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Jersey City to Reclaim Local Control Over School District

Full Restoration of Local Control Expected By Spring

TRENTON – Today, Mayor Steven Fulop and Superintendent Marcia Lyles joined New Jersey’s Commissioner of Education, David Hespe, for a vote that returned two components of the Jersey City school system back to local control. They also set out a time line for full control to return in Spring 2016.

The Jersey City school system has been under state control since 1989. Twenty-six years ago this week, the state claimed authority the school district, marking the first time in American history that a state assumed management of a city school system because of “academic bankruptcy.” At the time, the *New York Times* reported that Jersey City Schools were “crippled by political patronage and nepotism, weak administration and management, fiscal irregularities, [and] indifference.”

Today's vote provides four of the five components needed to return to full local control to Jersey City, with the final component to be returned to Jersey City control by early 2016.

“After almost three decades of state management, control of our public schools is returning where it should be – home,” said Mayor Steven Fulop. “Jersey City has earned this opportunity,” the Mayor continued, “Our school system has seen promising improvement that reflects the hard work of many dedicated educators.”

Beginning in 2010, then-Councilman Fulop – along with allies and education activists – supported slates during Jersey City Board of Education elections that were focused on finding a new superintendent committed to student outcomes. Those slates won three straight elections, and paved the way for a new superintendent, Dr Marcia Lyles.

“We could not be more excited about this opportunity,” said Dr. Marcia Lyles, Superintendent of Jersey City Public Schools, “This is an affirmation of everything we’ve been working towards for the past several years. We’re looking forward to regaining full control.”

The State Department of Education (DOE) evaluated whether Jersey City’s readiness to reclaim local control using, the Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC). It is an assessment completed every three years, breaks down school management into five categories: instruction and program, personnel, fiscal management, operations management, and governance.

This morning, the Mayor and superintendent met with State Department of Education members in Trenton, where both the “operations” and “personnel/human resources” were turned over to Jersey City control. They also announced the formation of a working group to determine how the final component of local control – “instruction and program” – could be turned over to the city in the next several months.

All media inquiries should be directed to Ryan Jacobs, Communications Director for Mayor Steven M. Fulop. ///