

**For Immediate Release**

**June 23, 2014**

## **JCPS Provides Response to Management Performance Review**

*District Gives Update on Progress of Implementation of Recommendations and Timetable for Future Evaluation and Improvements*

Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) has already begun improvement efforts based on a review conducted by the Kentucky Auditor of Public Accounts.

The Jefferson County Board of Education (JCBE) approved Monday night the formal response to the *Management Performance Review of Certain Policies, Procedures, Controls, and Financial Activity* of JCPS by the auditor's office. The response included updates on district progress since the study was completed in late May as well as a timetable for evaluation of the remaining findings and recommendations.

"This review process provides JCPS with multiple opportunities to expand our thinking and improve our operations in such a way that benefits our students," said Superintendent Donna Hargens. "The classroom is the center of our universe, and our allocation of resources and our processes must be reflective of that."

Several action steps focus on providing additional information, education, and support to school-level decision makers and district employees to ensure consistency of practice. District processes outlined in the response will help School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) Councils—which oversee school budgets and staffing—evaluate optimal staff ratios and ensure that schools have the resources they need.

"Through the leadership of the Board, Superintendent, and Cabinet, we have made critical improvements to our operations," wrote Board Chairwoman Diane Porter in her letter to the Auditor. "We have seen advances in student achievement as well. While we are proud of our accomplishments, your findings echo our sentiments that there is still much to do as we strive to become the best urban school district in the country."

JCPS invited this review as a next logical step to multiple studies focused on improving practices and structures to better support students. Those studies include the Curriculum Management

Audit, Dr. Gary Orfield's student assignment study, the AdvancEd Accreditation, the GE Foundation Audit, and the Magnet Schools of America Review.

Action steps for the *Management Performance Review of Certain Policies, Procedures, Controls, and Financial Activity* include:

- **Benchmarking (Classroom Resources)**—To ensure that all teachers have properly resourced classrooms, the district will provide principals additional guidelines and training regarding existing policies on the teacher stipends section of their budgets. JCPS currently provides \$140 per student for instructional supplies. The current state requirement is \$100 per student.
- **Benchmarking (Textbooks)**—Each principal or designee will conduct an inventory of all base textbooks in the four core areas and indicate the availability of resources for students to take home. We will use this inventory to ensure that each school has appropriate instructional resources and textbooks during the annual budget process.
- **Benchmarking (School Staffing)**—School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) Councils are responsible for staffing decisions at each school, as mandated by state statute. However, to help ensure that schools have optimal ratios of teachers, instructional assistants, counselors, and administrators, we will conduct an analysis of staffing levels approved by the JCBE and by SBDM Councils. Then, district leadership will conduct meetings with individual school administrators to provide feedback on current staffing decisions and obtain consensus of true staffing needs for the future.
- **Benchmarking (Compensation)**—JCPS will submit a request for proposal for a salary review. This ensures that all employees are fairly compensated for their duties and responsibilities and that our salary scale is reflective of today's market.
- **Governance (Fiscal)**—Will improve sharing of pertinent information to ensure that the JCBE has a greater understanding of budget items and the budget process so that members can make informed decisions.
- **Internal Audit**—JCPS is reviewing the scope and nature of our internal audit function, which will move to a best-practice, risk-based work plan. The JCBE will have more formal oversight in this area, and we will consolidate fraud hotline and complaints tracking, as recommended in the audit.
- **Contracting**—JCPS is implementing a centralized database of all contracts, as called for in the review.
- **Information Technology**—To further fortify the safety of confidential digital information, JCPS continues to work closely with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) not only to investigate areas of potential improvement but also to employ a risk-based approach to ensure that sufficient protective measures are evaluated and implemented.

To view the district's full action plan, copy and paste the link below:

[www.jefferson.kyschools.us/news/PressRelease/Auditor\\_Response.pdf](http://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/news/PressRelease/Auditor_Response.pdf)

View the district's response letter, copy and paste the link below:

[www.jefferson.kyschools.us/news/PressRelease/AuditReview\\_ResponseLetter.pdf](http://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/news/PressRelease/AuditReview_ResponseLetter.pdf)