

New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC)

*Dr. Gerald Vernotica, Assistant Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education
Division of Field Services*

*Pam Castellanos, Executive Assistant
Division of Field Services*

*Naomi Vliet, Special Assistant
Division of Field Services*

*New Jersey Association of Federal Program Administrators
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Regulatory Authority

N.J.A.C. 6A:30, Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts

- Regulations based on P.L. 2003, c. 235 and P.L. 2007, c. 16.
- The chapter of code sets forth the steps the department will undertake to implement N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-3 et seq., which include a three-year evaluation process, placement of a school districts on a performance continuum, improvement and intervention activities and periodic monitoring of progress.

What is NJQSAC?

NJQSAC is the department's new monitoring and evaluation system for public school districts. This system shifts the monitoring and evaluation focus from compliance to assistance, capacity-building and improvement. It is a single comprehensive accountability system that consolidates and incorporates the monitoring requirements of applicable state laws and programs and complements federally required improvements. The system will focus on monitoring and evaluating school districts in five key components which, based on research, have been identified to be key factors in effective school districts. These components are:

- Instruction and program;
- Personnel;
- Fiscal management;
- Operations; and
- Governance.

What is different about NJQSAC ?

- All school districts will complete self-assessment reviews in five key areas of school district effectiveness (Instruction and Program, Personnel, Governance, Fiscal Management and Operations).
 - A structured system of improvement and intervention activities has been developed.
 - The system provides a clear mechanism to assess the performance of all districts in each of the five components, places the districts on a performance continuum and identifies the level of improvement or intervention activities needed from the department.
 - It provides for the expanded authority for the Commissioner to intervene quickly when significant problems occur.
 - The system provides a clear and attainable mechanism for return to local control where performance has demonstrated improvements in certain areas while continuing state intervention in identified areas.
 - It rests on principles of uniform standards, simplicity, effectiveness, efficiency, prevention and involvement of the department for only the time necessary in the specific areas of need.
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Immediate next steps for all districts implementing QSAC in 2009-2010

There are several activities that district administrators can do prior to the full implementation of the NJQSAC monitoring and evaluation system statewide. Some of these activities include:

- Review the legislation;
- Review the administrative code; and
- Communicate the anticipated changes to local boards of education, other school administrators and to the community.

Overview of the Process

- District committee scores itself Yes/No on the District Performance Reviews (DPRs).
- District completes facilities walkthroughs.
- District submits DPRs to the department on or before November 16th.
- District submits facilities checklists and minutes documenting BOE approval to county office on or before November 16th.
- Executive County Superintendent and staff verify district responses.
- Commissioner makes recommendation to State Board of Education.

District Committee

Who is a part of the committee?

- CSA
- One or more members of the administrative staff
- One or more teaching personnel, representative of different grade levels
- Business administrator and assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, as well as other appropriate public school district level personnel as determined by the CSA
- One or more member representatives of the local collective bargaining unit (selected by the local collective bargaining unit), which may be the teaching personnel mentioned above
- One or more members of the district board of education selected by the district board of education

District Committee, continued

The CSA shall determine the total number of people on the committee.

The CSA can include other persons on the committee with the approval of the district board of education.

In mid-July, the Executive County Superintendent will check in with the district to ensure that the district's committee has been appropriately staffed.

The Committee's Work

In each district, the CSA must:

- Ensure that whatever process used by the committee in completing the DPRs provides for participation and input by all committee members.
- Consult with the committee in formulating a response to each indicator.
- Ensure that the responses reflect the circumstances of the district.
- Ensure that all responses can be verified.



How does the committee work?

NJQSAC allows for a great deal of discretion in how the work is accomplished.

- Subcommittees can be formed.
- Subcommittees might preliminarily score the DPRs as well as identify data, supporting documentation, and/or appropriate people to consult.
- Subcommittees would then make presentations to the full committee for final scoring.

How Do We Do This? Think SHOW and TELL

For each indicator, there are three essential questions:

1. Does this indicator reflect the reality of our district?
2. What would we SHOW to someone to support our answer?
3. Who could TELL someone more about our answer?



Suggestion

While the district will **NOT** need to submit notes from its committee process to the **NJDOE**, it is suggested that the district establish some way of keeping notes of its **SHOW/TELL** comments so that it is prepared to discuss its responses during the verification process.

Also, districts do not need to copy each document that they identify as a **SHOW** but rather should be able to locate it if asked.

Meanwhile.....

Each district is also responsible for completing the 7.6 Facilities Checklist for each building in their district.

- The data gathered on the checklists serve as the answers to the facilities section on the Operations DPR.
- Facilities checklists must be submitted to the county office as part of the district's QSAC submission.



District BOE Resolution

Late October/Early November

- The CSA must submit the scored DPRs to the district BOE.
- Minutes of the BOE meeting must reflect the BOE resolution to submit the DPR to the department.

On or before November 16th

Districts must submit to the county office:

- DPR Statement of Assurance indicating participation of committee members.
- Facilities Checklists for each building.
- BOE minutes indicating BOE resolution.

NOTE: All five scored DPRs reflecting a Yes/No for each indicator and a final score for each DPR area must be submitted to the department, not the county office.

What happens next?

The Executive County Superintendent will schedule an initial verification review. He/she will:

- Confirm receipt of the DPRs and facility checklists.
- Check DPRs to make sure that all indicators have been scored and that there is a final tally.
- Review the signature page to ensure the participation of committee members.
- Review the district BOE's resolution.
- Schedule an initial review of the district's DPR.

Initial Review

- The Executive County Superintendent and staff will work to verify whatever indicators they can based on information held at the county office.
- The Executive County Superintendent and staff will identify areas for verification.
- The Executive County Superintendent and staff will visit each district and meet with committee members to verify district responses through documentation and conversations with appropriate personnel.
- After the initial review, the Executive County Superintendent will determine if the district requires additional review.

Additional Review

An Executive County Superintendent may trigger an additional review utilizing the following criteria:

- A large number of disparities in responses between the district's self-assessment responses and the Executive County Superintendent scores during the initial review.
- The Statement of Assurance does not include 100% of the district's self-assessment committee's signatures.
- Other information as deemed appropriate by the Executive County Superintendent.

Additional review could include: larger number of interviews, school site visits, classroom observations, additional documentation review, and a public forum.

Placement on the Performance Continuum

- Executive County Superintendents will make their recommendations to the Commissioner.
- Commissioner will issue placement letters to districts by April 30.
- Results must be presented to the local BOE at the next local BOE meeting.
- Commissioner will notify State BOE of final placements.



Improvement Activities

The following activities may be required of a district scoring under 80 percent in one or more DPR area:

- In-depth evaluation by team convened by the department
- Improvement plan aligned with other plans and reports
- Focused technical assistance
- On-site monitoring by the department



NJQSAC – Additional Training

In-depth training for districts being “QSAC’d” in 2009-2010 school year will take place in 2009:

- ✓ Review DPRs;
- ✓ Review of submission process

Resources

Check the department's NJQSAC website for updates:

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/qsac/>

Contact your County Office of Education

or

the Division of Field Services for additional information:

(609) 984-6755
