

Governor Phil Murphy

Murphy Administration Announces the Return of Jersey City Public Schools to Full Local Control

09/14/2022

TRENTON - The New Jersey State Board of Education today voted to return full local control to the Jersey City Board of Education, ending more than 30 years of state control of district operations.

"This is certainly a historic day for Jersey City, and one that I'm glad to see come to fruition," said **Governor Phil Murphy**. "After 33 years, I'm proud to see that full decision-making authority has been restored to the local board of education in Jersey City. Moreover, I'm confident the community will continue to rally around their students to ensure that every child in Jersey City has access to a world-class education."

"Today's action truly reflects the importance of ensuring, to the greatest extent possible, a local voice in the care and oversight of a community's own schools," said **Acting Education Commissioner Angelica Allen-McMillan**. "This milestone achievement is a result of the collaboration and effort of all key stakeholders at the state and local levels, including district and civic leaders, educators, parents, and students. Our congratulations go out to the entire school community."

This is the third school district to be removed from state control under the Murphy Administration. The State Board of Education returned full local control to Paterson Public Schools in January 2021, which had been under state control since 1991. In July 2020, full local control was returned to the Newark Public Schools, which had been under state control since 1995.

"New Jersey's public schools are successful when students, families, educational leaders, and local citizens are empowered to work together to provide input that supports and uplifts the schools in their community," said **State Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg**. "Today's action by the State Board of Education fully restores the decision-making authority to the residents of Jersey City. This milestone is a credit to the school district's teachers, staff, administrators, Superintendent Norma Fernandez, Ed.D., and the Jersey City Board of Education. I am confident that the Jersey City Public Schools will build upon its sustainable progress by continuing to work collaboratively in the best interest of its students."

"This is truly a historic day for Jersey City. We are grateful for the work of so many stakeholders to make this day a reality. The process was long, and the pandemic extended the last phase. However, the years of support and the delay allowed us to extend our learning and reflect on developing efficient systems in governance, instruction and programs, fiscal management, and operations. Thus, allowing us to make ethical decisions to meet the needs of our community," said **Dr. Norma Fernandez, Superintendent of Jersey City Public Schools**. "Our goal for the Jersey City Public Schools is to inspire and prepare our scholars to confidently achieve their dreams and ambitions, master future challenges and reach their fullest potential in a diverse, ever-changing world."

In response to ongoing struggles the Jersey City school district had been facing for years, the State Board of Education determined in 1989 that state control was necessary to make improvements to the district. The NJDOE supported and assessed the district's progress in meeting key benchmarks over the years in order to transition back to local control. During the multi-year transition period, the NJDOE enlisted the services of an independent entity – the Bloustein Local Government Research Center at Rutgers University – to create a Comprehensive Accountability Office (CAO) and employed two Highly Skilled Professionals to support implementation of the transition plan and evaluate the district's progress in areas such as instruction and programming, governance, and fiscal management.

Today the State Board of Education received the final reports from the CAO and the Highly Skilled Professionals, Dr. Stephen Cowan and Dr. Alexis Colander. In light of their reports confirming the district has successfully met the necessary benchmarks to return to local control, the State Board of Education approved a resolution to return control of the district to the Jersey City Board of Education.

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