

# Superintendent Annual Evaluation

Dr. Donna Hargens

June 23, 2014

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Jefferson County Board of Education

## Preface

The Jefferson County Board of Education conducted its annual evaluation of the superintendent of the Jefferson County Public Schools on June 13 and June 23, 2014 based on three Performance Objectives for the 2013-2014 school year:

- Performance Objective 1: Improve student achievement.
- Performance Objective 2: Develop capacity within the organization.
- Performance Objective 3: Continuously improve the implementation of Vision 2015.

The Superintendent presented her portfolio of evidence to the Board on June 10, 2014 [http://www.jefferson.k12.ky.us/Board/Board Meeting Materials.html](http://www.jefferson.k12.ky.us/Board/Board%20Meeting%20Materials.html). The following report includes the Board's feedback on the 2013-2014 performance objectives and establishes performance objectives for 2014-2015.

## Evaluation Narrative

### 2013-2014 Performance Objectives

#### **Performance Objective 1: Improve student achievement.**

The Board is encouraged by the emerging trends of student achievement, reflecting the focused efforts of teachers, support staff and principals in the schools. It is evident that district staff in the academic division has capably targeted support and guidance to schools. For the first time, JCPS in 2013 met the annual target set by the state for the percentage of students reaching proficiency. Achievement indicators show patterns of improvements across all student groups. Several of the priority schools are demonstrating consistent improvements in student achievement. Dr. Hargens has steadfastly focused the attention of the district on this objective over the past three years.

Dr. Hargens has dedicated additional resources to the schools. Instructional supports were repurposed to the schools as Goal Clarity Coaches with Assistant Principals added to elementary schools. In addition, Dr. Hargens has focused on organizing community resources. Louisville Linked provides a mechanism for a

continuum of services to schools, particularly in priority and schools with students with high needs. Dr. Hargens has worked to develop a multitude of community partnerships to meet a variety of student needs. Finally, in her 2013 evaluation, the Board directed Dr. Hargens' attention to early childhood programs. Improvements appear to be underway to ensure that more students are entering kindergarten with greater academic readiness.

In short, there is clear momentum in all areas to support steady and continuous improvements in student learning. Dr. Hargens task in the coming year is to build on and accelerate this momentum.

**Performance Objective 2: Develop capacity within the organization.**

Substantial changes have been made over the course of three years to the structure of central office services. Area Assistant Superintendents have been added to support principals, and the *Envision Equity* scorecard has been developed to allow the district to assess systemic efforts to insure educational equity. Direction and support to academic excellence in our schools appears to be effectively benefiting student achievement.

Dr. Hargens has established positive relationships with the Kentucky Department of Education and the state legislators. She welcomes and seeks external, objective feedback, and uses insights and criticisms to define areas for improvement.

Examples of this positive leadership include requesting the recent state audit, *Management Performance Review of Certain Policies Procedures, Controls, and Financial Activity of the Jefferson County Public School District* and the *Magnet Review Report*. In addition, she is informally pursuing input from leaders in the community to explore ways in which the district can better communicate its financial condition and future planning. She administered a 360 degree survey to staff to determine staff perception of and satisfaction with her leadership. Results of the survey are included in her portfolio of evidence.

Finally, the Board observes Dr. Hargens' efforts to resolve issues brought to her attention. For example, communication with the Board has improved. Initial steps

are being taken to reinstate mechanisms for principal development within the district.

**Performance Objective 3: Continuously improve the implementation of *Vision 2015*.**

A strength displayed by Dr. Hargens is her attention to the District's strategic plan, *Vision 2015*. She consistently communicates the Board's vision effectively throughout the Louisville community. She has been relentless in her commitment to develop a strong community presence. She tirelessly participates with community members through a variety of venues as an advocate for JCPS schools.

Dr. Hargens uses the strategic plan to guide the work of the district and its priorities. The Board directed Dr. Hargens to develop a long-term plan for technology and for facilities and she has taken initial steps to do so.

### **2014-2015 Performance Objectives**

The Board recognizes the essential accomplishments and progress that Dr. Hargens has made in the Jefferson County Public Schools. The Board further acknowledges the dedicated and capable staff whose hard work makes Dr. Hargens' leadership effective. A district focus on *every student graduating prepared* must continue with the full engagement of all JCPS staff.

To that end, the Board articulated their collective concern regarding the need to develop the internal culture and conditions that support sustainable high performance for both students and the personnel of JCPS. The Board directs Dr. Hargens to focus her leadership on the development of staff, relationships, internal processes and culture that are paramount to the next level of the district's progress.

**Performance Objective 1: Mobilize staff to improve student learning, pre-kindergarten through grade 12.**

Student achievement remains the center of the district's mission. The Board believes that the following performance objectives are essential to building a high performing system within which people are motivated, valued and recognized for

their commitment to students. Dr. Hargens' leadership, communications and response to the above directions as outlined by the Board are critical to the next phase of improvement in student achievement.

**Performance Objective 2: Strengthen your leadership within the school district and across the schools.**

The Board cites three focus areas within this performance objective.

1. Clarify your point of view on issues that are brought forward to the Board. The Board asks that Dr. Hargens declare her point of view to board members, particularly regarding complex issues or topics of significant importance to mission critical work of the district. She needs to demonstrate leadership by stating a point of view with specificity and increase her input during presentations made by staff at Board meetings. The Board asks that Dr. Hargens insure that communications and presentations to the Board are concise and address inquires from the Board.
2. Cultivate the energy of district and school staff to be fully engaged as valued members of Jefferson County Public Schools. The Board encourages Dr. Hargens to invest in developing a sense of team whose members feel empowered to act within the accountabilities of their positions.
3. Work to foster relationships, a sense of pride, and community within the district through meaningful interactions and communications. Build opportunities for genuine connections with JCPS staff to support their commitment to the district as valued members of the team. The Board strongly encourages Dr. Hargens to share information with district and school staff in a timely manner. Further, the Board suggests that Dr. Hargens engage in conversations with leadership throughout the district to enrich relationships and forge internal partnerships.

**Performance Objective 3: Clarify consistently accountabilities and degree of urgency for decisions to be made.**

The Board directs Dr. Hargens to delegate and communicate clear decision-making parameters that result in clarifying who is responsible for making a particular decision or recommendation to the superintendent. Such clarity will assist staff in understanding the responsibilities, time frames, and expectations resulting in decisive and prompt follow through. The Board would like to see decisions made in a timely and effective manner, including but not limited to personnel.

Clarification appears to be needed in matters related to school based authorities and district level authorities. Site based decision-making accountabilities at the school and the district level may be clear in statute yet blurred in execution, resulting in lack of coherence in systemic advances. The Board directs Dr. Hargens' attention to this important determinant of school performance, and calls for recommendations to the Board about needed changes, even if this includes a long-term strategy for legislative action to amend state-driven requirements.

**Performance Objective 4: Create a culture of excellence to deliver predictable, effective, and responsive services.**

Dr. Hargens has explained repeatedly that the district lacks clear, objective processes that facilitate excellent service, and instead operates too often via "oral tradition." The Board calls for action on this observation, including that key processes be established, communicated, and used. Explicit and efficient processes that everyone in the district understands are essential for sustained high performance that the Board wants to realize.

An essential function in the district to which that the Board requests your immediate attention is human resources. The district human resource functions should be updated to accomplish state of the art recruitment, retention and development services to insure that JCPS schools have the best and the brightest educators. That includes effective implementation of the state's new Professional Growth and Evaluation System for teachers and principals as well as other needed professional development programs for staff from induction and throughout their

careers in JCPS. We need to use the most effective training and development learning technologies for our staff to support the level of performance that we expect.

In addition, the Board would also like to see focused efforts to proactively communicate, internally and externally with our community, the accomplishments of JCPS students and the extraordinary work of JCPS staff. We must tell our story in proactive ways to call attention to our successes as well as addressing our challenges. Our communication efforts need to be more balanced to reflect the energy and talent of our employees and the impact they have on our students.

### **Summary**

The Board praises Dr. Hargens for the work that she has led over the past three years. We recognize Dr. Hargens devotes extraordinary energy to making the Jefferson County Public Schools the best urban district in the country. The Board directs Dr. Hargens to the Performance Objectives for the 2014-2015 school year. We ask her to develop her leadership influence to engage the internal community of Jefferson County Public Schools and build pride in being a vital team member. It is important to note that the Jefferson County Board of Education will be using a new superintendent evaluation process next year that is being established by the Kentucky Department of Education.

## Performance Objectives for 2014-2015

**Performance Objective 1:** Mobilize staff to improve student learning, pre-kindergarten through grade 12.

**Performance Objective 2:** Strengthen your leadership within the school district and across the schools.

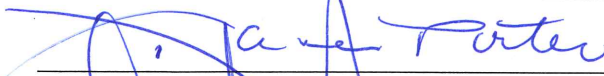
**Performance Objective 3:** Clarify consistently accountabilities and degree of urgency for decisions to be made.

**Performance Objective 4:** Create a culture of excellence to deliver predictable, effective, and responsive services.

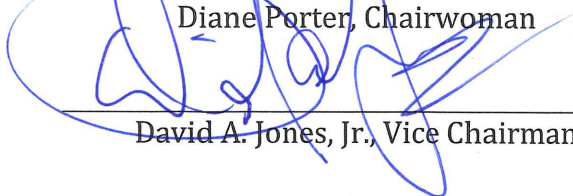
### Final Summative Board Evaluation of the Superintendent

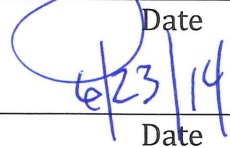
Summary Board Evaluation (Meets/Does Not Meet)					
General Performance Criteria	Meets Expectation	Does Not Meet Expectation	Specific Performance Objectives	Meets Expectation	Does Not Meet Expectation
Leadership	X		Objective #1	X	
Management	X		Objective #2	X	
Policy and Governance	X		Objective #3	X	
Communication	X				
Board Relations	X				
Community Relations	X				
District Goals and Planning	X				
Professional Standards	X				

General	
General Performance	Specific Objectives
Meets Expectations X	Meets Expectations X
Does Not Meet Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations

  
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 Diane Porter, Chairwoman

23 June 2014  
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 Date

  
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 David A. Jones, Jr., Vice Chairman

  
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