



## **SCHENECTADY CITY SCHOOLS**

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*John Yagielski, Superintendent of Schools*

# **Restructuring Schenectady High School**

September 2010

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*An overview of the restructuring process*

including explanation of why Schenectady High School must be restructured,  
school status, changes taking place and next steps.

# Schenectady High School

## *Why Restructure?*

Schenectady High School must make significant changes for the 2010-2011 school year. The changes are required because of low Regents test scores and a low graduation rate for at least five consecutive years. Under No Child Left Behind and New York State Education Department accountability measures, Schenectady High School has been assigned the *Accountability Status of Restructuring*.

As a result of this status, Schenectady High School is required to make change by selecting one of five options: 1) closing and reopening as a charter school, 2) replacing all current school staff, 3) contracting with an outside entity, 4) turning over to the state education agency or 5) restructuring with fundamental reform.

Schenectady High School will be restructured with reform.

The Schenectady City School District and Schenectady High School Restructuring team followed a strict process before submitting a comprehensive restructuring proposal to the New York State Education Department. In order to provide guidance and support, a multi-day on-site review was led by a member of the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Observations, recommendations and commendations were provided and suggested for inclusion in the plan.

The restructuring plan that will be implemented in September 2010 reflects changes in philosophy as well as programming changes and new initiatives, organizational and structural changes, increased resources and supports, increased staffing and enhanced professional development.

The following will provide:

- Background and explanation of accountability
- School data
- Options and consequences of not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
- Developing the restructuring plan including process and procedures
- Restructuring Plan
- Restructuring Strategies, Elements and Key Points
- Contact Information
- Glossary of Terms
- Addendum: Summary for Schenectady High School's Department of Labor Grant

## **Background on Accountability**

Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and requirements of the New York State Education Department (NYSED), school districts are held accountable for the participation and performance of their students.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 is a federal law designed to improve education. The goal of NCLB is to have every student performing at grade level by 2014. The key parts of NCLB are learning standards, school accountability, public school choice, free tutoring, high qualifications for teachers and parental involvement.

Schools must show that students are reaching established achievement targets set by NYSED. This is called *Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)*.

# Who and what is measured?

At the high school level, progress is measured by:

- Participation and Performance on English Language Arts (ELA) Regents
- Participation and Performance on Mathematics Regents
- Graduation rate (including only students who graduate in four years)

Accountability decisions are based on three distinct cohorts (or groups) of students.

A cohort by definition is a group of subjects who have shared a particular experience during a particular period of time.

The high school cohort consists of **all students who entered Grade 9 in a particular year**, and all ungraded students with disabilities who reached their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday in that year and were enrolled in the school for five months. Students who transferred out of the school district are excluded from the cohort.

The most recent high school **cohorts** include:

- **Graduation Rate: 2005 Total Cohort**

Students who entered grade 9 at Schenectady High in 2005

The graduation rate is based on the number of students within the cohort who graduate in four years. For this particular cohort, that would be 2009. (Ex.) In order to achieve a 100% graduation rate, all students who entered Schenectady High School in 2005 would have had to of graduated in June 2009.

## Graduation Requirements

In order to graduate with a General Education Diploma, students must earn at last 22 credits as outlined here:

English Language Arts	4 units
Social Studies	4 units
Mathematics	3 units
Science	3 units
Health	.5 units
The Arts	1 unit
Foreign Language	1 unit
Physical Education	2 units
Sequence Courses/Electives	3.5 units
<b>Total</b>	<b>22 units or credits</b>

- **English & Mathematics Participation:** All students enrolled in grade 12 or students who graduated between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010.

*In order for districts to make AYP in Participation, at least 95% of grade students in each accountability group of 40 more students must have taken the English and mathematics examination that meets graduation requirement.*

- **English & Mathematics Performance:** 2006 Cohort  
*Achievement of students who entered grade 9 in 2006*

## What is Accountability Status?

Schools are assigned an **accountability status** based on its history of making AYP and current AYP status.

There are four different levels of **Accountability Status**:

- Good standing
- Improvement
- Corrective Action
- Restructuring

If the school is identified for improvement, corrective action, or **restructuring**, it is also assigned to an **accountability category** based on the student groups whose failure to make AYP caused the school be identified.

Categories Include:

- Basic
- Focused
- Comprehensive

The performance of students in each of the following accountability groups is measured and considered in determining a school's status. The accountability groups include:

- All students
- White students
- Black or African American Students
- Hispanic or Latino Students
- Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- Students with Disabilities
- Limited English Proficient
- Economically Disadvantaged

In order for a school to make AYP, **every group**, including *all students* must meet graduation, participation and performance criteria. The failure of one group to make AYP on an ELA or math accountability measure means that the school does not make AYP on that measure.

**Schools are subject to consequences if *All Students* and all subgroups, do not reach the benchmark.**

### **Schenectady High School Status: Advanced Restructuring (Comprehensive)**

To achieve status of "good standing," Schenectady High School students must prove they are successful in all measures and in all subgroups for two consecutive years.

The progress report of Schenectady High School including how students performed and the accountability status is part of the annual report card.

# The Status of Schenectady High School

Schenectady High School is currently in **advanced Restructuring (comprehensive)** because the school did not make AYP over the last six years.

Below is a seven year chart that indicates which student groups make AYP each year.

School Year ----- Status	ELA Made AYP	Math Made AYP	ELA Did Not Make AYP	Math Did Not Make AYP	Graduation Rate
<b>2008-2009</b> ----- <b>Restructuring Comprehensive ELA and Math</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White</li> <li>Asian/Nat Haw</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White</li> <li>Asian/Nat Haw</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Students</li> <li>Black/Afr. Am.</li> <li>Hispanic/Latino</li> <li>Disabilities</li> <li>Econ. Disadv.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Students</li> <li>Black/Afr. Am.</li> <li>Hispanic/Latino</li> <li>Disabilities</li> <li>Econ. Disadv.</li> </ul>	Made AYP ----- Graduation Rate 55%
<b>2007-2008</b> ----- <b>School Requiring Academic Progress 5 ELA and Math</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White</li> <li>Asian/Nat Haw</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Students</li> <li>White</li> <li>Asian/Nat Haw</li> <li>Econ. Disadv.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Students</li> <li>Black/Afr. Am.</li> <li>Hispanic/Latino</li> <li>Disabilities</li> <li>Econ. Disadv.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Black/Afr. Am.</li> <li>Hispanic/Latino</li> <li>Disabilities</li> </ul>	Made AYP ----- Graduation Rate 62%
<b>2006-2007</b> ----- <b>School Requiring Academic Progress Year4 ELA and Math</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Students</li> <li>White</li> <li>Asian/Nat aw</li> <li>Hispanic/Latino</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Students</li> <li>White</li> <li>Black/Afr. Am.</li> <li>Asian/Nat Haw</li> <li>Econ. Disadv.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Black/Afr. Am.</li> <li>Disabilities</li> <li>Econ. Disadv.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hispanic/Latino</li> <li>Disabilities</li> </ul>	Made AYP ----- Graduation Rate 71%
<b>2005-2006</b> ----- <b>School Requiring Academic Progress Year 3 ELA and Math</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Students</li> <li>White</li> <li>Black/Afr. Am.</li> <li>Asian/Nat Haw</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Students</li> <li>White</li> <li>Black/Afr. Am.</li> <li>Asian/Nat Haw</li> <li>Hispanic/Latino</li> <li>Econ. Disadv.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hispanic/Latino</li> <li>Disabilities</li> <li>Econ. Disadv.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disabilities</li> </ul>	Made AYP ----- Graduation Rate 67%
<b>2004-2005</b> ----- <b>School Requiring Academic Progress Year 2 ELA and Math</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Students</li> <li>White</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Students</li> <li>Black/Afr. Am.</li> <li>Asian/Nat aw</li> <li>Disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Black/Afr. Am.</li> <li>Asian/Nat Haw</li> <li>Disabilities</li> </ul>	Made AYP ----- Graduation Rate 66%
<b>2003-2004</b> ----- <b>School Requiring Academic Progress Year1</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Students</li> <li>White</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Students</li> <li>White</li> </ul>	Made AYP ----- Graduation Rate 66%
<b>2002-2003</b> ----- <b>School in Good Standing</b>					Made AYP ----- Graduation Rate 66%

NCLB requires each state to define adequate yearly progress. Each state sets levels of improvement that schools must achieve within time frames. NYS Status for schools includes: School in Good Standing, School Requiring Academic Progress, School Requiring Academic Progress (Year 1), School Requiring Academic Progress (Year 2), School Requiring Academic Progress (Year 3), School Requiring academic Progress (Year 4) School Requiring Academic Progress (Year 5 & Above).

*It is important to point out that since Schenectady High School is not a Title I school, it did not have a distinction or status prior to the NCLB requirement for each state to measure the adequate yearly progress of all schools.*

Under NCLB, schools that do not make AYP for five consecutive years are required to develop plans to restructure in the sixth year. Since Schenectady High School did not make AYP, one of the following restructuring options **must be implemented**.

**Schenectady High School has five “Restructuring” options:**

1. Reopen the school as a public charter school
2. Replace all or most of the school staff (which may include the principal)
3. Contract with an outside entity with a demonstrated record of effectiveness to operate the school.
4. Turn the operation of the school over the state educational agency
5. Engage in a form of restructuring that makes fundamental reforms such as significant changes in the school staffing and governance, to improve academic achievement in the school and that has substantial promise to make AYP

If Schenectady High School fails to make AYP in the second year of restructuring, the school must update and continue to work toward the goals of the plan.

If Schenectady High School persistently fails to make AYP, NYSED will direct how the Schenectady City School District addresses the needs of Schenectady High School. Ultimately, this could mean that the school must submit an acceptable plan for closure or phase out of the school.

## **The Restructuring Plan**

### **How was the Restructuring Plan Developed?**

The Schenectady High School Restructuring core team includes 26 members of the school community including board of education members, administrators, teachers, parents and students. The core team is responsible for developing a timeline, strategy and plan to move forward. Before a comprehensive plan could be finalized, the core time was responsible for setting up meetings, discussions and forums, collecting input and information, organizing information, and disseminating information. Members of Schenectady High School, the school district and school community make up the larger team.

The process for developing the plan includes gathering input from all members of the school community. Over a period of several months the core team and district administrators studied plans from other school districts, researched successful programs and practices and spoke with district parents, staff and students. In order to get feedback on many topics and opinions about the high school, many student and parent focus group meetings were held during the winter months. The conversations addressed many areas including the master schedule, the house system, freshmen challenges, tracking and ability grouping, attendance problems and the school climate.

The **Mandatory District Restructuring Plan** includes a two-year District Action Plan and School Level Plan. The District Action plan must reflect a serious restructuring plan of the entire school with a commitment of focused district supervision and support.

District officials were also required to specifically address the following:

- How the district will report and evaluate progress of the Schenectady High School Restructuring Plan.
- Detail additional resources the district will provide to ensure the school is able to make AYP.
- Provide specific information on how regional Networks and community partners will be able to support the Restructuring
- Support needed from NYSED

### **Approval Timeline** of the Restructuring Proposal

- The Superintendent of Schools Signed the Restructuring Proposal on June 14, 2010
- The Board of Education Approved the Proposal on June 16, 2010
- The Board of Education President signed the Proposal on June 21, 2010
- The Proposal was mailed to NYSED on June 21, 2010
- Joint Intervention Response received by district on July 23, 2010

As part of the process, NYSED has partnered with the district through a **JIT** or **Joint Intervention Team**. JIT consists of an SED representative, a district representative and an education expert with experience in school turnaround. The purpose of JIT is to guide the school district and provide resources and expertise to help Schenectady High School students meet or exceed the state benchmarks.

After submitting the Schenectady High School Plan, JIT completed a four-day onsite review of teaching and learning. The visit took place on May 25, 26, 27 and June 2, 2010. JIT provided a report which focused on Schenectady High School's Educational program and efforts to improve student performance relative to the restructuring plan.

JIT also provided recommendations, all of which were considered in the development of the final Restructuring Plan to be implemented in 2010-2011. The final plan was approved by the Schenectady City School District Board of Education at the June 16, 2010 meeting.

On **July 23, 2010**, JIT provided a comprehensive review and written report to the superintendent of schools. The JIT report addressed a number of areas including curriculum, teaching and learning, school leadership, infrastructure, use of data, professional development and district support. JIT report offered observations, recommendations and in many cases commendations for practices already in place.

Highlights of JIT recommendations, many of which were presented as part of the restructuring plan, include:

- Develop a uniform lesson plan format that includes components of an effective instructional plan and that all teachers should be required to use
- Evaluate the high school master schedule and provide opportunities for interaction among faculty
- Focus department meetings on academic achievement, state standards and improving achievement
- Complete an inventory of instructional resources allocated to classrooms to ensure that they are allocated appropriately and equitably
- Present teachers using effective strategies as models

- Communicate grading policy and ensure high school faculty follows the policy
- Restructure 9<sup>th</sup> grade program and create foundation for further high school success
- Work with NYSED to identify models to help with restructuring effort, effective implementation of strategies, alignment, expectations, parental participation and effective use of data  
 “Benchmarking Schenectady High School to schools with similar characteristic that have achieved well should accelerate the improvement process and support the Restructuring Plan.”
- Communicate school goals, achievement of goals, and analysis to school community
- Improve observation and walkthrough process
- Make Academic Intervention Services (AIS) available to all students in need
- Continue to invest in safety procedures and outreach to parents
- Improve cleanliness in some areas
- Establish welcoming attitude to parents and community
- Make more consistent and better use of data
- Offer focused professional development
- Improve overall culture and climate

JIT recognized that Schenectady High School has taken strides and was progressive in a number of areas including school safety, technology and the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. JIT recommended continuing these practices and in some cases expanding them to other areas where they can be effective.

JIT commended the high school leader’s commitment to school safety and practices and procedures that are in place. As written in the JIT report - “Students interviewed during the JIT visit suggested that they are comfortable with the safety of the school and no one expressed problems regarding safety as an issue when coming to school or going home. Parents expressed satisfaction with school safety. There was a general satisfaction in the improvement of school safety in recent years. School safety is a high priority for administrators at Schenectady High School and Central Office.” JIT recommended that the school district continue to invest in the procedures it has established to improve school safety at the high school.

JIT noted that absenteeism and tardiness are underlying problems which inhibit achievement of students at Schenectady High School. The report also noted that absenteeism among some groups is very high and is often stated as the primary reason why students are failing.

JIT recommended using the available data and working with parents and staff to find solutions to the attendance problems. The team commended the district and high school for the substantial investment in technology which provides the school with up to date, period-by-period attendance of students. JIT recommended making the technology also available to “home visitors” who work with parents to encourage the attendance of their children in school.

JIT also referenced the success of the International Baccalaureate program multiple times in the report and suggested that school leadership use the program as a model for setting expectations and professional development design. “There is an effective International Baccalaureate program at Schenectady High School. Students in that program are achieving at high standards. However, this is not true for all students at other levels.” JIT recommended – “Staff development that incorporates the principles of instruction in the International Baccalaureate program would benefit all instruction at Schenectady High School.”

The final Schenectady High School Restructuring Plan includes the recommendations made by JIT.

## What changes are taking place?

The **Schenectady High School Restructuring Plan** is designed to improve student achievement levels by providing targeted programming, challenging curriculum, enhanced resources and tools all in a climate that is welcoming, safe and supports student learning and growth.

The plan addresses all corners of teaching and learning and is designed to provide enhanced academic and social supports to every student from the first day he or she walks through the doors of Schenectady High School until graduation and beyond.

The plan reflects change to organization, structure, curriculum, instruction, the menu and quality of services available and to the overall school climate and environment. It includes an array of opportunities for students to redirect and re-focus after experiencing academic difficulties or in response to other distractions or life challenges such as a troubled home situation that can lead to attendance and behavior issues. The plan is not only responsive to need but is also proactive and steps up efforts to increase challenge and raise expectations of all students so students reach their academic potential.

Schenectady High School students will find they have an extended bridge to community mentors. It is a bridge that is built to connect them with caring adults who drive education and achievement and support their efforts to be successful throughout high school and to graduation.

Many new programs and initiatives, alternative teaching methods and expanded opportunities to recover credits are strategically in place to cooperatively help improve the academic achievement level of all students but with special focus on those who are at-risk of not succeeding such as freshmen and special education students.

The following will outline organizational and structural changes, strategies and key elements of the Schenectady High School Restructuring Plan.

## What are the structural & program changes?

### **9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy**

Every freshman at Schenectady High School is a member of the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy. Every smaller learning community at Schenectady High School has its own 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy with teaching and guidance teams, extra support services and resources.

The new academy is formed through collaboration of the high school staff, restructuring of the smaller learning communities and with financial resources provided through the Department of Labor grant recently awarded to the high school. The academy is designed to create a nurturing and positive learning environment for the newest members of Schenectady High School.

The Schenectady High School staff has been increased and reorganized to support the new program which offers a lower student to teacher ratio, opportunities to develop and nurture relationships with adults, time to get acclimated to the environment and class mates, sensitivity to the change in environment, setting and responsibilities and additional support and services that will help provide that seamless, supportive transition from middle school to high school – a time that is challenging for some students.

The freshmen academy runs on a different schedule than that of the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. The students move among just four classrooms within one area of the house for all of their core area lessons. They also move to a different bell schedule, enabling them to navigate the school without all of the students in the hall at the same time. Teachers in the academy work with freshmen in small groups and with concentrated focus on individual needs including behavior and academic success.

Academy teachers also work together as a team on each individual student's plan. All the core area teachers have common planning time in which they can discuss individual student needs and take a comprehensive approach to ensure that they are in sync and working together to meet each of those needs. For example, Johnny's social studies, math, English and science teachers all meet at the same time to discuss ways they can work together to help him be successful. One of his teachers may have a strategy that has been effective in response to a concern regarding Johnny. That strategy might work in the other classes as well.

The freshmen academy also provides additional academic support for those freshmen who need extra help or resources. Academic Intervention Services are provided by the classroom teachers through seamless delivery.

The staff will participate in ongoing targeted professional development that will provide useful best practices and help guide the implementation of a successful program.

Instruction technology, academic intervention, two attendance deans, materials and supplies to support 9<sup>th</sup> grade teams and instructional data are additional resources that are available to teachers and students within the academy. Students will also benefit from increased pupil personnel services including a guidance team dedicated to only freshmen.

The changes, all part of a comprehensive plan to help new students make positive social, emotional and academic adjustments, address concerns regarding the early high school experience and its impact on success. Many factors including daily attendance and being on time for school and class, being organized, setting goals, behaving appropriately and social skill development all contribute to the kick-off of a successful high school career. The 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy has school and community resources and staff members in place to specifically address these high priority items from the first day of school and forward. All of these factors play a significant role in the freshmen experience which sets the stage for the next three years of high school to graduation and beyond.

### **10<sup>th</sup> Grade Preparation Program (10P)**

The new 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Preparation or targeted Academic program is available to 100 students who did not have a successful academic freshmen year. The program focuses on getting students caught up to their peers and back on track to meet or exceed graduation requirements and graduate on time by providing additional supports designed to target each student's academic needs, provide resources and support but in a different setting and with smaller class sizes. Students have an opportunity to take double periods with teachers in order to complete course work. The program also includes a reading specialist and an advisory component designed to guide the students and keep them on track. Students enrolled in 10P participate in media arts and utilize technology each day. Through the program, they have an opportunity to participate in Media Works, a program offered through Proctor's Theatre.

10P also focuses on improving attendance, a factor which weighs heavily on academic success. Some of the ways the program is designed to be effective includes increasing time on task, helping students get better prepared, utilizing cooperative learning strategies and making connections to careers and real world applications. After students successfully

complete the program, they will select a house or continue in an alternative education environment.

The Schenectady High School staff has been increased and reorganized to support this program with additional pupil personnel services available. Staff will participate in targeted professional development. Instructional technology academic intervention services and the instructional data management system are a few of the resources that will help target and address students who need support after an unsuccessful first year of high school. The increased staffing and resources are in part available through the Department of Labor grant and Contract for Excellence.

### **The Steinmetz Career and Leadership Academy**

Not all students learn the same way. Not all students learn at the same pace. The Steinmetz Career and Leadership Academy (SCLA), which is a house of the high school but located on the Steinmetz School campus, is available to students entering 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. The program utilizes non-traditional methods to deliver instruction and is specifically designed for students who have had difficulty staying on task and learning by traditional means and are at risk of not being successful in high school.

The academy presents a unique opportunity for students to work one-on-one with a teacher and coach while primarily utilizing technology to work independently and at an individual pace. Teachers serve as coaches and facilitators throughout the learning and exploration process. The students will be responsible for completing the lessons and inquiry-based projects – all done using laptop computers. Each student will be guided by his or her own learning plan which will be developed with the guidance of advisors and counselors. The advisory program includes study, organization and writing skills as well as development of educational employment. Every student in the academy is provided with a wireless laptop to use at home and in school. Students must apply to be considered for the program. Enrollment is limited. The program, staff, technology and resources are in part funded through the Department of Labor grant.

### **High Quality Mentor Program**

Through this high quality mentor program 160 students who are at risk of not being successful in high school will be matched with properly screened mentors. The mentors will meet with the students regularly and provide support, encouragement and enrichment. High school personnel will work closely with local volunteers and employee groups and continue to recruit suitable mentors who are committed to supporting and helping Schenectady students eye their goals and strive for success.

## **Other Strategies & Elements**

### **Student Based Employment Strategies**

Many times, students who are at risk of not being successful, have lost interest, focus or simply don't have any short or long term goals. The high school team is not only going to intervene and point students in the right direction, but they are going to set students on track and in motion when they begin 9<sup>th</sup> grade by equipping them with opportunities, strategies and links to college, employment and professional careers. These opportunities include college exploration program as well as exposure to an array career fields, professionals and service learning.

The program provides incentives for students to set their sights on graduation. Students will explore their own interests, learn about relative career opportunities and establish a career portfolio. They will be provided with opportunities to attend summer programs with focus on academic skills as well as opportunities for work and service learning experiences.

The program begins in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Students in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades will have opportunities to job shadow and intern with local employers.

### **School Climate**

Almost every aspect of the school climate and culture will be affected as the restructuring plan is implemented at Schenectady High School. Changes to the physical building, teaching and learning, professional development, relationships, leadership, social and emotional skill development, quality of education, school, community collaborations and community mentors and partners present in the school, will all have an impact on the school climate. All of these overlap and together determine the climate. All of the strategic changes to the various dimensions of the school will lead to a more positive school climate.

The school administration is committed to making the school a welcoming environment to parents and visitors. School leaders will model behaviors and professional development sessions will provide guidance to school staff on how to improve the climate. The JIT commended the high school leadership for the safety, practices and procedures that are in place. Those practices will continue.

An array of training and educational programs designed to improve the school climate will be implemented beginning in the fall. Many programs will be offered to help students and high school staff members more effectively handle difficult situations. Training program will cover topics such as bullying, student ambassador leadership, gang awareness, digital citizenship, aggression replacement therapy and functional family therapy.

### **Targeted Professional Development**

In order to meet the needs of all learners and to best implement many of the instructional changes under the restructuring plan, Schenectady High School teachers and administrators will participate in targeted professional development. Targeted areas include differentiated instruction, literacy, urban education training, assessment and grading, using data to guide instruction and co-teaching. Professional development initiatives support the many changes and implementation of new programs, strategies and positive affecting the school culture.

### **Data Management System**

The data management system is the electronic warehouse that holds important data on every student, every group and every classroom in the district. The data serves numerous purposes all of which will be maximized. The data provides information that creates a student profile and thus identifies academic needs. Middle school data will be made available to high school faculty to help identify in advance students who need academic improvement services when they begin 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

The data management system allows for the data to be analyzed and is readily available to help guide important decisions regarding curriculum and instruction, to determine and implement appropriate intervention and inform decisions regarding programs, instruction, staffing and scheduling. Not only will the data help drive instruction but it will also assist in determining professional development needs. Formative assessments will be used by teachers to monitor instruction and make adjustments for individuals, groups and classes.

Trends will be evaluated to determine where professional development, resources and application of other instructional methods are needed.

## **Curriculum**

The Schenectady High School Restructuring Plan calls for curriculum changes that will ensure complete consistency across grade levels and within each grade.

The high school is implementing required use of a uniform lesson plan that includes the components of an effective instructional plan. Teachers are required to use the lesson plans which include methods for assessment and recommendations for academic intervention.

Teachers who are proficient in differentiated instruction, effective student engagement and high levels thinking skills will serve as models for the teaching staff.

Staff development will incorporate the principles of instruction modeled in the International Baccalaureate program.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities are held to the same high standards and expectations as all students. Effective 2010-2011, the academic program for students with disabilities will be improved. The special education curriculum has been redesigned so it is better aligned with the New York State Standards. Students have more contact time with subject area specialists in a less-restrictive learning environment. Instruction will be delivered or co-taught by curriculum specialists who work with the special education teachers.

## **Increased Academic Intervention Services**

Academic Intervention Services (AIS) assessments will be implemented in English language arts and mathematics. AIS Services will be increased and provided to all students who require services. AIS is taught by the classroom teacher or co-taught with a specialist. Many lower level classes include a reading teacher in the classroom.

## **Changes to Staff Department Meetings**

Department meetings will focus on academic achievement of students and content areas including state standards and improved achievement.

## **Master Schedule**

Schenectady High School operates on a modular schedule. While this master schedule will not change for the 2010-2011 school year, it will be reviewed and alternatives explored for following years. The schedule has been re-tooled so that core subject area teachers do have more common planning time.

## **Equitable Distribution of Resources**

A Schenectady High School team will complete an inventory of instructional resources available to classrooms to ensure that resources are allocated appropriately and equitably.

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# Main Restructuring Keys:

- New 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy
- Targeted Academic Program for students not experiencing academic success
- Restructured Smaller Learning Communities
- Restructured attendance policy, practices, personnel and coordination
- Change to Pupil Personnel Service and Special Education Programs and curriculum
- Allocation of resources
- Increased focus and research-based professional development
- Academic Intervention Services
- Building-wide Co-teaching Model
- Career and guidance initiatives
- Individual Learning Plans for all students
- Collection, analysis and use of data
- Implement comprehensive and consistent approach to curriculum mapping in all areas
- Climate change
- Review of policies

The Schenectady High School Restructuring Plan includes the recommendations made by the JIT and will work with NYSED throughout the restructuring effort including implementation which is underway.

The Schenectady City School District will report and evaluate progress to ensure that Schenectady High School is able to make AYP.

**We invite you to visit Schenectady High School.**

## Contact Information

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Gregory Fields, Associate Superintendent of Schenectady High School at 370-8190.

## Schenectady High School Smaller Learning Communities

### John Sayles School of Fine Arts

**House Principal:** Christopher Chank

Phone number: 881-3942 eMail: [chankc@schenectady.k12.ny.us](mailto:chankc@schenectady.k12.ny.us)

### Thomas Edison School of Math, Science and Technology

**House Principal:** Jerry Rosen

Phone number: 370-8161 eMail: [rosenj@schenectady.k12.ny.us](mailto:rosenj@schenectady.k12.ny.us)

### G.E. Scholars School of Humanities and Culture

**House Principal:** Peter Parisi

Phone number: 370-8191 eMail: [parisip@schenectady.k12.ny.us](mailto:parisip@schenectady.k12.ny.us)

### School of Business and International Study

**House Principal:** Paul Scampini

Phone number: 370-8162 eMail: [scampinip@schenectady.k12.ny.us](mailto:scampinip@schenectady.k12.ny.us)

### Steinmetz Career and Leadership Academy

**House Principal:** Diane Wilkinson

Phone number: 370-8183 eMail: [wilkinsond@schenectady.k12.ny.us](mailto:wilkinsond@schenectady.k12.ny.us)

## Glossary of Terms

**Achievement Gap:** the difference in test scores between ethnic groups, between students from high- and low-income households, and students for whom English is not their primary language. Reasons for these achievement gaps may include the inability of all parents to be involved equally, language and cultural barriers, and poverty.

**Accountability System:** Each state sets academic standards for what every child should know and learn. Student academic achievement is measured for every child, every year. The results of these annual tests are reported to the public.

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP):** Adequate Yearly Progress is the minimum level of improvement and school districts and student groups must achieve each year in at least reading/language arts and math. It also measures the progress of schools using other academic indicators, such as the graduation rate or school attendance. Each state has set its own definition of AYP and those have been approved by the U.S. Department of Education and are available on the department's website. The definitions must reflect the objective of all students demonstrating proficiency by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. Click here to access Idaho's AYP definition and

**Assessment:** Another word for "test." Under *No Child Left Behind*, tests are aligned with academic standards. Beginning in the 2002-03 school year, schools must administer tests in each of three grade spans: grades 3-5, grades 6-9, and grades 10-12 in all schools. Beginning in the 2005-06 school year, tests must be administered every year in grades 3 through 8 in math and reading. Beginning in the 2007-08 school year, science achievement must also be tested.

**Disaggregated Data:** This simply means data from different groups. "Disaggregate" means to separate a whole into its parts. So, the information is broken down by groups such as race, gender, income level, special needs, English language learners, subject and grade level. This helps parents and teachers to see more than just the average test score for a student's school and understand where the achievement gaps lie.

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act (EASA):** This act was originally signed into law in 1965 under President Lyndon B. Johnson. It was enacted to improve education opportunities specifically as they related to minority and disadvantaged students.

**Graduation and dropout rates:** The graduation rate is the number of students who graduate divided by the number of students who drop out. For example, if 320 students graduate and 180 drop out,  $320 \div 180 = .64$ . Therefore, the graduation rate would be 64 percent. The dropout rate represents the percentage of students who leave school in a given year, not the percentage of students who, over the course of their high school career, fail to graduate. Therefore, the dropout rate in these states often captures only one year of what usually is a span of at least four years when students leave school, the best calculation compares the number of students who started in ninth grade and the number who completed 12th grade four years later.

**Highly Qualified Teacher:** A highly qualified teacher is defined as one who has obtained a full state teacher certification or has passed the state teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the state; holds a minimum of a bachelor's degree; and has demonstrated subject area competence in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches.

**Limited English Proficient (LEP):** Limited English Proficient refers to students for whom English is a second language and who are not reading or writing English at grade level.

**Mobility Rates:** The percentage of students who move into or out of a school or district every year.

**No Child Left Behind (NCLB):** This is the principal law that affects K-12 education. It is the most recent update to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (EASA), originally signed into law in 1965 under President Lyndon B. Johnson. NCLB amended the EASA act in a number of areas to strengthen parental involvement and choice in education.

**Other Academic Indicator:** Schools must meet the "other academic indicator" in order to meet AYP. For high schools, this is graduation rate, and for elementary and middle schools, this is to meet or maintain progress from the previous year.

**Parent Involvement:** Parental involvement is the participation of parents in regular, two-way meaningful communication involving student learning and school activities. The involvement includes ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.

**Percent Proficient:** Set by the state, this is the percentage of students that must be proficient on exams each year to make AYP.

**Proficiency:** Proficiency is the ability to do something at grade level.

**Safe Harbor:** "Safe Harbor" is a provision in No Child Left Behind for schools and districts that are making progress in student achievement but are not yet meeting target goals for AYP. It is designed to prevent the over-identification of schools not making AYP.

**School Choice:** Schools who are listed as "needing improvement" must offer the options for students who attend that school. Those options include transferring to a school that is not listed as a "needs improvement" school and offer parents the opportunity to obtain supplemental services for their child.

**School Improvement:** A school is in its first year of "school improvement" when it has not made AYP for two consecutive years. In order to exit school improvement status it must make AYP for two consecutive years. A school can be identified for a second year of school improvement if it does not make AYP for another year, after initially being identified as in need of improvement.

**Subgroups:** Testing results must be reported by student "subgroups." These subgroups are: All Students; Ethnicity groups for African-American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Multiracial, and White; Economically and Non-Economically Disadvantaged (based on information from the free and reduced lunch program); Limited English Proficient students; and Students with Disabilities. On School Accountability Report Cards, testing results are also reported by gender (male, female).

**Supplemental Services:** Students from low-income families who are attending schools that have been identified as failing for two years will be eligible to receive outside tutoring or academic assistance. Parents can choose the appropriate services for their child from a list of approved providers. The school district will purchase the services.

**Standards:** What district or states believe it is important for student to know.

**Title I:** Title I provides federal funding for schools to help students who are behind academically or at risk of falling behind. Funding is based on the number of low income children in a school, generally those eligible for the free and reduced lunch program. Title I supplements state and district funds. Schools receiving Title I money are supposed to involve parents in deciding how these funds are spent and in reviewing process. Title I used to be called Chapter I.

**Summary for Schenectady High School's**  
**Department of Labor Grant:**  
**Mentoring, Educational, and Employment Strategies to**  
**Improve Academic, Social, and Career Pathway Outcomes**  
(SGA- DFA PY 08-14)

**Major program components for the ARRA Department of Labor Grant include:**

- Education Strategies,
- Improving School Environment/Student Behavior,
- Case Management, Mentoring and Employment Strategies.

**Major education strategies will include developing:**

- A 9<sup>th</sup> grade academies in each of the house of the high school,
- A targeted program for Repeat 9<sup>th</sup> graders,
- Establishing a new career-themed Digital Academy, and
- Making significant improvements to existing career-themed houses to enhance career connections as well as improving rigor and relevance.

**To Improve the School Environment and Student Behavior DOL grant funds will support:**

- Educational changes (9th grade Academies, additional career themed satellite house and alternative education programs) that will reduce overcrowding in the hallways and cafeteria on the SHS main campus, reducing potential for conflict.
- Bullying programs such as Point Break and Student Ambassador Leadership Program to facilitate greater communication between student groups and SHS faculty and administration.
- Gang awareness training for students, parents, and staff will be essential to changing the school climate.
- Digital Citizenship Training will be aimed at stopping online student bullying which has been cited as one cause in a recent suicide cluster event.
- Intensive interventions such as Aggression Replacement Therapy and Functional Family Therapy will be targeted to students with repeat aggressive behaviors.
- 6 Case Managers each serving a case load of approximately 20 highly at-risk students

**Employment Strategies is an essential component of the DOL program.**

- Career awareness and exploration will begin in 9<sup>th</sup> grade with career fairs, speakers, and visits to colleges and tours of places such as the nearby GE Research and Development Center.
- a career interest inventory and establish a career portfolio in 9<sup>th</sup> grade before selecting a career themes house for 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades.
- a six-week program offering half-day academic skills program to build SCANS Competencies paired with half-day work experiences or service learning experiences.

## **Project Outcomes for Schenectady High School's Department of Labor Grant**

### **1. To establish a broad-based Turnaround Team to plan and advise implementation of SHS improvements**

**Outcome 1a:** The Turnaround Team comprised of district level staff, building level faculty, parents and community-based organizations will meet regularly and document meetings.

### **2. To implement a high quality mentor program matching students with properly screened mentors to support greater school success**

- **Outcome 2a:** 160 student- mentor matches will be established, supported, and monitored over the course of the grant as measured by CBO documentation and evaluator reports.
- **Outcome 2b:** 85% of students matched with a mentor will decrease school absences by 10% over the prior baseline year as measured by Pentamation data.
- **Outcome 2c:** 85% of students matched with a mentor will improve quarterly grades in English and math by at least one half a letter grade over the baseline year measured by Pentamation data.

### **3. To implement comprehensive educational strategies resulting in improved attendance and increased academic achievement leading to higher graduation rates.**

- **Outcome 3a:** SHS daily attendance will increase by 3% annually toward the goal of 95% overall attendance as measured by Pentamation data.
- **Outcome 3b:** SHS passing rates of 65% or greater for the required NYS Algebra and English Regents Exams will increase by a minimum of 5% annually toward the goal of achieving 95% as measured by New York State Report Card data.
- **Outcome 3c:** The number of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students earning required course credits to be promoted to 10<sup>th</sup> grade will increase by 10% per year as measured by Pentamation data.
- **Outcome 3d:** The SHS Cohort Graduation Rate will increase by 10% per year as measured by NYS Report Card Data.

### **4. To provide comprehensive employment strategies incorporating college exploration and career pathway knowledge, skills and work experiences into the curriculum.**

- **Outcome 4a:** 500 SHS students will participate in paid work per year as measured by CBO documentation and evaluator reports.
- **Outcome 4b:** 200 SHS students per year will participate in job shadowing, career-based mentoring, unpaid internships, service learning, and other career awareness activities as documented by CBO Employment Contractor and DOL Grant Program Director.
- **Outcome 4c:** All SHS students will complete a career interest inventory and develop a career aspirations portfolio.

### **5. To improving the SHS school environment by establishing and maintaining a safe and violence free place of learning**

- **Outcome 5a:** Total incidents will reduced by a minimum of 10% each program year, as measured by data reported on the NYS Violence and Discipline Incident Report (VADIR).
- **Outcome 5b:** SHS will reduce its' School Violence Transitional Index by 5% annually as measured by VADIR Incident Reports.

### **6. To provide case management services to highly at-risk youth to connect them and their families to community resources to allow greater school success**

- **Outcome 6a** 90% of students identified in high risk categories working with a case manager will increase attendance by 20% over the prior baseline year as measured by Pentamation data.
- **Outcome 6b** 75% of SHS students identified in high risk categories with working with a case manager will earn 5.5/22 of the required NYS Regents Graduation Course Credits per year.

**Budget Summary for Schenectady High School's  
Department of Labor Grant**

<b>Budget Categories</b>	<b>Project Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Project Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Project Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Total (f)</b>
1. Personnel	\$104,203.00	\$755,546.00	\$771,920.00	\$1,631,669.00
2. Fringe Benefits	\$28,970.00	\$281,880.00	\$284,257.00	\$595,106.00
3. Travel	\$9,700.00	\$87,500.00	\$87,500.00	\$184,700.00
4. Equipment	0	0	0	0
5. Supplies	\$284,090.00	\$383,879.00	\$363,665.00	\$1,031,634.00
6. Contractual	\$27,300.00	\$1,224,500.00	\$1,224,500.00	\$2,476,300.00
7. Construction	0	0	0	0
8. Other	\$24,960.00	\$112,500.00	\$112,500.00	\$249,960.00
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	\$454,262	\$2,733,305.00	\$2,731,842.00	\$5,465,147.00
10. Indirect Costs*	\$7,722.00	\$46,466.00	\$46,442.00	\$100,630.00
11. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0
12. Total Costs (lines 9-11)	\$486,945.00	\$2,892,271.00	\$2,890,784.00	<b>\$6,270,00.00</b>