

LOCAL CONTROL PLANNING MEETING



INFORMATION ABOUT THE TRANSITION TO LOCAL CONTROL

BACKGROUND

The State Board of Education voted on September 13th to “return operational control to Newark Public Schools following the creation and completion of a transition plan.” In line with regulations, the Department of Education (DOE) will develop this plan with collaboration on components from the District. The plan will cover the withdrawal of state intervention and the return of oversight over governance, instruction and program.

The State Board and Commissioner of Education identified a few key drivers for the return to local control:

1. Instruction & Program: The progress Newark educators are making with students is essential to moving back toward local control and providing a foundation on which to build.
2. Governance: Newark leaders are working collaboratively and are uniting around the common goal of sustaining and improving learning gains for students.

Improved QSAC scores in these areas allowed the Commissioner to recommend the return of local control and the State Board of Education to vote for it.

This process represents a historical moment and is a tribute to the many years of hard work by the Mayor, School Board, District employees, and all Newark community members.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS	
Jan 2007 to Aug 2016	State Board of Education voted to return control of QSAC in 3 areas: operations, fiscal management, and personnel.
Sep 2015 to Aug 2016	Newark Education Success Board (NESB) developed and published a report, Pathways to Local Control, to guide the transition to local control.
Sep 2016	Newark district and school board leaders finalized a strategic plan titled The Next Three Years with significant public input.
Sep 2016 to Aug 2017	A transition plan for personnel was developed and, in August, approved by the Commissioner - giving the Board voting authority over all personnel decisions taken by the District.
Sep 2017	State Board votes to return local control in the remaining QSAC domains, Governance and Instruction & Program, and to begin the process of returning full control to Newark.
Sep 2017 to Winter 2017/18	NJDOE is drafting a full return transition plan with collaboration from NPS, the local School Board, and Mayor’s Office.
Winter 2017/18	The transition plan will be presented to the Newark community at a Newark School Board meeting. The plan will identify a date for the return of full control to Newark schools.
Winter 2017/18 moving forward ↓	The Newark school board will implement the full return transition plan. This will include, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in a superintendent search and hiring a superintendent • Holding a public referendum to determine if school board members will be elected or be appointed by the Mayor • Identifying specific areas for further training for board members • Specific provisions for Governance, I&P, and the other QSAC domains to hold board members and district officials accountable to benchmarks.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

According to the NJSBA “The role of the school board member in school governance is not one of direct management, but one more focused on policy and goal-setting.” This document provides an overview of responsibilities to be considered as we prepare for this transition.

SCHOOL BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

- Advocating for all children, teachers, and staff
- Maintaining fiscal responsibility
Making policy for the District regarding personnel matters
- Delegating day-to-day management and decision-making authority for policy and personnel to the District
- Acting in compliance with applicable law, including the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act and School Ethics Act

Source: Adapted from Goodman and Zimmerman, (2006) Effective Superintendents, Effective Boards.

SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Recommending all administrative policies and annual budget to the Board
- Supporting the board by providing information for decision-making
- Overseeing educational program
- Taking responsibility for personnel matters
- Developing and administering the budget
- Developing and supporting teachers and other staff
- Day-to-day administration of the school district

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Prioritizing student outcomes
- Providing educational leadership to the community
- Creating strong connections with other agencies to support the achievement and development of children
- Setting district-wide policies and goals
- Ensuring safety and adequacy of all school facilities
- Ensuring effective Board and District communication
- Overseeing negotiations with employee groups

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

SCHOOL BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

- Approving district-wide curricula and assessments
- Approval of district-wide budget (ensuring budgets are balanced).
- Selecting the superintendent
- Approving hiring recommendations

SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Managing schools and their staffs
- Developing school-based and district-wide budget for Board review and approval
- Conducting hiring processes and making recommendations to the Board

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Engaging in reviews of and discussions about student outcomes data and ensuring accountability for addressing identified gaps
- Engaging with one another responsibly and with transparency

CORE AREAS OF FOCUS FOR TRANSITION (FOR DISCUSSION):

- 1 School Board Ethics and Expectations**
What are some expectations you have for board members’ ethical behavior during and after this transition? What are some examples of how their ethical behavior might look in practice? (see NJSBA code of ethics)
- 2 Hiring a Superintendent**
What are some of the criteria for the superintendent search process that you would like to be included in the plan to select a new superintendent? (Reference best practices document at table).
- 3 School Board, District, and Community Collaboration Going Forward**
What are some things you think are important for the school board and district to consider as they prepare to collaborate with each other - and the larger Newark community - going forward in this new era of local control? (Reference board and district responsibilities table above for discussion).

