



For Immediate Release

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Murphy Administration Announces Return to Full Local Control to Newark School District

Trenton, NJ – Today, the New Jersey State Board of Education voted to return full local control to the Newark School District, nearly 25 years to the day after the state assumed control of district operations.

“This is a historic day for Newark, and a day for celebration,” **said Governor Phil Murphy.** “For a quarter century, the local board of education in Newark has not had the full power to make decisions for their community. Today, full local control of the public schools has been restored to the people of Newark so that the local school board can address the unique needs of the school community.”

“We know that schools operate most effectively when they have the support and buy-in of stakeholders in the community,” **said Education Commissioner Lamont O. Repollet.** “This milestone came about through the sheer determination and dedication of so many people at the local level, including parents, educators, school administrators and civic leaders.”

On July 5, 1995, the State Board of Education removed the authority of the Newark Board of Education and took control of the school district, which had struggled for years with academic and management issues. A 2005 law created the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability System (NJQSAC), a system to monitor all school districts in five key areas: Instruction & Program; Governance; Fiscal; Operations; and Personnel. The NJQSAC monitoring system is used by the Department of Education to determine whether to return state-operated districts to the control of the local board of education.

Three years ago, the State Board determined that Newark Public Schools had made sustained progress in all five functional areas, and in 2018 the Department collaborated with the district to implement a two-year transition plan to local control. The Department enlisted an independent entity, the Bloustein Local Government Research Center at Rutgers University, to establish a Comprehensive Accountability Office (CAO) to assess the school district’s quantitative progress toward meeting benchmarks in the transition plan, as measured by metrics on an Accountability Scorecard. In addition, a Highly Skilled Professional, Ms. Anzella Nelms, was hired by the Department to assist the district in implementing the transition plan and to provide qualitative observations regarding the district’s progress.

On Wednesday, the State Board received the final reports of the CAO and the Highly Skilled Professional, which both affirmed the district’s substantial and sustainable progress. After Commissioner Repollet recommended the district be returned fully to local control, the Board adopted a resolution approving the withdrawal of Newark Public Schools from state intervention.

“Today marks a historic moment for the Newark public school system as the State Board of Education voted to fully return our schools to local control. This is a credit to the hard work of every school board member, superintendent, staffer, teacher and of course student who has risen to meet the challenges our schools have faced. As we move towards a new future, the mission must remain the same – elevate every one of our students towards academic excellence. I am proud of today and look forward to the important work of the future,” **said Senator M. Teresa**

Ruiz, Chairwoman of the Senate Education Committee. “Our city's education system has seen steady improvements in recent years and I fully expect that with Superintendent León’s leadership, our students will continue to see a rise in standards, supportive services and quantifiable results.”

“Today’s vote marks a new and exciting chapter for the Newark Public Schools,” **said Kathy Goldenberg, President of the State Board of Education.** “I am confident that the students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators, superintendent, and board members of the Newark Public Schools will continue to demonstrate the success that stems from community-driven and student-focused efforts.”

"This is truly a historic day in Newark and we are grateful to all who have contributed to this momentous occasion," **said Newark Public Schools Superintendent Roger León.** “We have learned from the past, are preparing for a promising future, and are committed to working tirelessly to provide a first-class education for all of the children of the City of Newark.”

