

In-Depth Evaluation

According to *N.J.A.C. 6A:30-1.2*, an “In-depth evaluation” is the process that may be authorized by the Commissioner to evaluate public school districts that achieve less than 80 percent on any quality performance indicators in one or more of the five key components of school district effectiveness, as determined by the comprehensive review. In-depth evaluations shall be conducted by a team of individuals, designated by the Commissioner, which may include Department employees and/or highly skilled professionals.

As per *N.J.A.C. 6A:30-5.3*, school districts that receive less than 50 percent of the weighted quality performance indicators in one or more of the five key components of school district effectiveness must undergo an in-depth evaluation unless the Department of Education (DOE) has conducted a comprehensive review within the previous year.

In school districts that achieve between 50 and 79 percent of the weighted quality performance indicators in one or more of the five key components of school district effectiveness, the Commissioner determines whether to conduct an in-depth evaluation using the following factors:

- Whether other evaluations of the district exist that address the deficiencies or limited capacities identified in the comprehensive review and that obviate the need for an additional in-depth evaluation; or
- Whether the district can demonstrate that it is engaged in efforts to address the areas of limited capacity or deficiencies identified in the comprehensive review process.
- The Commissioner may also determine to waive the in-depth evaluation where the DOE has conducted an in-depth evaluation in a prior year and that evaluation was the basis for a NJQSAC district improvement plan currently in operation in the district.

The Commissioner must comply with the following in conducting an in-depth evaluation:

- Notify the district within 30 days of the completion of the comprehensive review whether the Department will conduct an in-depth evaluation;
- Appoint persons or entities to conduct the in-depth evaluation and appoint a team leader;
 - The evaluation team may consist of DOE personnel, highly skilled professionals or other appropriate persons as determined by the Commissioner. Each member must be qualified by training and experience to examine the specific deficiencies in the district.
 - The evaluation team, in consultation with DOE staff, determines the scope of the in-depth evaluation, which need not be limited to the deficiencies identified in the comprehensive review. The team may examine deficiencies related to those identified in the comprehensive review, other areas of limited capacity, as well as community conditions that may adversely affect students’ ability to learn.



- The in-depth evaluation must include, but is not limited to:
 - A pre-evaluation conference between the evaluation team and the chief school administrator to discuss the scope and procedures of the in-depth evaluation;
 - On-site visits to central offices and schools as determined by the evaluation team;
 - A review of all relevant documents;
 - Interviews with appropriate individuals, as determined by the evaluation team, including members of the district performance review committee, to obtain their perspectives regarding the factors that contributed to the identified deficiencies and to receive input and suggestions; and
 - A public meeting, arranged by the CSA, at which parents, employees, and the public, may offer comment on district practices, policies, performance, and capacity
- The in-depth evaluation team review must be completed within 30 business days unless the Commissioner grants a reasonable extension.
- Within 45 days of the conclusion of the in-depth evaluation, the evaluation team must report their findings and recommendations to the Commissioner. The Commissioner must then prepare a final report to the chief school administrator and local board. The final in-depth report may be used by the Commissioner to re-evaluate the district's placement on the performance continuum and by the district and Department in developing the NJQSAC district improvement plan.
- The board must report the Commissioner's findings to the public at a regular or special meeting within 30 days of the issuance of the final Commissioner's report.

