agreed that we might disagree, at times, but we would never become disagreeable and unable to move forward. The stakes in Newark are too high to allow different ideologies to become the focus. Quite simply, every child is the focus and educating each child that goes through the Newark Public Schools is what our work has been about.

To my surprise, I was unanimously selected to serve as the Chair of this NESB. It was simultaneously an unexpected honor and a humbling burden. However, I am a proud product of the Newark school system as a graduate of Fifteenth Avenue Elementary School and West Side High School. This is my forty second year as an educator and 26 of these years, I learned and worked to hone my knowledge and skills in Newark as a teacher, vice principal, central office program director and retired as the principal of Malcolm X Shabazz High School. During the past 16 years, I have continued, grown and worked with future teachers, new administrators, veteran teachers and veteran administrators in various districts in New Jersey. It was a blessing to be able to bring these years and these experiences as lenses to look through during the work of the NESB.

After twenty-five official NESB meetings and more calls, outreach contacts, document reviews, best practices reports readings and deliberations than can be counted, our report is being released August 22, 2016. ***It is not a document to be shelved and forgotten. We intend it to be a living work used to support the current work and ready the district for the return of local control as soon as it is officially announced by the New Jersey State Board of Education. Further, we, the NESB, urge the State Appointed Superintendent and the Newark Advisory Board to immediately begin implementing, with fidelity, every recommendation that will move the district forward in recovery and stability for decades to come.***

When I visited South Africa, some year ago, and talked with children in schools throughout Petermaritzburg, I was greeted by students, as well as teachers and administrators saying, “Sawbona”. Literally translated, it means, “I see you”. As we did our work, I believe we endeavored to make recommendations and see the best NPS can provide for every child.

Mary G. Bennett, NESB Chair



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# ABOUT THE NEWARK EDUCATION SUCCESS BOARD (NESB)

## The Charge

The Newark Education Success Board (NESB) was charged by Mayor Ras Baraka and Governor Chris Christie to develop a clear pathway for the return to local control of Newark Public Schools (NPS) to the Newark community, including appropriate timelines and benchmarks. The report, due in the Summer of 2016, was to include public input and community engagement and outline capacity building trajectories at both district and school levels, to ensure that the challenges that led to state takeover will not recur.

## Mission Statement

We must ensure all children in Newark have access to a high quality, free public education and graduate high school with the academic and social skills necessary to be productive, civic-minded individuals. Our educators and leaders will create learning environments that promote critical thinking, collaboration and creativity, and we will work closely with parents and community stakeholders to create a culture of inclusiveness and engagement.

## Vision Statement

All Newark students will graduate high school ready for college and 21st century careers.

## Our Work

The NESB met monthly from July 2015 to July 2016.

In August 2015, norms were set and NESB also met with the Essex County Superintendent and two members of the Quality Single Accountability System (QSAC) unit, Robert Bumpus and Pat Castellanos, to obtain additional information about NPS's QSAC October 2014 School Improvement Plan (SIP) and scores. The October 2014 QSAC report was given to NESB by Commissioner Hesper at the first meeting on July 31, 2015.

Community input meetings were held in September and November 2015, in addition to regular NESB meetings. In addition, Four Newark Advisory Board members were invited and attended a portion of the November 2015 NESB meeting.

In January 2016, Ross Danis resigned from the NESB to accept a new position in North Carolina. Shane Harris joined the NESB in February 2016. In February 2016, NESB members agreed to engage the Panasonic Foundation<sup>1</sup> to serve as the facilitator for the work going forward. The Panasonic team, led by Dr. Larry Leverett, conducted telephone interviews with each NESB member. In March 2016, the NESB began meeting twice monthly with Panasonic facilitating the work of the meetings.

## NESB Members

### Mary Bennett

Chair and Secretary: Educator, Alliance for Newark Public Schools

### Christopher Cerf

Superintendent, Newark Public Schools;  
Former New Jersey Commissioner of Education

### Ross Danis

Former President and CEO, Newark Trust for Education  
(served July - December 2015)

### Shane Harris

Vice President of Corporate Giving and Executive Director,  
Prudential Foundation (served February 2016 - present)

### Honorable Rochelle Hendricks

Secretary of Higher Education, State of New Jersey

### Donald Katz

Founder and CEO, Audible, Inc.

### Al Koepp

Trustee, St. Benedict's Preparatory School; Former CEO Newark  
Alliance; Retired CEO Verizon; Retired COO PSE&G

### Jose Leonardo

Former President of Newark Student Union; Student, Arts High School

### Grace Sergio

Parent, Newark Public Schools

### Rev. Perry Simmons

Pastor, Abyssinian Baptist Church

## Staff, Liaisons, Advisors and Personnel

### Amanda Cahn

Independent Consultant at Newark Public Schools

### Cathy Coyle

Special Commissioner to New Jersey Department of Education Commissioner

### David Hesper

New Jersey Commissioner of Education,

### Lauren Wells

(until June 2016) Chief Education Officer to Mayor Ras Baraka

### De'Shawn Wright

Chief of Staff at Newark Public Schools

## Methodology

The NESB collaboratively developed content for each section of the report during its monthly meetings. The Panasonic Foundation provided background reading and research material for each section developed by the NESB. Information was sent to all NESB members in advance of meetings, and meeting sessions included collaborative discussion and recommendation development. Panasonic then gathered the feedback from all NESB members and revised drafts that were then reviewed and finalized at subsequent NESB meetings.

Input from community meetings in September and November 2015 was incorporated into the report. The September community meeting was attended by 140 people at Abyssinian Baptist Church, and the November 2015 meeting was attended by 35 people at Abyssinian Baptist Church. The NESB also met with representatives of Uncommon Schools to learn about the strategies underlying the academic progress their students have achieved.

The NESB began to discuss options for possible report editors/writers in December 2015. NESB decided that an external writer would be best. Several

individuals were recommended and vetted, and Dr. Sheryl Petty of Management Assistance Group was selected in May 2016. Lauren Wells secured funds to support the writing process. The editor compiled the information developed during the NESB meetings and other background materials provided, to synthesize the sections of the report.

On behalf of the NESB, Mary Bennett requested assistance for the completion of the report document. The Mayor's Office and Panasonic agreed to provide assistance in producing the report document.

## Requirements Governing Newark Public Schools Returning to Local Control

### Quality Single Accountability System (QSAC)<sup>2</sup>

NESB's original charge from the Governor and Mayor was to determine timelines and milestones for the return of local control. After diligent research and review of Newark's standing and Quality Single Accountability System (QSAC), the New Jersey state monitoring system used to evaluate school districts, NESB determined that its work was inextricably linked to QSAC and therefore focused careful attention on the QSAC process. As part of this, the NESB requested the participation of Joseph Zarra, Essex County Superintendent, who is in charge of the QSAC team, at their August 2015 meeting. This served to inform and provide a deeper perspective from the County Superintendent about the district's evolving work, including aspects of organizational culture and stakeholder collaboration.

QSAC is the evaluation and monitoring system that gives the State the authority to take over and return a local school district from and to local community control and provides for state monitoring in **five areas**: 1) Instruction and Program, 2) Personnel, 3) Fiscal Management, 4) Operations Management, and 5) Governance. When the State took over in 1995, Newark was placed under full-district control, meaning that all five areas within QSAC were under the State's authority.

To initiate the return to local control in any area, a district under State control must 1) demonstrate substantial and sustained progress, as signified by receiving a score of 80 or above on a full or interim District Performance Review (DPR) and demonstrate substantial evidence that the district has the adequate programs, policies and personnel in place and in operation to ensure that demonstrated progress is sustained (as has happened with Newark and other school districts in the past, the State can assess the district at 80 or higher but withhold control under certain conditions until adequate evidence is provided to ensure long term capacity is in place.) Once that score and evidence of sustainable progress is achieved, the Commissioner of Education may then 2) make a determination that the district's progress is sufficient enough to recommend to the State Board of Education that local control be returned.

After the Commissioner recommends the return of local control of an area to the New Jersey State Board of Education, the NJ BOE then votes on whether to return the area to local control. Once the NJ BOE approves an area's return, the district, in coordination with the local stakeholders, develops a "Transition Plan." A Transition Plan for a QSAC area, and the official return of control for it, are only official once the local School Advisory Board (or, if the district has Governance, the full governing Board) approves the Transition Plan. Transition Plans provide for a set of conditions, actions,

and policies the district and/or board must put and keep in place, and may be set for any time period, though in recent history this has been for a range of one to two years. Unless the district and board do not follow the Transition Plan (in which case the State may take back control), the district then has local control of the area.

## Timeline for Return of Local Control Under QSAC

As of August 3, 2016, Newark has earned control in three areas: Operations in 2007, Fiscal Management in 2014 and Personnel in 2016. In its 2014 Interim Review, NPS earned 72 in Governance and 62 in Instruction and Program. In the May 2016 Interim Review, the district earned 100 in Personnel. While the score in Instruction and Program remains below the minimum of 80, an Equivalency Waiver was awarded to the district in recognition of significant gains in this area. At the end of the 2016-2017 school year, an additional QSAC review will determine the status of the two remaining areas, Governance and Instruction and Program, that have not been returned to local control. The August 1, 2016 letter from Commissioner David Hespe said that, if that 2017 QSAC review determines that the district has maintained its progress in those two areas, and if the state evaluates that adequate programs, policies and personnel are in place, it is expected that governance will be returned for the 2017-18 school year. Local control over governance restores the power of the local school board to select the Superintendent.

The process described above must occur for each area under State control. Additionally, with regard to Governance, New Jersey law requires that an election occur in which the voters of the district decide whether it thereafter will be governed by a Type I or Type II school board. In Type I districts, the Mayor of the city in which the district is located appoints school board members. In Type II, the City's voters elect school board members.<sup>3</sup> The district must hold the election to determine the type of board that will govern it moving forward within a year after it has satisfied all components of its transition plan.<sup>4</sup> This "special election" is conducted pursuant to Title 19 of the New Jersey statutes.<sup>5</sup>

The timeline to return full local control in Newark depends on how quickly the district improves its QSAC scores in each of the three remaining areas as well as the state's evaluation of the degree that adequate programs, policies and personnel are in place to sustain the progress. The State conducted its most recent Interim review on May 18, 2016 for the three areas still under State control: Governance, Personnel, and Instruction & Program. Mary Bennett was invited by Antoinette Baskerville Richardson, NPS Advisory Board President, and Superintendent Cerf to attend the opening sessions with the County's review team on day one of the interim visit on May 18, 2016. A report with final scores for the district was delivered to the district on August 2, 2016.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.panasonicfoundation.net>

<sup>2</sup> See: "QSAC: A Guide for School Officials and the Public." (2007). *Institute on Education Law and Policy* at Rutgers University. [http://ielp.rutgers.edu/docs/QSAC\\_Guide\\_final.pdf](http://ielp.rutgers.edu/docs/QSAC_Guide_final.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> N.J.S.A. § 18A:12-6. To signify acceptance of the return of local governance control, either the municipal governing body (in Newark, the City Council) or the Board of Education (in either case, by resolution adopted by a majority of its members), or the voters of the municipality by petition signed by 15 percent of voters, must call for a referendum on whether the district shall thereafter be governed by a Type I or Type II board. The school board then files the question of acceptance with the clerk of the municipality, and according to the majority of votes cast in the referendum, the district is governed by the provisions of New Jersey law that control the type of board that the electorate has approved.

<sup>4</sup> N.J.S.A. § 18A:7A-49e, -f, -g.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* The special election is conducted by the Board of Education. County and municipal election officials are to carry out their statutory duties in connection with the election, but the Board of Education is responsible for seeing that it occurs and for educating the voters on the question to be presented in the election.



# NESB RECOMMENDATIONS

## Introduction

The recommendations below respond to the five QSAC areas used to assess the effectiveness of New Jersey public schools, with the addition of Family & Community Engagement, given its significance in the efficacy of school systems, parent and community investment, and the importance of community partnership in school systems. Though Operations is part of the QSAC areas, no section is included on this area in the document given that Operations has been returned to local control. A section on Finance is included, though it has also been returned to local control. Given the budget challenges and projections for continued concern over the next few years, this document includes recommended pathways for assessing and addressing these financial issues.

The district has been engaged in strategic planning since early 2016. This report is not intended to replace or supplement the NPS Strategic Plan. Some NESB members participated in the district-wide and community input process as the initial 3-year “Goal and Priorities”<sup>6</sup> were established to guide NPS through 2019. In addition, the district has also established an annual District Improvement Plan

(DIP) to guide the efforts underway in the short-term.

To establish a baseline for the NESB work, attention was given to the 1994 report from the Comprehensive Compliance Investigation (CCI) of NPS which provided detailed information about the district’s poor performance in Levels I, II and III of the state’s monitoring process for all New Jersey public schools. The persistence of poor student achievement, disengagement of board members, corruption, and lack of community and parent engagement, led to the Newark school district being taken over by the state in July 1995. In the appendix, there are two documents provided by the district: the first is the **history of the state takeover** in Newark, and the second is the **current state of affairs** within the district.

The **recommendations developed by the NESB** are divided into the following sections:

1. Governance
2. Curriculum, Instruction and Programs
3. Talent Development
4. Family & Community Engagement
5. Finance
6. Phasing of Recommendations

## Governance

### Overview

Given that Governance responsibilities have not been returned to NPS, the following outlines the duties, responsibilities and structures that will support the effective functioning of the School Board. All members of the current Advisory Board are elected by the citizens of Newark. They are entrusted with the responsibility knowing and understanding their roles and fully performing their duties on behalf of the children and community they represent. Through the restoration of local control, they will be empowered to make binding decisions on behalf of the public school system.

### Board of Education Duties and Responsibilities

1. Board members are stewards of NPS. They recognize that NPS belongs to students, families and the community. The sole purpose of NPS and the Board’s structure, policies, practices and procedures is to provide an effective free public education for all children.
2. The Board is responsible for ensuring that Board members have the awareness, knowledge and understanding to act in the interests of children as the primary “focus” of all decisions.
3. The Board will design a process for a Superintendent search, including:
  - a. Requiring that all candidates meet the state law requirements for the position and have demonstrated competency in increasing student achievement, organizational leadership and financial management.
  - b. Identifying an executive search team with a sound reputation for leading successful Superintendent searches, including screening for focus on both equity and excellence.
  - c. Designing and implementing an inclusive process in partnership with the search team, which involves a committee of civic leaders representative of the NPS community.
4. Board of Education members shall support and when appropriate guide, the Superintendent to support his/her success. The Board shall:
  - a. Maintain an annual schedule to set district goals;
  - b. Implement mechanisms to monitor system performance on agreed upon metrics that measure the progress of the system toward meeting the targeted goals;

- c. Fully exercise its statutory responsibility (18A 17-20-3) to evaluate the Superintendent, and ensure state requirements for the evaluation of the Superintendent are met in a timely and effective manner.
  - d. Conduct annual mid-year and end-of-year assessments of the system's progress;
5. The school Board shall support the Superintendent by providing input and counsel on senior appointments.
  6. The school Board shall require the Superintendent to develop and implement a plan of talent development for district employees to assume leadership roles at the central office and school level.
  7. The school Board shall develop a systematic process to encourage community engagement through democratic participation in all areas aligned with the system's goals to improve effectiveness and increase student academic achievement and social emotional competence.

### Organization of the Board to Accomplish its Duties and Responsibilities

1. The school Board shall annually develop and implement a set of Board Development Goals to support the continuous improvement activities related to Board governance.
  - a. This includes a continuous focus on the strategic efforts of the district to accelerate student achievement and knowledge of the national and regional trends in education.
  - b. The Board's annual work calendar shall be developed reflecting priority areas of focus and development during each school year.
  - c. All Board members, through their committee leadership and collective Board functioning, will ensure the inclusion of priority topics throughout the school year calendar.
2. The Board will engage in Board development activities to support its efforts to establish and

- maintain an effective committee framework based on best practices in Board governance.
- a. The Board shall develop and enact Board by-laws to provide structure and direction for all school Board committees.
  - b. Further, the Board committee process shall provide opportunities for diverse community members with specific expertise to continuously interact with Board committees as appropriate to the work, duties and responsibilities of each standing Board committee (e.g. finance and audit, operations, facilities, instruction and program, legal issues, talent development, community engagement, communications and strategic planning).
  - c. The Board shall also be provided with information, data and support in interpreting data on the system's progress and success.
  - d. The Board shall seek out support and guidance from credible parties such as the New Jersey School Boards Association.
3. The school Board shall develop and adopt by-laws that provide direction to the Board and Superintendent for the effective use of community advisory committees formed to advise the school district (Board and Superintendent) in specific areas that impact the effectiveness and efficiency in all operations of the school district.
  4. The school Board and Superintendent shall develop written communications protocols to ensure effective two-way communication between the Board and the district (e.g. Board to Superintendent, Superintendent to Board, Board member to Board member, Board members to staff, and staff to Board members).
    - a. The adopted protocols shall support timely and accurate dissemination of messages and information that enable the Board, Superintendent, and senior leadership to have the information needed to effectively perform their roles.
  5. The role of the district auditor should be defined in conformity with state law to include the capacity of the Board to be good and effective stewards of the resources entrusted to them for the education of Newark's school children.

New Board members and all members of the current Advisory Board, shall be given regular opportunities to learn their role as stewards of Newark Public Schools, with an emphasis on their governance, policy and fiduciary responsibilities.

6. The Board and the district should have appropriate legal counsel in all matters requiring legal representation. Such counsel should include provisions for when the Board and Superintendent deem it is necessary to retain the services of outside legal counsel.

### Board Induction, Development and Training

1. New Board members and all members of the current Advisory Board, shall be given regular opportunities to learn their role as stewards of Newark Public Schools, with an emphasis on their governance, policy and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. Board members shall comply with the Board member training program as required by NJ State Law (18A:12-33). This is the minimum requirement to which Board members must commit.
3. Board members shall participate in twice annual Board retreats and self-assessments to improve their capacity to fulfill their governance, policy and fiduciary responsibilities.
4. Job descriptions, training and support shall be provided to Board members in chairing committees and to committee members in areas of committee's responsibility.
5. The induction process shall extend beyond the resources of the state of New Jersey to acquire Board development resources from local and national levels.

### Conditions to Ensure a Highly Effective Board

1. Ensure Board members are familiar with NJ State law related to Conflicts of Interest (18A: 12-24) and the Code of Ethics for School Board Members and file annually the Disclosure State of Employment, contracts or business with schools and Financial Disclosure Statement, as required by NJ State Law (28A: 12 - 24, 1, 18A: 12-25, 18A: 12 - 16).
2. The Board chair and vice chairperson shall assume the responsibilities for the effective operation of Board meetings and exercise authority to guide Board members in following the agreed to norms of behavior.
3. The Board through the chairperson and Superintendent, with the support of NPS security personnel, shall have the authority to assure appropriate levels of decorum at all public meetings.
4. The Board shall continue to collaborate with the Superintendent in implementing the new strategic plan to assure alignment between the Superintendent's vision, mission, academic and operational goals, including development of a reflection and monitoring system.
  - a. The strategic plan having benefited from community and stakeholder input must be effectively communicated and disseminated to assure that everyone is informed and prepared to implement the plan.
  - b. The strategic plan identifies transparent shared goals for student academic achievement and socio-emotional competency, the school system's organizational climate, management and operational improvements.



# Curriculum, Instruction & Programs

## Overview

- c. The Board and the Superintendent shall collaborate to align programs, budget and other resources towards the attainment of the annual goals in the strategic plan.
  - d. The Board and the Superintendent shall agree on a systematic process for Board reflection and monitoring of the strategic plan results and system performance.
  - e. The Board shall develop and implement a systematic approach to monitoring district performance and metrics defined in the strategic plan.
  - f. The Board shall develop and implement a work plan that includes reflection, oversight and a schedule for monitoring progress and supports needed.
  - g. The system performance in all areas of the strategic plan's goals and targets will be the foundation of the evaluation of the Superintendent.
5. Board members and the Superintendent shall develop processes to build trust and partnership to enable the Board and Superintendent to work collaboratively toward the district's shared goals and to address issues and challenges that impede district progress.
- a. Professional intermediaries shall be engaged to resolve issues impeding progress in the district as needed, if the issues cannot be resolved by the Board and the Superintendent working together.
  - b. These intermediaries could be the County Superintendent, New Jersey School Board's representatives, external capacity builders and technical assistance providers, etc.

### Overarching Areas

1. As part of the strategic planning process, the Superintendent, in partnership with the School Board and district stakeholders, have developed a **bold vision, core values and theory of action** to drive system change and support an expectation that all learners can be academically and socially successful.
  - a. This vision, values and theory of action should be accompanied by a dashboard to enable continuous monitoring of all components of the school system.
  - b. This reflection and accountability system should support the continued creation of a district culture and operational expectations to drive systemic changes throughout NPS.
  - c. All elements of this framework shall inform the school district and community with an evidenced-based approach to ensure all learners are prepared for the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century.
  - d. The framework should outline the knowledge, skills and necessary support systems related to standards, assessments, curriculum, instruction, professional development, and the learning environments students need to be prepared for a diverse, digitally

Newark Public Schools seeks to provide a transformative education that will equip its students to embrace and adapt to the challenges and opportunities that the **21st century** presents. Such a focus recognizes that the current U.S. education system was designed to support an industrial society that is now obsolete, and has been replaced by a world of continuously accelerating change powered by the forces of technology and globalization.

For the next generation of learners to succeed and thrive, their learning experiences must facilitate development in three primary domains: 1) **knowledge** (theoretical or practical understanding), 2) **skills** (capacities and strategies that enable learners to apply knowledge to new situations, engage in higher order thinking, problem solve, collaborate, communicate effectively, and plan for the future), and 3) **dispositions** (behaviors and ways of being that contribute to learners fulfilling their full potential, and contributing in healthy ways to their communities).<sup>7</sup>

This section highlights focus areas in designing and improving curriculum, instructional practices and programs to support each and every NPS student's development in these domains. All areas should be undertaken with appropriate central office leadership, in partnership with principals, teachers, students, families and staff.

<sup>6</sup> See: [www.nps.k12.nj.us/strategic-plan](http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/strategic-plan)

- and globally interconnected world.
- e. The role of district leadership in partnership with students and representative community members, is to design the vision and strategic plan for developing schools that are prepared and held accountable for the successful implementation of such a 21st century framework.<sup>8</sup>
  - f. Through a collaborative partnership, the Newark Public Schools and the City of Newark have begun a community schools initiative that will impact 5 schools in the South ward beginning in the 2016-17 school year. The implementation of this initiative should be closely observed to assess its effectiveness and identify opportunities to more broadly adopt the best practices related to successful outcomes for students.
    - i. The South Ward Community Schools Initiative is adopting a model that has been used effectively for decades around the country. Its base in each school is a strong instructional core, comprehensive support services and programs that reach beyond the traditional school and beyond the usual co-curricular offerings for student, their families and the school community.
    - ii. Through a thoughtful process of meetings, surveys, focus groups, and planning, each community school is able to identify what is needed to support their students' academic, social and emotional growth.

**2. Establish a Culture of Mutual Support, Collaboration and Achievement for Employees and ALL Students**

- a. Newark Public School students must be provided with high expectations, reinforcement for these expectations, and the opportunities to be involved in high intellectual performances based on expectations for students to succeed in a rigorous academic program in every classroom, in every school, across all programs and systems of instruction. Students shall be given

consistent messages from all NPS employees that they can be successful academically and socially. High expectations must go beyond rhetoric from teachers, administrators, and all other district instructional and non-instructional district employees.

3. The school Board, in partnership with the Superintendent and community, shall **coordinate existing equity policies and develop a single guiding NPS equity policy** that sets system expectations to foster a barrier-free environment where all students, regardless of race, class, learning needs, or other personal characteristics, have the opportunity to share their strengths, learn, grow and receive support equitably.
  - a. The policy should inform decisions about equitable access to high quality curriculum, programs, resources, supports, personnel, and facilities.
  - b. The policy should additionally include provisions for culturally responsive approaches to promoting positive school climate, student engagement, relationships and behavior that supports the learning and safety of all students.<sup>9</sup>
  - c. The policy should also include provisions for improving teacher effectiveness and improving student access to effective teachers, leading to higher, more equitable student achievement.<sup>10</sup>
4. The Superintendent and district leadership shall continue to provide clear **standards** for student learning accompanied by high quality curriculum **materials** and **assessments** that have as key elements:
  - a. Common standards for teaching that are related to meaningful student learning;
  - b. Standards-based, equity-driven assessment;
  - c. Support structures and aligned professional learning opportunities for teachers<sup>11</sup> to lead instruction and give direction to NPS programming.
5. The Superintendent and district leadership shall continue to implement a **comprehensive curriculum** that will reflect current

research to enable all children to fulfill their full potential as empowered individuals, constructive members of their communities, productive participants in the economy, and engaged citizens of the US and the world.<sup>12</sup>

6. The Superintendent and district leadership shall pursue a process to ensure the **central office transformation** that focuses all employees centrally and meaningfully on teaching and learning improvement, and supporting school building administrators in providing high quality instruction in every school, for each student.
  - a. A reassessment of the relationship between the central office and schools should determine the extent to which systems are aligned to support effective teaching, learning and student achievement.
  - b. An example of an assessment tool to aid in this reflection is the *Five Dimensions of Central Office Transformation*<sup>13</sup>, which includes:
    - i. Learning-focused partnerships with school principals to deepen principals' instructional leadership practice.
    - ii. Assistance to central office and school principals to build effective partnerships and maximize the resources of all the partners to benefit schools.
    - iii. Stewardship of the overall central office transformation process.
    - iv. Use of evidence throughout central office to support continual improvement of work practices and relationships with schools.
7. The Superintendent and district leadership shall ensure that there is **transformative educational leadership** at both the Central Office and school levels.<sup>14</sup> The transformative NPS administrator must:
  - a. Strive for high quality, equitable instruction;
  - b. Possess the expertise to lead his/her staff to achieve such instruction;
  - c. Be an expert on child learning and development;
  - d. Have an in-depth knowledge of public policy; and

- e. Have the ability to work collaboratively and guide his/her team to turn their vision into a reality.

**Components**

**District-Wide Leadership Support and Culture**

1. The NPS Board of Education and Superintendent should continue to *attract and retain* a world class, district-level, academic leadership team.
  - » The team should ensure every office and every aspect of central office functions—optimally and measurably—to serve, facilitate and support schools.
2. The NPS Board of Education, Superintendent and district leaders should establish the identity of NPS as an *integrated and interdependent community of “learners”* made up of students, teachers, staff, parents and Board members who are dedicated to preparing all students for success in college and careers.
3. The NPS Board of Education and Superintendent should celebrate teaching as a profession, (not only a job).
  - » To this end, the District and Board should continue its operation of committees (notably the Peer Oversight Committee and District Evaluation Advisory Committee), to build trust and develop common approaches.

**Standards**

1. Clear standards should continue to be reviewed and, where appropriate, improved to create a seamless education system through<sup>15</sup>:
  - a. The intentional alignment of pre-school through post-secondary expectations for students;
  - b. Addressing the strengths and needs of the whole student through a rich and balanced curriculum;
  - c. Infusing 21st century skills into rigorous content; and
  - d. Preparing all students for meaningful post-secondary options, constructive community participation, and the workforce.



The NPS Board of Education, Superintendent and district leaders should establish the identity of NPS as an *integrated and interdependent community of “learners”* made up of students, teachers, staff, parents and Board members who are dedicated to preparing *all* students for success in college and careers.

### Equitable School Resources

1. NPS Board of Education and Superintendent should continue to ensure every student has *equitable access* to support, well-maintained facilities and high-quality curriculum, and that schools are resourced (with staff, materials, and programs) to fully support meaningful, measurable student learning.

### Curriculum

Today’s students need to develop thinking skills, content knowledge, and social and emotional competencies to navigate complex life and work environments. We live in a technology and media-driven environment, marked by access to an abundance of information, rapid changes in technology tools and the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale. Effective community members must be able to exhibit a range of functional and critical thinking skills. This section outlines expectations for NPS in developing the content for student skills in the 21st century.

1. The NPS Board of Education and Superintendent should continue to ensure that all students have access to curriculum aligned to common core standards that is research-based, comprehensive, and rigorous.
  - a. Further, the curriculum should offer access to deep content knowledge and integrate critical thinking and other 21st Century skills<sup>16</sup> in ways that allow for adults to continuously build on the strengths of students over several years.
  - b. Curriculum should minimally include the following:<sup>17</sup>

- i. Key Subjects and 21st Century Themes
    1. English, reading / language arts, world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history, government and civics
    2. Global Awareness
    3. Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy
    4. Civic Literacy
    5. Health Literacy
    6. Environmental Literacy
  - ii. Learning and Innovation Skills
    1. Creativity and Innovation
    2. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
    3. Communication and Collaboration
  - iii. Information, Media and Technology Skills
    1. Information Literacy
    2. Media Literacy
    3. ICT (Information, Communications and Technology) Literacy
  - iv. Life and Career Skills
    1. Flexibility and Adaptability
    2. Initiative and Self-Direction
    3. Social and Cross-Cultural Skills
    4. Productivity and Accountability
    5. Leadership and Responsibility
2. Graduates of NPS high schools should be prepared for success in college, careers and contributing to their communities. They should additionally:
    - a. Know their rights as contributing members of society;
    - b. Learn diverse cultures (e.g., Eurocentric) that is inclusive of the deep history and contributions of African American, Native

- American, Latino, Portuguese, Asian American and global cultures; and
  - c. Ensure that there are sufficient Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities for students.
3. In addition, the NPS Board of Education and Superintendent should ensure all students have access to *varied curriculum offerings* with attention to:
    - a. extra and co-curricular activities,
    - b. guidance counseling services,
    - c. public service/social responsibility,
    - d. health and sex education,
    - e. social activities,
    - f. physical education and athletics, and
    - g. student leadership.
  4. The NPS Board of Education and Superintendent should ensure all students have access to multiple pathways to success designed to meet their *diverse strengths, needs, learning styles, preferences and interests*.

### Instruction<sup>18</sup>

1. All students should be *supported, encouraged and instructed to achieve rigorous* outcomes.
  - a. Instructional practices should be culturally responsive,<sup>19</sup> drawing on and engaging students’ strengths, gifts, and skills from their cultures and communities, as well as identifying and providing scaffolding to address their learning needs.
  - b. All students means all – including students with disabilities, English language learners, and others who have learning needs unmet by traditional instruction.
2. *Teachers* should continue to have:
  - a. High quality curriculum;
  - b. High quality instructional resources (including technology);
  - c. Structures and resources for common planning time with their peers, encouraging mutual support and on-going learning to improve their skills;
  - d. Instructional coaching and

- support, as needed;
  - e. The ability to earn and leverage autonomy in decisions regarding unit and lesson planning; and
  - f. On-going, formative reflection and assessment strategies to adjust instructional approaches based on real-time student learning.
4. District and school leadership teams should identify and implement best practices in *instructional management*, such as coaching and design of highly effective teams.
    - a. Support the development and cultivation of teacher leaders.
  5. The NPS Superintendent and district leadership should continue to:
    - a. Develop and implement a robust system of *reflection, measurement and accountability* for student performance, and
    - b. *Report to and engage in dialogue* regularly with the Board of Education and community on progress.

### Professional Development

1. The NPS Superintendent and district leadership should continue to ensure that teachers, principals and other administrators are engaged in ongoing research-based, professional *development* that includes:
  - » Continuous, ongoing support for effective implementation of learned strategies;
  - » Reflection and accountability on the use and impacts of the learning from professional development experiences; and
  - » Appropriate, functional technology to support effective implementation of professional development and instructional approaches.
2. The NPS Superintendent and district leadership should design systems to *measure the impact of professional development* on changes in teaching practices and student learning.
  - » Joint reflection and measurements of effectiveness should be used to differentiate support, rewards and autonomy.
  - » Joint reflection and measurements should also be used to encourage

mutually supportive environments of sharing and using effective strategies and approaches among teachers, principals, administrators and staff.

- The NPS Superintendent, district and school leadership should continue to *engage higher education and community partners* in preparing teachers and providing ongoing development that is relevant to teachers' strengths, needs/skill gaps, are culturally sensitive, and specific to their students' strengths and needs/skill gaps.

#### School Leadership

- The NPS Superintendent and central office leadership should ensure that every school has an effective, *transformational leader* who embraces participation and collaboration with all stakeholders in the community in order to maximize everyone and everything to increase student achievement and students' social and emotional well-being.
- The NPS Superintendent and district leadership should ensure that the principal's main purpose is to be an instructional leader dedicated to designing and implementing a curriculum to drive student achievement.
  - » Principals should be given decision-making authority, particularly over personnel.
- School leaders shall ensure that schools are *welcoming* for students, families and communities.
- Principals and school leadership teams should have *flexibility in establishing schedules* to encourage common planning time / professional learning communities (PLCs).
- NPS central office, school-based leaders and teachers should recognize effort as a vital element in defining success. When risk taking, *mistakes should be expected, valued and used as learning experiences*.

#### Student Engagement Voice

- NPS should establish a range of high-quality approaches to *meaningfully engage students*<sup>20</sup> in school and district success. Efforts may include:
  - Establishing representative student councils

that can be in partnership with school and district leadership to jointly reflect on progress and course-correct efforts in the schools and district, on an on-going basis;

- Students, staff and teachers partnering to design and co-teach lessons and improve classroom and school culture; and other areas.

#### Early Childhood Education

NPS Board of Education and Superintendent should continue to develop and offer access to high quality Early Childhood Education programs to all Newark children and families.

#### Systems of Support

- NPS students should be guaranteed access to a *broad range of academic and social supports* that are timely and evidence-based to generate high levels of success.
- These supports should include strategies such as *personalization, restorative justice* approaches, and improving *school culture*, among other areas.

#### Extended Day/School Year

- Learning opportunities* in all schools should extend beyond the traditional school day and school year.
  - Students must be provided the opportunity to practice what they learned during the school day, receive academic support if needed, and participate in constructive academic activities.
  - Opportunities for enrichment activities shall be provided to students to enhance physical fitness, arts, social-emotional skills, and other approaches that accommodate the wide range of talents that all NPS students possess.
  - Deliberate linkages between the extended school day/afterschool and regular school day must be designed so that programs are high-quality and consistent with the district's strategic plan, standards and curriculum.
  - Community schools<sup>21</sup> (like the South Ward Community Schools initiative) are

a powerful approach to well-rounded student support and engagement.

#### Assessment

Assessment systems must be designed to advance systematic, on-going reflection for the purposes of educational improvement to support student academic and socio-emotional success. The following *best practices in assessment* can guide the district's work:

- The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
- Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
- Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
- Assessment requires attention to outcomes, but also and equally, attention to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
- Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.
- Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.
- Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.
- Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.
- Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.

#### Charter Collaboration and Accountability

The NESB makes its recommendations in consideration of the context of the city's system of schools in 2016, and asserts that:

- Many families in Newark have children in both charter-run and district run schools.
- Others have children who transition between

these options (district, charter and private schools) throughout their pre K-12 experience.

- Students and families are best served when the different sectors communicate and share resources to ensure that all schools in Newark are delivering the highest quality education for all children.
- Core to achieving this vision is the ability of these sectors to acknowledge a shared responsibility to ensure equitable access to high quality education in Newark, and develop a shared commitment to work together in a productive manner to address barriers to equity.

In light of this, the NESB makes the following recommendations for charter collaboration and accountability:

- The NPS Board of Education and the New Jersey Department of Education, through its Office of Charter Schools, should advocate for and actively support a *NPS/Charter/Faith-Based Working Group* to develop a shared vision for high quality education in the City of Newark that includes equitable access for all children in the City.
- The Working Group would collaborate to *identify common expectations* for school quality and commit to a set of *shared values and indicators of success* that help advance the goal of ensuring that all students in the City of Newark regardless of background realize their full potential.
- The Working Group should collaborate to identify common expectations and *share best practices* that address key factors impacting K-12 education in Newark. Examples include: oversight, transparency of data, accountability, access to funding, use of facilities, supporting and retaining great educators, improving school enrollment, addressing special education needs.
- The Working Group would develop *recommendations to help influence innovations* in policy and practice such as: pursue providing options for high performing district schools to operate with levels of autonomy comparable to that of high performing charter and independent schools,

allowing the central office to focus resources on those schools in need of improvement while supporting an expanded innovation ecosystem.

5. In order to increase transparency and shared accountability, the Working Group would produce an *annual report* outlining results of collaborative efforts. The report will be reviewed annually by the NPS Board of Education and the New Jersey Department of Education.



## Talent Development

### Overview

The Newark Public Schools has a responsibility to provide a highly qualified, diverse employee base at every level of the district to provide a 21st century educational experience to all learners, that will equip them with the tools to become productive community members in an ever-evolving society. NPS leaders should be prepared to be **agents of change** responsible for leading, encouraging, empowering and overseeing school improvement efforts to prepare students for college and career with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to ensure their full participation in civic, social and economic domains of our society.

“Research has shown that a teacher’s effectiveness has more impact on a student’s academic achievement than any other factor controlled by school systems, including class size and the school a student attends” (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). The **challenges** in the area of human capital/talent development in NPS have persisted for several decades and are noted in the original Comprehensive Compliance Investigation Report and the more recent QSAC system audits.

The district has developed an updated strategic plan. The preliminary document, “The Next Three Years: Goals and Priorities 2016-19,”<sup>22</sup> includes strategies to address several important talent challenges in Priority 2: Great Leaders and Educators in Every

School and Classroom. The document cites several **accomplishments**, including evidence of the district’s ability to retain more than 90% of “effective” and “highly effective” teachers in NPS classrooms.

However, recruiting enough highly qualified, certified science, math, and bilingual teachers to serve the student population remains a challenge. NPS has considerable work ahead to achieve the full benefits of a human capital/talent development system that provides the resources needed to accelerate improved academic and social outcomes for all of Newark’s learners. **Any current or prospective employee in Newark Public Schools should understand NPS’s history, divisions and a future that includes healing, respect and success for all.**

The areas below are designed to support NPS’s current emphasis in talent development and encourage further investment over the next several years to install a high-quality performance system for human capital and talent development.

1. **Continue and sustain a district-wide effort to transform NPS’s culture and climate.**
  - a. There is a significant need to bring the city together under one unifying banner of success by:
    - i. Creating a core belief system which addresses the key components of

<sup>7</sup> A Transformational Vision for Education in the US, An Initiative of Convergence, n.d., <http://www.p21.org/>, 29 March 2016.

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Coalition for Community Schools, [http://www.communityschools.org/resources/building\\_a\\_vision\\_and\\_strategic\\_plan.aspx](http://www.communityschools.org/resources/building_a_vision_and_strategic_plan.aspx), n.d., 29 March 2016

<sup>9</sup> See for example: [www.schottfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Seattle-Racial-Equity-Policy.pdf](http://www.schottfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Seattle-Racial-Equity-Policy.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond and Robert Rothman, Editors, *Teacher and Leader Effectiveness in High-Performing Education Systems*, Alliance for Excellent Education and Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, CA, 2011

<sup>11</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, *Creating a Comprehensive System for Evaluating and Supporting Effective Teaching*, Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, <https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/creating-comprehensive-system-evaluating-and-supporting-effective-teaching.pdf>, CA, 2012.

<sup>12</sup> A Transformational Vision for Education in the US, An Initiative of Convergence, n.d., <http://www.p21.org/>, 29 March 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Meredith I. Honig, Michael A. Copland, Lydia Rainey, Juli Anna Lorton and Morena Newton, *Central Office Transformation for District-Wide Teaching and Learning Improvement*, Wallace Foundation, April 2010, <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/district-policy-and-practice/Pages/Central-Office-Transformation-District-Wide-Teaching-and-Learning.aspx>, 29 March 2016.

<sup>14</sup> See for example: June Rimmer, “Developing Principals as Equity-Centered Instructional Leaders.” (2016). In *Equity-Centered Capacity Building: Essential Approaches for Excellence and Sustainable School System Transformation*. <https://capacitybuildingnetwork.org/article9/>

<sup>15</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, *Creating a Comprehensive System for Evaluating and Supporting Effective Teaching* Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, <https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/creating-comprehensive-system-evaluating-and-supporting-effective-teaching.pdf>, CA, 2012.

<sup>16</sup> See *The Partnership for 21st Century Learning*, [www.p21.org](http://www.p21.org)

<sup>17</sup> See *Partnership for 21st Century Learning* (2015), “Framework Definitions,” p.2-7.

<sup>18</sup> See for example: Raymond L. Pecheone and Andrea Whittaker (April 2016). “Well-Prepared Teachers Inspire Student Learning.” *Phi Delta Kappan*. V97, N7; and Baltimore City Public Schools, *A Framework for Effective Instruction*. [www.baltimorecityschools.org/Page/24957](http://www.baltimorecityschools.org/Page/24957)

<sup>19</sup> See for example: Brown University’s *Education Alliance*, <https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/strategies-0/culturally-responsive-teaching-0>; the *Equity Alliance* at Arizona State University, [http://www.equityallianceatasu.org/sites/default/files/Website\\_files/CulturallyResponsiveTeaching-Matters.pdf](http://www.equityallianceatasu.org/sites/default/files/Website_files/CulturallyResponsiveTeaching-Matters.pdf); and “*Culturally Responsive Standards-Based Teaching: From Classroom to Community and Back*,” [https://www.amazon.com/Culturally-Responsive-Standards-Based-Teaching-Classroom/dp/1412987024/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1467567932&sr=8-1&keywords=culturally+responsive+standards+based+teaching](https://www.amazon.com/Culturally-Responsive-Standards-Based-Teaching-Classroom/dp/1412987024/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1467567932&sr=8-1&keywords=culturally+responsive+standards+based+teaching)

<sup>20</sup> See for example: Oakland Unified School District “*Engagement Pyramid*” <http://www.ousd.org/Page/11996> and “*Student Engagement Standards*” <http://www.ousd.org/Page/12033>

<sup>21</sup> See [http://www.communityschools.org/aboutschools/what\\_is\\_a\\_community\\_school.aspx](http://www.communityschools.org/aboutschools/what_is_a_community_school.aspx)

- administering a high performing school district;
  - ii. Creating a culture of trust, empowering teachers and recognizing success;
  - iii. Creating structures for sharing and deepening strong practices across the district;
  - iv. Increasing the morale, spirit and pride in Newark's Public Schools;
  - v. Processes that provides resources so that all students are able to learn equitably;
  - vi. Ensuring that equity is a driving force in Talent/Human Resource decision-making and distribution of resources; and
  - vii. Understanding of Newark's communal needs, those issues that bring everyone together and a commitment to a united focus on the success of all schools and children, must be established and communicated by all.
- b. This effort should focus on **building the relationships, ownership and alignment** necessary to provide guidance to district employees on the vision, core values, beliefs, norms and behaviors expected of all employees of the Newark Public Schools.
- i. This effort should also emphasize the importance of collaboration with all bargaining units within the Newark Public Schools to focus the attention of all stakeholders on the common goal of high academic achievement for all Newark Public School students.
  - ii. Create a culture of respect and partnership within the organization. Design processes to skillfully confront and address divisions and barriers across all boundaries.
  - iii. Design and engage the Superintendent, Board of Education, school and district level leaders, staff and educators, principals, collective bargaining units, students, families and school district partners in a sustained, collaborative process to continue to transform the district organizational culture and climate in ways that increase ownership and commitment
- to the success of all students, families and the Newark Public Schools.
- iv. Build on recent surveys to in a systemic way to monitor student, family and staff perceptions of climate, culture, work conditions, health and safety indicators, and employee satisfaction.
- 2. Continue to assess all aspects of the district's NPS Human Capital/Talent Development current state and needs, structures/infrastructure, processes, procedures and practices.**
- a. The assessment should include, but not be limited to the following areas:
    - i. The leadership and staffing needs of each school;
    - ii. Board of Education policies;
    - iii. Administrative regulations;
    - iv. Sourcing and preparation;
    - v. Induction and support;
    - vi. Training and development of certificated and non-certificated staff;
    - vii. The use of the lens of equity and cultural responsiveness in recruitment, deployment, induction, professional development, evaluation and compensation of educators and staff throughout the district;
    - viii. Performance management for all district employees;
    - ix. Compensation systems and non-monetary rewards;
    - x. Organizational climate, culture and work conditions; and
    - xi. Data systems, record keeping systems and information management.
  - b. The needs assessment should be implemented during the 2016-17 school year in order to identify short- and long-term strategies to be implemented in the 2017-18 school year.
- 3. Continue to develop and implement a sustainable approach to Professional Growth and Development.**
- a. Professional development must always

## Embed mentoring in an integrated professional culture to help provide the most effective support

- begin in the spirit of an environment based on trust and collaboration.
  - b. Ensure that professional development is culturally responsive and relevant to the experiences of Newark students and communities.
  - c. Align this effort with the central office transformation process noted in the "Curriculum, Instruction & Programs" section above, focusing all employees meaningfully on providing high quality instruction in every school, for each student.
  - d. Continue the use of leadership cohorts that are based on continuous improvement and best practices, such as the Principal and Vice Principal Leadership Institutes. Explore models from other high achieving urban school districts to build upon the work to date.
  - e. Identify what works within Newark Public Schools, charter and private schools, and share that information across among all district educators and staff.
  - f. Ensure that all schools have planned professional development for new teachers including a full orientation before school starts, ongoing support seminars during the school year, and mentoring.
  - g. Embed mentoring in an integrated professional culture to help provide the most effective support, including improvement of teaching performance, facilitation of knowledge transfer, promotion of personal and professional well-being, and socialization within the school culture. Principals and support staff must have clearly definable deliverables and evaluated based on these needs.
  - h. Ensure that this approach is based in high quality supports, investments and high-quality data to build the capacity of educators and leaders to provide instruction that increases the academic and social success of all learners.
  - i. Develop a carefully designed 3-5 year implementation plan for professional development fully aligned with the strategic plan, supported by a financial plan.
- 4. Continue to Design and Implement Leadership Development Programs.**
- a. Invest in the development of instructional leadership at all levels in the district, with particular focus on ensuring that every district school is led by a well-prepared principal.
  - b. Focus the leadership program on new and veteran leaders and design it to concentrate on modeling the behaviors, dispositions and skills necessary to promote instructional leadership.
  - c. Ensure that high-quality, culturally responsive mentoring is provided as a critical component of professional integration for all new teachers, whether they are prepared through traditional or alternate routes.
  - d. Ensure that succession planning for district administration is part of leadership development plans.
- 5. Provide Targeted Professional Development on Cultural Inclusiveness and the role of Unconscious Bias in successfully educating diverse students.**
- a. Ensure that all staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and dispositions needed to become aware of unconscious bias and function at high levels of effectiveness.
  - b. Professional development programs for new hires and existing staff must focus on preparing all NPS employees to provide a culturally inclusive learning environment which values the cultural and racial diversity of NPS students and families.

## Improve and expand partnerships with colleges and universities to ensure that teachers, counselors, coaches, instructional support personnel, principals.

### 6. Support and Monitor the Implementation of Key Strategies in Priority 2: Great Leaders and Educators in Every School and Classroom, with the following additions and amendments:

- a. Build upon the commitments to communicate, organize, support and align district talent resources to implement the goals and priorities included within Priority 2 of the current iteration of the NPS emerging strategic plan. These areas include:
  - i. Retention of effective teachers and principals
  - ii. Providing better coaching and feedback to support improved practice
  - iii. Improving recruitment of effective educators
  - iv. Empowering teacher leaders
- b. Ensure that recruitment programs exist that identify high quality team members who are reflective of all school communities racially, linguistically, culturally, religiously, across all distinctions, genders and preferences.
  - i. A special effort should be made to develop and increase high-quality African American and Latino male teachers and administrators.
  - ii. NPS may engage in partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, for example, to increase its pool of qualified and committed candidates.
  - iii. Develop a “Grow our Own” strategy to encourage more native Newarkers to become teachers and principals within the public school system.
- c. The Board of education, in collaboration with the Superintendent, should establish district and school level metrics to measure period-to-period impact of system efforts to implement the major initiatives in Priority 2 of

- the current iteration of the NPS strategic plan.
- d. The Board, commensurate with its responsibility to monitor district performance, should work collaboratively with the Superintendent to design and implement a monitoring system to gauge district progress toward the attainment of agreed upon outcome measures.
    - i. The frequency and format of Board monitoring reports, to be prepared by the Superintendent, shall be agreed to by the Board and Superintendent in advance.

### 7. Focused Partnerships with College and University-based Teacher and Leadership Preparation Programs.

- a. Be proactive, deliberate and intentional in the effort to ensure that Newark Public School employees are prepared to assume effective instructional and leadership roles.
- b. Improve and expand partnerships with colleges and universities to ensure that teachers, counselors, coaches, instructional support personnel, principals, administrators, supervisors and coordinators are prepared to educate a diverse racial, ethnic, socially, and economically stressed learners and their families.
- c. Continue to partner with local universities to strengthen NPS’s professional growth and development systems.<sup>23</sup>

### 8. Continue to design and implement aligned performance accountability systems with key metrics and achievable results critical to the equitable education of all students.

- a. Improve the performance appraisal system to identify and support the development of more effective teachers, staff and administrators.

- b. Implement effective monitoring systems to provide clear and valuable data linked to student and staff performance.
- c. Create systems that support staff, teachers and administrators to reflect systematically on their performance (independently as well as in collaboration), to increase clarity about intentions and actual performance, improve practice, and deepen collaboration in support of all students.
- d. Ensure that the Board is provided support and information on teaching and learning, data and metrics to create focus and understanding that a highly qualified operational labor force will result in a high performing district.
- e. Provide recognition and acknowledgment from the school Board of all those who contribute to the progress of schools in moving toward their achievable results as a school community.

### 9. Assure that the compensation system helps retain and attract high-quality, long-term, culturally responsive teachers, administrators and staff.

- a. Commitment and exemplary practice at all levels of the school system should be adequately and equitably recognized and rewarded.

<sup>22</sup> <http://content.nps.k12.nj.us/wp-content/uploads/mdocs/newarkprioritiesexecsummary.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> See for example: Karen Symms Gallagher, Thomas E. C. Smith, and Charise Anderson (April 2016). “Deans for Impact: Who We Are and What We Stand For.” *Kappan Magazine*, V97, N7.



## Family & Community Engagement

### Overview

Nurturing the development of school and community relationships is a critically important commitment that fosters a **belief in the capability of all students** to succeed in school, family and community settings. Highly effective family and community engagement strategies require an aligned, coherent focus from the “Boardroom to the classroom,” and throughout the community. Districts committed to higher levels of learning for students design, implement and monitor creative linkages between the home, school, community-based organizations, child-serving agencies, higher education, health and social service organizations, philanthropic organizations, private sector businesses, faith-based communities, and all other assets present in the community.

An NPS vision for family and community engagement must **challenge historical conditions of low expectations, assigning blame, absence of stakeholder trust** in the school system, and lack of belief in the ability of schools to ensure the academic and social success of every child. Partnership with families and communities based on a positive orientation that builds on strengths, student, family and community assets and resources, requires investments in connecting to the potential of the school system to release the genius that exists in all learners.

Embodying a **strengths/asset-based perspective**

requires broad based, comprehensive approaches supported by leadership commitment, thoughtful planning, implementation, policy, capacity building, resource allocations, results-based accountability—all sustained over the long-term. Student success can be fully maximized with such family and community engagement strategies that are supported by quality leadership at all levels of the district.

When a school system embraces the benefits that can be accrued by engaging parents and community as partners, opportunities are created to **rebuild the trust, confidence and shared ownership** of all stakeholders to enrich the opportunities for children to experience success. By re-wiring the relationships between schools, families, and community resources, new sets of possibilities are created that can build a culture of achievement for the adults who work with our learners and the efficacy of learners and their families. Effective family and community engagement can positively impact the academic and social success of every child.

### Areas of Focus

The following considerations inform family and community engagement approaches necessary to providing Newark students a

transformative education that will equip them with a 21st century learning experience:

#### 1. Adopt a School District Vision that Drives Family and Community Engagement

Family and Community Engagement must be driven by a powerful vision focused on high levels of student learning and that communicates the district’s commitment to engaging the total school community in efforts to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in achieving the district’s vision.

#### 2. Develop a Framework and Infrastructure to Support Robust Implementation of District- and School-Level Family and Community Engagement Policies, Goals, Expectations, Strategies and Practices<sup>24</sup>

- a. The Framework should be defined by Board of education policy and:
  - i. Demonstrate clear expectations for schools to provide meaningful engagement in parent engagement strategies that support parents having access to strategies and activities to help their children to be successful in school;
  - ii. Increase accountability for performance effectiveness using multiple measures to monitor impact and effectiveness of district- and school-based family engagement practices;
  - iii. Provide reliable, annual financial support in the district budget for family engagement infrastructure, capacity building and implementation of a comprehensive family engagement framework;
  - iv. Provide flexibility for individual schools to engage in differentiated approaches tailored to address the unique needs and interests of individual of schools;
  - v. Ensure that all school, offices and departments embrace and utilize culturally responsive practices to support the engagement of diverse Newark Public School families;
  - vi. Provide ongoing support and training for parents, teachers, principals and other school personnel. This includes:
    1. Providing support to build the capacity of each school to effectively utilize community resources;
    2. Establishing authentic participation in School Leadership Councils (SLCs) with clear guidelines to define the purpose, structure, process for selecting members, and roles and responsibilities of the SLCs, which should
      - a. Build collaborative problem solving,
      - b. Provide ownership for the academic and social success of students,
      - c. Maintain a culture of achievement and high expectations for students, families and adults,
      - d. Monitor metrics on the effectiveness of efforts, and
      - e. Honor the diversity of NPS families;
    - vii. Facilitate the connection of NPS families to a variety of highly effective, high quality resources that support home-based efforts and build their capacity to support the academic and social success of Newark students; and
    - viii. Provide information and supports to enable families served by NPS to have access to the internet and technology devices to ensure on-line engagement for all NPS students in home and school contexts.
  - b. Involve all stakeholders who are essential to development and implementation of the NPS family and community engagement framework and infrastructure.
    - i. Rebuilding trust and relationships across broadly diverse stakeholders is an essential early emphasis to garnering the involvement and support necessary to successfully engage stakeholders who may be critical and judgmental of past efforts in the arena of family and community engagement.
    - ii. The district should assist school leaders with identifying and engaging

Rebuilding trust and relationships across broadly diverse stakeholders is an essential early emphasis to garnering the involvement and support necessary to successfully engage stakeholders who may be critical and judgmental of past efforts in the arena of family and community engagement.

key partners and resources in the greater Newark available to partner with and support individual school.<sup>25</sup>

- iii. Essential stakeholders who can work with the district to inform district efforts include, but are not limited to, the following:
  1. Educators
  2. District Leaders
  3. School Leaders
  4. Teaching Staff
  5. Students
  6. Non-professional Staff
  7. Parents/Family
  8. Advocacy Groups
  9. Collective bargaining units
  10. Typically less engaged groups
  11. Community members
  12. Community-based organizations
  13. Agencies, individuals and businesses involved with the schools and those who have not been traditionally involved (e.g., community mental health, library, recreation, law enforcement, critics, clergy, recreation providers, health and human service providers, community development organizations, fraternal groups, etc.)
- c. Clearly Define Roles and Responsibilities
  - i. Determine roles, responsibilities, expectations and measurements with assigned leadership for the success of implementation and accountability of the district's family and community engagement framework.
  - ii. Ensure effective, two-way communications with all stakeholders.

- iii. Clarify the expectations and roles of district leaders, school leaders, families and community members in:
  1. district and school improvement plans;
  2. personnel evaluations;
  3. curriculum and instruction;
  4. communications;
  5. capacity building for all essential stakeholders; and
  6. policy monitoring role of the Board of education.
- d. Build on existing Family and Community Engagement Infrastructure
  - i. Develop evidence-based structures for consistent implementation to ensure that expectations are embedded at all levels of the system. Roles for stakeholders could be established at all levels of the system and community to implement, monitor, and drive the plan.
  - ii. Ensure that the work of key individuals, teams, and groups is aligned to the Family and Community Engagement Framework. Identify gaps that must be closed and enlist and utilize staff and community resources to cover identified gaps.

**3. Clarify Board of Education Responsibilities for Family and Community Engagement**

The school Board has an important set of responsibilities in the area of Family and Community Engagement. High performing school Boards engage in multiple approaches to engaging diverse communities<sup>26</sup>:

- a. The school Board must provide the

- community with system-wide stewardship by working with the Superintendent to shape the relationships and structure for the district's Family and Community Engagement vision and mission.
- b. The Board is responsible for monitoring school district performance and has the responsibility for policy monitoring and to ensure the systems commitments to Family and Community Engagement are embedded in the performance appraisal of the Superintendent.
- c. The school Board, through governance-driven monitoring systems, has the responsibility to regularly assess system performance of Board-adopted policies in the area of Family and Community Engagement.
- d. Further, school Boards are expected to participate in training programs and engage in ongoing learning to expand their knowledge of the latest developments in this area, and to deepen understanding of the Board's role in development and implementation of high-quality family and community engagement.
- e. Through its leadership and in partnership with communities, school Boards have the responsibility to give direction, determine resource allocation formulas, and set the vision, mission, core beliefs and the strategic goals of the system.
- f. The Board can determine whether or not Family and Community Engagement becomes a front-burner issue in a school community and support the leverage points to make change happen - i.e., system goal-setting, strategic and operational plans, and accountability systems to measure and publicly report on indicators of progress.
- g. The school Board should:
  - i. Adopt, support and implement Family and Community Engagement vision, mission, policies and system goals;
  - ii. Maintain effective communications and relationship with the Superintendent and hold the Superintendent responsible for Family and Community Engagement;

- iii. Demonstrate leadership, courage and the will to serve as a model for engagement through community linkage meetings, formation of advisory groups, and focused committee work, and by its demeanor in public and executive meetings;
- iv. Advocate for the allocation of resources to ensure high-quality capacity building supports for instructional and non-instructional district employees, parents and community partners;
- v. Educate and engage the community to create a sense of system and community urgency to aggressively do "whatever it takes" for every student to achieve success in school;
- vi. Act to hold the school Board and all adults accountable for the improvement of district Family and Community Engagement outcomes based on multiple and varied measures;
- vii. Monitor system performance of all aspects of the Family and Community Engagement framework;
- viii. Strategically engage students, families, communities, residents, businesses, elected and appointed municipal officials, community-based organizations and others to increase the effectiveness of collaborative efforts to support the academic and social success of all students;
- ix. Establish clear Board of education work plans that align with Family and Community Engagement Framework, invest in their own development, and to regularly reflect on their effectiveness; and
- x. Model high standards of ethical practices both individually and as a full Board to build and maintain relationships and trust within the school district and across the community.

#### 4. Clarify School District Leadership Responsibilities

- a. School district leadership is responsible for setting the tone for the success of the district's Family and Community Engagement vision and goals. District leaders must make engagement a priority and:
  - i. Set clear goals for school-family-community partnerships that all schools are expected to meet,
  - ii. Establish clear measures of accountability, and
  - iii. Implement monitoring systems to assess progress on those goals.
- b. School district leaders must lead by example in building the trust and relationships necessary to support implementation of the district's Family and Community Engagement expectations.
- c. District leaders that work collaboratively with students and families, collective bargaining units, parent organizations, and the array of community partners to foster a culture of partnership and ownership in order to develop a base of support for high quality Family and Community Engagement. The importance of building trust, forming relationships, and proactively communicating with all stakeholders must not be underestimated.
- d. Family and Community Engagement must be among district priorities and consistently reinforced by modeling the beliefs, behaviors and practices expressed in the system's vision, policy, strategic goals and improvement plans at the district and school level. School-family-community partnerships should be included in all district and school improvement initiatives.

- e. District leaders provide a comprehensive and coordinated program of training, peer-to-peer sessions, technical assistance and other supports to build the capacity of parents, community partners, and school staff in planning and implementing effective parent, family and community involvement activities to improve student and school performance.

#### 5. Differentiate Support for Schools

- a. Each school deserves training and support targeted to its specific strengths and needs.
- b. In particular, schools will need encouragement to be creative and flexible in offering programs to draw on local expertise and spark interests of the families to increase their desire to work with their school.
- c. The Office of Family and Community Engagement should continue to provide tailored workshops and training for parents and families to increase their capacity to support their children's learning.



## Finance

### Overview

The goal of ensuring educational excellence and broad access for all Newark students can only be realized when resources are sufficient to enable the Superintendent and Board to implement strategies that assure all children receive a high quality public education. Equally obvious is that Newark's students, their parents and teachers should be able to rely on those decisions and to plan with confidence in a secure and predictable environment.

Among other considerations, this will require the development of a **stable financial policy framework** for NPS under local control. It is the NESB's opinion that a stable financial policy framework must be grounded in the long-term economic, educational, and social value to the state derived from Prekindergartn-12 education.

In fact, the central tenet of this report is that the responsibility for maintaining excellence, diversity, and the health of NPS under local control should continue to be shared by the state, the community, the NPS system, the faculty, the staff, and the students. This principle of **shared responsibility** implicitly recognizes that, as it is for every New Jersey school district, an urban school district is a precious public resource, worthy of support not only because it offers opportunities to each individual student, but also because it contributes to the social, cultural, and economic health of the society at large.

This means that there is a **dual accountability** under local control. The State of New Jersey and the Newark community share the obligation to ensure necessary financial resources for new enrollment growth, reasonable base budget adjustments beyond inflationary increases, the protection of access through student aid programs, as well the resources needed to attract the best new faculty.

At the same time, NPS has an obligation to provide its fair share of funding and evidence that it has adopted policies, practices and procedures through which the system has increased its productivity and efficiency to support and provide a quality education for the students it serves.

It is important for the community to have an objective assessment of current operations if they are to make responsible decisions under local control. To that end, we recommend the Mayor, the Board and the Superintendent form an **Advisory Transition Team**<sup>27</sup> including civic leaders from business and higher education. That Team should be charged with gathering sufficient information concerning district finances and operations to support a seamless transition to local control.

Assuming state partnership on continuing to provide sufficient funding to Newark, the district's **management of its funds** is equally critical to a successful transition to local control. The district will

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.cabe.org/uploaded/Convention\\_Handouts/HANDOUTS\\_2015/ClimateFCPOrganizationalChart.docx\\_\(1\).pdf](https://www.cabe.org/uploaded/Convention_Handouts/HANDOUTS_2015/ClimateFCPOrganizationalChart.docx_(1).pdf)

<sup>25</sup> This includes but is not limited to faith-based organizations, corporations, colleges, universities and other community based organizations, block associations, building captains in multi-unit housing complexes.

<sup>26</sup> See this link for a model policy adopted by the Baltimore City Board of Education on community and family engagement: <http://www.baltimorecity-schools.org/cms/lib/MD01001351/Centricity/Domain/2725/PDF/KCAFamilyCommunityEngagementFinal.pdf>



need to continue to be prudent and aligned about the principles it will use to allocate resources to ensure the strongest possible capacity, resources and supports for the success of every NPS student. Robust discussions and a process for key district stakeholders to align about the principles that will be used for resource allocation, will be essential in making trade-offs, potentially tiering support over time, and developing alternate solutions and pathways that do not compromise the district's core intentions and dedication to the academic and socio-emotional success of every student, with particular attention to the most vulnerable students, balancing a focus on both their strengths and needs.

The State Board of Education has already voted to return Fiscal Management, Operations and Personnel to local control. While the return of Operations is complete, the fully executed and approved transition plan for Fiscal Management is in its final phase of implementation, to be completed in August 2016. The long-term goal is to *create perpetual financial solvency for the district through a combination of adequate resources and sound financial management, based in shared values of equity and clear communication.*

While the 2015-2016 deficit of \$75.6 million was closed and a balanced **budget** is in place for 2016-17, the anticipated shortfall for 2017-18 is in excess of \$70 million. Clear, two-way, on-going communications with parents, families and community about the state of the budget, the strategies that will be used to address it, and the principles that decisions about equitable resource allocation will be based on, will also be critical to promoting increased transparency, deepening trust, and faith in the district's willingness and capacity to garner and allocate resources on behalf of the best interests of students.

Toward these ends, the district should build upon the thorough financial analysis conducted in the development of the 2016-17 budget to address estimated future deficits. It should share with the Board the organizational circumstances, structures, practices, procedures, norms and habits – internally, locally, and at state and federal levels – that put continuing financial stress on the district. This exercise should *clarify areas that can be addressed at the local level, and where leverage, relationships and/or*

*other joint advocacy and community partnerships might be necessary* at other levels. The district should be charged to clarify the impacts on conditions for student learning (disaggregated by student group), and describe pathways forward for improving these organizational culture and structure aspects, guided by a set of principles for decision-making, driven by equity and commitment to every child.

**1. Implement best practices procedures to ensure accurate budgets.**

- a. District management under board oversight must ensure that accurate budget estimates are prepared and that significant budget transfers are pre-approved by the Board.
- b. Reserves should be established and funded in accordance with applicable laws and used in strict compliance with statutory provisions only with Board approval.

**2. Implement best practices for procurement of professional services.**

The district should continue to implement procurement policies and procedures for obtaining professional services to ensure that taxpayers receive quality services at reasonable prices.

**3. Implement best practice internal audit controls.**

The audit committee should be trained and meet regularly and privately with the internal auditor to provide the internal auditor with direct access both to management and to the audit committee.

**4. Implement best practice information technology controls.**

The Board and Superintendent should ensure that proper controls, current technologies and software are installed and utilized by a well-trained NPS staff, and provide accurate and timely information to the Board of Education, district administration and auditors.

## The Board and Superintendent should develop a financial improvement plan. The board shall exercise responsibility for monitoring progress in the milestones of the Financial Improvement Plan.

**5. Structure and operation of the Audit/Budget Committee.**

- a. *Review and conform Audit/Budget Committee to reflect best practices.* The Board of Education by-laws shall state the purpose of the Audit Committee, define the meeting schedule and how the Audit Committee will interface with the Board, management and the district's auditors.
- b. *Ensure that the Audit/Budget Committee has the expertise to administer its responsibilities.* The Board of Education should establish an Audit/Budget Committee and, to the extent possible, name committee members that are financially literate and knowledgeable about best practices for financial accountability. Further, the board should consider the formation of an Advisory Committee consisting of individuals with requisite accounting, auditing and expertise in managing finances.

**6. Develop ongoing training programs to maintain audit committee competencies.**

Members of the Audit/Budget Committee and senior district financial administrators should participate in ongoing external courses and seminars to build their capacity to effectively manage district resources.

**7. Full financial audit of NPS preceding transfer to local control.**

- a. *Review and, where necessary, supplement existing financial analysts and audits.* The result shall be an improvement plan to fully resolve deficiencies and provide direction on the implementation of best financial management practices needed to secure financial stability going forward. Consider engaging a top tier financial firm to advise the Board.
- b. *Assign accountability for successful*

*implementation of the improvement plan.* The Board and Superintendent should develop a financial improvement plan. The board shall exercise responsibility for monitoring progress in the milestones of the Financial Improvement Plan. The Board's monitoring plan should include documentation reviews, work observations, and performance testing.

A full financial audit to establish a strong operational and financial platform for NPS into the future. This platform should be broad enough to examine district Staff and Board practices and procedures objectively, and should include the following steps:

**1. Develop an effective improvement plan.**

- a. A key component of an effective plan is the inclusion of both attainable and measurable milestones to allow both Staff and Board to effectively monitor the process.
- b. This stage should include elucidation of the steps that will be taken to bring the budget into balance, and the anticipated impacts of these steps on students and the conditions for teaching, learning and leading.
- c. The policies and procedures needed to establish a solid financial platform going forward should also be clarified.
- d. Board, district and school leadership, and community members should jointly develop and ratify the principles and values that will guide decision-making about resource allocation.

**2. Assign accountability for successful implementation.**

- a. Ownership by Staff and Board is critical, with clear, appropriate and on-going communication with families and community members.
- b. Roles and responsibilities include ensuring that milestones are achieved and that the validation phase is completed.

**3. Develop a validation process.**

- a. For the improvement plan to endure, it should include activities that will provide evidence of its effectiveness.
- b. These activities, under Staff supervision and Board oversight, include documentation reviews, work observations, and performance testing.



## Phasing of Recommendations

The NESB charge includes the recommendation of timelines and benchmarks that provide the pathway for the return of local control of the Newark Public Schools. Given the progress the district has made on QSAC this year and the detailed, intimate knowledge of district operations required to construct specific deadlines, the NESB reasoned that it is not possible to provide actual dates to drive the implementation of many of the recommendations. Rather, the N.J. Department of Education and NJ State Board of Education have the authority to determine the timing and conditions for restoration of local control. Therefore, the NESB concludes that the recommendations in this report can be implemented in a phased approach.

The phasing approach discussed below provides a staged process that enables the district and board leadership to begin working to address recommendations within this report in the near and long term.

**The NESB's recommendations range from those that can be addressed and accomplished immediately, prior to and in preparation for the restoration of local control, to others that can be prioritized and implemented within the first 18 months of local control. The NESB recommendations in this report should be immediately considered by the Newark Public School District Board of Education and Superintendent.**

The Superintendent and the Newark Advisory Board are encouraged to review the NESB report to identify recommendations that can be addressed during 2016-17.

The NESB recognizes the importance to phase implementation of its recommendation over time. Therefore, we propose that state Superintendent and Advisory Board engage in a process to consider each recommendation and: 1) **complete a gap analysis**, 2) **engage in planning**, 3) **begin implementation**, and 4) **ensure ongoing monitoring**.

1. **Gap Analysis:** For each recommendation, the Board and Superintendent should:
  - Research measurable results associated with student academic and social success.
  - Collaborate with relevant stakeholders.
  - Assess the current state compared with a full expression of the recommendation.
  - Determine evaluative measures (e.g., a scale spanning from non-existence to completion).
2. **Planning Period:** An initial planning period between the gap analysis and the development and subsequent adoption of the school district budget.
  - In anticipation of the gap analysis occurring in the months after the release of this report, the planning period would

<sup>27</sup> Not to be confused with the Transition Plan.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A Newark Public Schools: History Under State Takeover

- last approximately 6 months.
  - Identify roles and/or individuals who are positioned to contribute to implementation, including point responsible for project management.
  - Develop the plan to implement changes, including timelines and milestones.
3. **Implementation Period:** Undertake action steps and engagement with relevant stakeholders to implement the plan.
- Initiation of implementation not to exceed 18 months after the return of full local control.
4. **Continuous Monitoring:** The Superintendent shall present monitoring reports that assess the impact and influence of the implementation on the academic and social success of NPS students.
- Where relevant, monitoring reports will be coordinated or combined with Superintendent reports on similar or aligned initiatives, such as the Strategic Plan.

The conditions and circumstances that led to the state takeover of Newark Public Schools were grave. As documented by Robert Curvin in *“Inside Newark: Decline, Rebellion, and the Search for Transformation,”* the district was plagued by poor student achievement, disengagement by management and board members, job favoritism, corruption, severely declining infrastructure, and a lack of community and parent engagement. The following is a comprehensive timeline produced by the *Star Ledger*, which details the history of the state takeover of Newark Public Schools:

### April 26, 1968

*Governor Richard Hughes first recommends state takeover of the Newark school system.*

Hughes presented a plan to the legislature that suggested several measures to deal with what he believed were the underlying causes of the 1967 Newark riots that left 26 people dead and hundreds injured. One of the suggestions was a state takeover of Newark Public Schools.

His suggestion was not acted upon.

### January 1, 1984

*State introduces school monitoring.*

According to state report on education in New Jersey, the state first implemented a public school monitoring system in 1984. Schools were measured against state and federal standards. Those that met them were certified; those that didn't were required to create corrective plans of action.

### October 5, 1992

*State begins external review of Newark school district.*

“The job of the review team, based on status of the district, is to conduct an investigation on behalf of the commissioner that will yield a

report on recommendations for future action by the Department of Education,” Assistant DOE Commissioner Larry Leverett told the *Star-Ledger* at the time. “The process that the department is engaged in is not aimed at takeover.

It is aimed at having the district become certified.”

### October 6, 1992 — July 21, 1994

*Tense investigation into Newark school system.*

The formal state investigation into the district played out over two tumultuous years that included a lot of resistance from school officials and a mixed reaction among community members. The period was marked by clashes between state investigators and district officials.

### May 9, 1993

*Report finds Newark schools deficient.*

The state DOE released the report that found the district struggling “under the weight of poor performance on the part of many students, neglected buildings, charges of mismanagement, nepotism, cronyism and rampant political interference.”

### May 13, 1993

*District announces corrective action plan.*

Then-Superintendent Eugene Campbell announced an “educational improvement plan” in response to the review.

### May 13, 1993

*State takes financial control of district.*

Education Commissioner Mary Lee Fitzgerald appoints Rebecca Doggett the “auditor general” of the district, who has the power to block major school board expenditures.

**May 20, 1993**

*State orders Comprehensive Compliance Investigation into the district.*

The CCI is the final step before a state takeover. School officials initially said that although they opposed the takeover, they would cooperate with investigating state officials. The district was later accused of refusing to submit information and comply with the investigation.

**October 20, 1993**

*Assistant state education commissioner and journalists arrested at Newark school.*

Hilda Hidalgo, an assistant state education commissioner carrying out an unannounced inspection at an elementary school, was arrested and charged with creating a disturbance and resisting arrest after a commotion erupted when school officials asked her to leave. Three Star-Ledger journalists covering the visit were also arrested and charged with trespassing.

The investigation was temporarily halted as a result of the arrests, but was reinstated about a week later.

**November 29, 1993**

*Hidalgo pleads not guilty.*

Hilda Hidalgo pleaded not guilty to the charges related to the disturbance during the school investigation. Star-Ledger education editor Robert Braun and news photographers Joseph Gigli and John O'Boyle also pleaded not guilty.

**March 9, 1994**

*Hidalgo found guilty.*

A municipal judge finds Hidalgo guilty of resisting arrest.

**July 22, 1994**

*State announces plan to takeover district.*

Education Commissioner Leo Klagholz held a press conference announcing the results of the CCI, and the state's decision to take over the district. The 1,700-page CCI cited more than 100 charges against the school district, ranging from "questionable" fiscal practices and possible political corruption, to outdated curriculum and unsafe schools.

**July 22, 1994**

*State orders takeover hearing.*

The school district and local officials, including Mayor Sharpe James, came out against the takeover. "Reform is needed, not a takeover," James said at the time.

**July 23, 1994 — December 31, 1995**

*Legal battle over takeover.*

In the two years leading up to the actual takeover of the district, Newark schools announced more than \$1 million in legal fees trying to fight it. Opponents and district officials engaged in several court battles with the state attempting to halt the takeover process.

**April 13, 1995**

*Judge orders quick takeover of school district.*

Judge Stephen G. Weiss recommended the immediate state takeover of the district. "The state cannot continue to stand aside for another year... while the school system in its largest city continues demonstrably to deteriorate," Weiss said in his decision.

The ruling was passed to Education Commissioner Klagholz, who then made the recommendation to the state Board of Education.

**July 10, 1995**

*Schools announce appeal to Supreme Court.*

The Newark Board of Education announced in an emergency meeting that it would appeal the takeover ruling to the state Supreme Court.

**July 12, 1995**

*State seizes control of school district.*

Superintendent Eugene Campbell and other district officials were escorted out of the district's headquarters as the state officially took over the Newark school system. "We're glad that the timing of the decision gives us a reasonable opportunity to get ready to open the schools in September and make noticeable improvements,"

Education Commissioner Leo Klagholz said at the time.

**July 17, 1995**

*First state-appointed superintendent starts.*

Beverly Hall takes over as the first state-appointed superintendent in the district. On her first day, after a tour of the Newark school facilities, she said she was "appalled," and found many of the conditions "atrocious... I guarantee the schools will not open in this condition."

**September 12, 1995**

*First day of school*

Principals, teachers, and students reported mixed feelings about the state takeover on the first day of school.

**November 9, 1995**

*Hidalgo conviction overturned.*

Superior Court Judge Alvin Weiss overturned a guilty ruling in the case of Hilda Hidalgo, the assistant state education commissioner who was charged with resisting arrest during a school inspection. "I find it very sad and tragic that the incident even took place at all," Weiss said during his ruling.

**December 22, 1995**

*Court sides with the state.*

A three-judge appellate panel upheld the state Department of Education's decision to take over the school district. State officials applauded the decision. Klagholz said it would allow residents and state officials to "focus their full attention on the improvement of educational opportunities for Newark's 47,500 schoolchildren."

**December 23, 1995 — February 18, 1999**

*Changes come to the district.*

Over the four years of Hall's reign as superintendent, she instituted several changes in the district. The schools tried several reorganization techniques, including hiring private teachers from Sylvan Learning Center to educate Newark students, and began a tradition of massive private donations to the educational system. On March 23, 1996, The Prudential Foundation donated \$1 million to the Newark public school system. After months of speculation and teacher protests, Hall announced an

official reorganization plan in July, which called for 634 layoffs. "Over the years the system has become a public employment agency. Hopefully when people see that this will result in an improvement of classroom services, they'll understand that Newark's children benefit," Hall said at the time.

Hall moved from Queens, N.Y. to Scotch Plains in February of 1997, after years of Newarkers criticizing her for not living in the state or city. At the start of the 1998 school year, Hall tasked administrators with creating a "whole school reform" by the year 2000. At the start of the fourth year of the state takeover, Hall said, "I think this year we have to show measurable gains.

We have to build on small successes to have systemic impact, so we can say the programs are really working."

**February 19, 1999**

*Hall announces she's leaving Newark.*

Hall announced that she'd be leaving the district to head Atlanta schools. She was later indicted, along with 33 other Atlanta educators, accused of carrying out a conspiracy to forge student test scores in order to cover up poor performance.

**July 20, 1999**

*N.J. names Newark native second state-appointed superintendent.*

After a four-month national search, the state chose Marion Bolden, a graduate of the Newark school district and veteran educator in the school system, as the new superintendent. "Because I was born and raised in Newark and worked in Newark, I feel very good that I'm in a position of leadership to work with the community and the schools and the administration to make things better," Bolden said at the time.

**January 15, 2000**

*State scandal: Bad bookkeeping leads to big budget gap.*

State Education Commissioner David Hespe announced that bad bookkeeping by its finance department during the past four years had led to a \$58 million budget shortfall in the district's \$500

million operating budget. “What we’re looking at here is a business office that was inefficient,” Hespe said at the time. “I don’t think you’re going to find the kind of misspending that caused the state to take over the district in 1995, but with the operations of a budget this big, rebuilding the books sometimes is difficult.” Opponents of the takeover pointed to the gap as an example of the state’s misguidance of the district.

### **July 17, 2005**

*Newark reacts to 10-year anniversary of the takeover.*

Proponents argued that the state takeover had led to more funding for the district and increased test scores. But opponents said students’ test scores had not significantly improved. Discussions began about the possibility of returning the district and the two others under state control – Jersey City and Paterson – back to local control.

### **January 19, 2007**

*State monitors its progress.*

The state sent a team to monitor the progress of the district takeovers in Jersey City, Paterson, and Newark.

### **October 17, 2007**

*Newark gets management control back.*

After a review and a recommendation from Education Commissioner Lucille Davy, the local Public School Advisory Board gained back control over certain facility and management operations. The state maintained its power over finances, personnel and instructional programs.

### **June 29, 2008**

*Bolden announces retirement.*

After 9 years on the job, Superintendent Marion Bolden announced her retirement. State leaders and supporters said she improved the district’s finances and brought educational reform to the students. “It’s been rewarding but it’s been very stressful, because I’ve felt embattled and I feel like I spent too much of my time dealing with issues not related to my job,” Bolden said at the time of dealing with critics and the

brewing battle over a return to local control.

“But I don’t regret for a minute what we’ve been able to do for kids.”

### **June 30, 2008**

*State chooses new superintendent.*

Clifford Janey came to the district with experience in the Boston, Rochester, N.Y., and Washington, D.C. school districts. “I’ve always been one who gravitates to places that are challenging,” he said at the time of taking the position in Newark.

### **September 24, 2010**

*Facebook CEO donates \$100M to Newark schools.*

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg appeared on ‘The Oprah Winfrey Show’ with Gov. Chris Christie and then-Mayor Cory Booker to announce a \$100 million donation to help implement a new educational program in Newark schools.

### **January 18, 2011**

*Janey announces resignation.*

About four months after Gov. Christie announced that he would not be renewing Janey’s contract, the superintendent resigned. Christie said Janey had not moved quickly enough on reforms in the district.

### **May 4, 2011**

*Christie announces Cami Anderson appointment.*

Gov. Chris Christie announced that he would appoint Cami Anderson the next Superintendent of Newark schools. Anderson previously served as a superintendent at an alternative district for at-risk youth in NYC.

### **August 10, 2011**

*Movement to end state control grows.*

While entering its 16th year of state control, the local advisory school board began a more organized effort to advocate for a return to local control. Acting Education Commissioner Christopher Cerf said at the time that he did not feel the local board was ready to regain total control of the schools.

### **March 19, 2012**

*Anderson announces “renew schools.”*

Anderson announced a round of school reforms, which included some closures and the introduction of eight “renew schools,” which were to have longer school days, parent outreach and support, possible merit-based pay for staff, and more of a role for principals in choosing teachers.

### **December 18, 2013**

*Anderson announces ‘One Newark.’*

Anderson announced a complete school restructuring program dubbed ‘One Newark,’ which included relocating school communities, changing school leadership, and expanding charter schools. The plan had opponents from the onset, and has since become very controversial.

### **June 3, 2014**

*District finances returned to local control.*

In another victory for proponents of the end of state control, the state Board of Education voted to return financial management to the local board in Newark.

The district now controls two of five areas of central management.

### **February 20, 2015**

*Protest.*

The movement against ‘One Newark,’ state control, and Superintendent Cami Anderson came to a head in February, when students staged a sit-in of the district headquarters. The student activists gained support of many local politicians, including Mayor Ras Baraka, who has been a very vocal critic of Anderson. The mayor has called for her resignation and a return to local control.

### **February 26, 2015**

*Cami’s contract renewed.*

The state announced it had renewed Anderson’s contract for another year. “Cami has worked tirelessly to implement positive education reforms that have benefited Newark students and parents,” Commissioner David Hespe said of the decision.

### **July 8, 2015**

*Chris Cerf appointed superintendent and NESB launched.*

The state announced it had selected Chris Cerf to become the Superintendent of Newark Public Schools. Governor Christie charged Cerf with overseeing an orderly return of the school district to local control. Governor Christie and Mayor Baraka announce the formation of the Newark Education Success Board to develop a plan toward the return of local control to the citizens of Newark.

<sup>28</sup> From: [http://www.nj.com/essex/index.ssf/2015/04/timeline\\_20th\\_anniversary\\_of\\_newark\\_public\\_schools.html](http://www.nj.com/essex/index.ssf/2015/04/timeline_20th_anniversary_of_newark_public_schools.html)

## Appendix B

# Current Status of Newark Public Schools

The district has been engaged in strategic planning since early 2016. Through a district-wide and community input process, initial 3-year “Goal and Priorities”<sup>29</sup> have been established to guide NPS through 2019. This report is not intended to serve as an alternative to the Strategic Plan, which the NESB substantially endorsed; rather, it underscores and highlights points meriting particular emphasis. The district has also established an annual District Improvement Plan (DIP) to guide efforts in the short-term.

In relation to the QSAC process, the Newark Advisory Board of the district currently has control over Operations and Finance. Governance, Personnel, and Instruction and Programs are under state operation. Until the Board has control over Governance, ultimate authority resides with the state-appointed Superintendent. In May of this year, NPS underwent an Interim QSAC evaluation visit to determine if the district has addressed areas identified for improvement in the three areas that remain under state operation. The NESB closely supported the process of NPS leadership demonstrating improvements in the three areas. Superintendent Cerf and members of his staff provided monthly updates to the NESB on NPS’s work in all three areas.

### Following is information on key aspects of the district’s work<sup>30</sup>:

In addition to the Superintendent of Schools, the district is led by: a School Business Administrator, Chief Academic Officer (and five Assistant Superintendents), Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Talent Officer, and General Counsel.

#### Educator Development, Effectiveness & Retention

- An American Institute for Research (AIR) study confirmed that 95% of teachers who were rated “effective” or “highly effective” last year

remained in Newark classrooms this year.

- A nation leading CBA provided, among other things, that raises were not automatic with the passage of time, but were only awarded to teachers who were evaluated as effective. The teachers’ contract allows NPS to reward teachers who are rated “highly effective” with bonuses, ranging from \$5,000 to \$12,500 a year.
- NPS works with outside peer teacher observers to help provide more accurate and useful evaluations of teachers. Approximately 75% of teachers and 95% of administrators agreed the evaluation system was accurate, valid, fair and useful in a recent AIR study.
- Approximately 2,700 teachers serve over 35,000 NPS students. There is an average ratio of 1 classroom teacher for every 13.3 students. This is less than the class size limits noted in the NJ Administrative Code, which ranges from 21 (grades K-3) to 24 (grades 6-12).
- Each year, NPS faces a significant challenge recruiting enough highly qualified, certified science, math and bilingual teachers to serve our student population.
- The district provides monthly professional development to school staff, through its Leadership Institute programs for principals, vice principals, and teacher teams.

#### School Planning & Choice

- NPS currently has over 35,000 students enrolled in 65 schools. The district’s students are 51% African American, 40% Latino/Hispanic, 8% White, 1% Asian, and less than 1% Native American and Pacific Islander.
- Additionally, over 14,000 Newark students are enrolled in 20 public charter

schools. Charter school enrollment has tripled in the past five years.

- To assure equity in student assignments, the district implemented a centralized enrollment system for charters, magnets, and traditional public schools alike. Last year, over 11,000 applications to schools were submitted, grades K-12.
- Parents are demonstrating that they value more quality school options. For the 2015-16 school year, 75% of kindergarten families preferred a school that was not their closest district school and 42% of families selected a charter school as their first choice.
- Over 60% of students got into their 1st choice school. 86% got into one of their top 3 choices.
- 3% of Kindergarteners and 4% of 9th graders were not matched to any of their choices. In these cases, students were provided placement to their closest school that still had seats available.
- NPS has provided more support for parents with school selection and enrollment through its Family Support Center, community engagement specialists, enhanced communication strategy and improved informational materials about district schools.
- This year, NPS has scheduled over 30 school-hosted events from December through February, held a city-wide school fair in January and distributed over 30,000 printed school guidebooks across schools, community organizations, and at schools.
- Between August and January, the Family Support Center had nearly 10,000 visits by families. Of these visits, 48% (nearly half) were for new enrollments and 28% resulted in transfers within public schools in Newark.

#### Data Use, Measurement & Accountability

- The new PARCC tests present an opportunity for the district to share more data with schools, parents, and the community. NPS has shared district-level PARCC results and school-by-school performance. Schools will hold parent

meetings to share information on results and reports on their students’ performance.

- NPS created a new enrollment guidebook this year to provide information about district and public charter school options. The guide provides information on each school including: contact information, nearest bus route, sports and clubs, number of openings available, and how easy or hard it is to get into the school.
- Currently, most of the data the district shares publicly is through the Superintendent Report presented in monthly School Board meetings.
- The district is launching a Transparency Committee (which will include community leaders, Board members, parents and administrators) to review, monitor and audit policies that drive NPS’s work.

#### Curriculum & Academic Programs

- Student proficiency rates on the new, tougher PARCC test are low:
  - » English: 22% of NPS students met the standard for proficiency.
  - » Math: 17.5% of NPS students met the standard.
- However, NPS have a higher proficiency rate than 70% of comparable districts in math and 80% of comparable districts in English.
- Newark students showed substantial growth over the last academic year. The district student growth percentiles (SGP) score is up 8 points in Math and 9 in English. Additionally, 31 out of 45 schools improved in Math and 39 out of 45 improved in English.
- Graduation rates are up from 56% in 2011 to 70% in 2014.
  - » The High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) pass rate is also up from 31% in 2011 to 43.3% in 2014.
  - » New school models, like Bard High School Early College, are producing positive results for students, graduating over 50 students last year with a college degree as well as a high school degree.

- 40% of Newark students are enrolled in a school that “beats the odds,” according to a national study conducted by the Center for Reinventing Public Education. This is the highest rate in the U.S. and five times the national average.
- Over the past two years, the district has overhauled its ELA and math curriculum to align with Common Core standards.
- NPS purchased 11,000 Chromebooks to support digital learning. As a result of its focus on integrating technology into instruction, NPS received recognition in the 2015-16 school year from The Learning Counsel, a national education research institute, as one of the most innovative districts in the country in utilizing technology in the classroom.
- Approximately 17% of NPS students have Individualized Education Plans. The district offers nine different types of self-contained Special Education programs (e.g.: autism, behavioral disorder, learning disabled, etc.) across 50 schools
- Approximately 10% of NPS students are English Language Learners (ELLs). The district has bilingual programs in 25 schools in Spanish, Portuguese, and French.

#### Student Supports

- About half of NPS schools have extended school day programming.
- In partnership, NPS and City Hall launched a \$12 million Community Schools Initiative that will provide more student and family supports to selected South Ward schools next year, including Malcolm X Shabazz HS.
- Student suspensions are down 37% from last year, partly due to “restorative justice” practices being enacted in schools.
- Reported incidences of violence, vandalism, illegal substances, and weapons have decreased over the past three years, although many students still report feeling unsafe at school.
- Chronic absenteeism (students missing more than 10% of days enrolled

– typically 18+ days) is far too high. 22% of students in K-8 schools and 49% of students in high schools were identified as chronically absent in the 2014-2015 school year.

#### Operations, Finance & Governance

- Newark Public Schools is one of four districts in New Jersey under state intervention, and has been since 1995.
- The prior strategic plan (Great Expectations completed during the Janey administration) spanned 2009-2013.
- NPS overcame a \$75 million budget gap in FY15-16.
- NPS has submitted and the state has approved a budget for FY 16-17 that closed an additional \$80 million budget gap. In closing a combined 2 year budget gap of \$150 million, NPS has not reduced the aggregate allocation to schools in FY 15-16 and FY16-17.
- NPS has implemented a weighted student funding approach to school budgets to assure equitable distribution of resources.
- NPS spends over \$35 million a year on pupil transportation, most of which goes to provide door-to-door transportation for students with IEPs.
- NPS spends over \$22 million a year on school food and committed this year to provide free lunch to all students, regardless of income level.
- NPS spends over \$14 million a year on security and student safety. Schools have from 1 to 8 security guards on duty at all times, largely based on school size.

#### Community Engagement

- The Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE), which has 5 central office staff, oversees the district’s work to engage families and communities about our schools.
- FACE provides professional development to over 50 community engagement

specialists, typically 1 per school.

- FACE holds biweekly parent workshops that focus on academic content and bridging the connection between home and school.
- Other offices in the district also interact with families (Parent Contact Center, Family Support Center, the Superintendent’s Office, etc.). However, families report that coordination among these offices is unclear and can be inconsistent.
- This past year, the Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE), working with other NPS divisions, organized dozens of community events including enrollment fairs, strategic planning meetings, community talks and conferences. Thousands of Newark citizens participated in these events and sessions throughout the 2015-16 school year.
- NPS has a presence on Twitter and Facebook, but families report that the district is not adequately or consistently using these and other forms of digital communications.

### Financial Shifts & Impacts

Between 2012 and 2016, the total number of public school students served in Newark increased by approximately 10% while state funding remained essentially flat. As a result, per pupil spending declined during this period, leading to a reduction in staffing and programs. The greatest impact has been on the central office, where staff has been significantly reduced. Some civil service positions have been reclassified and the staff replaced with non-civil service certified persons.

<sup>29</sup> See: [www.nps.k12.nj.us/strategic-plan](http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/strategic-plan)

<sup>30</sup> From <http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/info/> and <http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/strategic-plan/the-next-three-years/facts-related-to/> and <http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/departments/office-of-the-Superintendent/>





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