

SCHENECTADY CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

2011-2012

**District Directions and Priorities
Second Quarter Progress Report**

January 2012

1. Implement Initiatives Included in the 2011-12 Budget

▪ **New District Level Organization**

The new district level organization was implemented beginning July 1. With the exception of the need to make a change with the Director of Business and Finance, the transition continues to move forward smoothly.

▪ **Initiate Early Intervention Teams**

The Early Intervention Teams are hard at work in our schools. The K-6 mid-year assessments were just completed and the Early Intervention Teams are working collaboratively with teachers to look at student data and determine instructional plans to continue to meet the needs of our diverse learners. The Teaching and Learning Coaches are meeting monthly for their own professional development on a variety of salient topics and sharing this information with their Intervention Teams and teachers.

▪ **Special Education programs to bring home selected students from BOCES**

- ✓ All 5 classrooms are in place
 - Adjusting staffing as needed - one class change ratio from 9:1:2 to 9:1:3.
 - Two students required a change in program - able to keep them in-district

- ✓ Special Ed Teachers, Speech Therapists and Social Workers hired
 - New staff in first year of tenure observations with principals and district staff
 - One new hire chose to leave the district and was replaced

- ✓ Ongoing training and school based support for the review and development of new Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans are happening at each of the buildings
 - Appropriate Classroom Management plans are in place.

- ✓ District trainers for Therapeutic Crisis Intervention were recertified
 - TCI training for new staff as well as recertification training for current staff is in process

- ✓ Developed plan to train paraprofessionals as they are hired to include:
 - Orientation, Hazcom, Bloodborne Pathogens, Attendance, Discipline, TCI

- ✓ Provided Olweus Bullying Prevention training to 9 schools

▪ **Hire staff members to replace BOCES itinerant services**

- ✓ Social Workers hired
 - New staff in their first year of tenure observations with principals and district staff
 - One new hire chose to leave the district and was replaced
- ✓ A Special Education teacher was assigned to coordinate Assistive Technology
 - Appropriate staff participated in various Assistive Technology trainings
 - Assistive Technology Specialist is working with the school teams to meet the needs of students in the district and at the District of Location sites
- ✓ A working relationship with Advanced Therapy (successful bidder for OT/PT services) is in place
 - OT and PT services are being provided according to the students' Individual Education Plans

▪ **Classroom Space and Transportation Services' Related Changes**

The follow initiatives were completed in September

- ✓ K-6 at Pleasant Valley and Success Academy to Mont Pleasant
- ✓ FDR and Keane – return students to their home schools
- ✓ Suspend part of Mobility Policy and institute Citizens Review and Appeals Panel
- ✓ Relocate English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) services
- ✓ School starting and dismissal time changes
 - A small group of teachers and administrators continue to monitor the early morning professional learning community time made available to staff this year

▪ **ATLAS Program Consolidation**

- ✓ Communication to principals regarding the guidelines on Superintendent Hearings (provided by our legal team) is occurring
- ✓ Streamlined Superintendent Hearing process
 - New forms and processes have been adopted that include: Requests for Superintendent Hearings, Timelines, Return to School Agreements, and follow-up letters
- ✓ Atlas Program Assistant Director Dennis Green is facilitating the creation of Return to School Agreements, which outline some alternatives to suspension that allow (with

Superintendent Agreement) a student to return to school prior to the end of the suspension

- ✓ Initial meeting held to explore and plan for Alternatives to Suspension with the involvement of Center for Community Justice, Probation, Faith Community Mentors and School District Personnel
- ✓ Streamlined request and approval process for medical tutoring to involve Nurse Manager in approval process. In addition, approvals limited to shorten time period (six weeks) with additional approvals needed for extensions
- ✓ Strengthening of community collaboration to provide supports to families and students
 - Panel presentation provided to principals
 - Mediation as a part of the discipline process
 - Individual school support
- **High School Department Chairs and “In-Residency” program**
 - ✓ **Department Chairs** – The new department chairs, Karin Callahan – English, Francis DelSignore – Math, Christopher Ognibene – Social Studies, Agnes Phillips – Science, and Lauren Dean, Special Education have quickly become key instructional leaders in the high school.
 - ✓ **“In-Residency”** – As we near the end of the first semester, it is clear that this program has gotten off to a great start. Both the teachers in these assignments and the principals they work with feel strongly that the program has been successful. The current teachers in these assignments are scheduled to return to their regular classroom assignments and a new group of teachers will begin this assignment in February.

2. School Improvement Plans and Activities

- **Review and refocus instruction in selected areas**
 - ✓ **K-12 English Language Arts** – We are continuing our work with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in ELA. In grades K-6, all teachers are implementing a February Unit of Study aligned to the CCLS.

In grades 7-12, two dates have been secured for professional development with our ELA Coordinator to have the teachers continue the work they started with the BOCES ELA coach in writing their curriculum and coming to consensus with units of study. At the end of the two days, the teachers will have skeletal consensus maps that outline a framework for teaching and assessing the CCLS.

- ✓ **IB – A.P. – University in the School** – The I.B. Leadership Team continues to meet to strengthen our IB curriculum and offerings. The IB principal and a team of IB teachers attended further training in Florida while other teachers have participated in on-line training. In addition, the Office of Instruction has collaborated with SHS to review the SHS advanced course offerings including AP, IB, and UHS classes. For the 2012-13 school year, we recommended focusing on IB and UHS offerings for the following reasons:

- IB has become more widely recognized at the college level for its rigor and relevance to our global world
- Fewer students are opting to take the AP exams
- UHS classes run the full year and assessment is based on year's work (not solely an exam)
- For AP classes, the AP credit is based solely on the exam and the focus of the course work ends when the exam is given in the beginning of May
- Successful UHS credits are guaranteed in the SUNY system whereas AP credits are not

- ✓ **Team Information Explorers** – Our Team Information Explorer (TIE) program is off to a great start. During the first semester students created stock portfolios, Google sites, and began researching colleges and careers. The entire TIE inquiry-based curriculum was created based on current enrichment-education research and using the Common Core Learning Standards. A few highlights of the second semester are:

- The TIE Program aims to prepare our 21st century students for the world beyond high school. After selecting a career to research, students will research a college and the education necessary to achieve their career goals. Using their research on salaries and job prospects, they will then create a realistic household budget based on expected pay.
- Researching their favorite food and food sources will provide students with a unique opportunity to learn more about agriculture, organic foods and the food preparation process. Fair trade will also be discussed.
- TIE students will be Skyping with other TIE students the first Monday of each month.
- Students will continue to study the stock market. They are studying data trends, stock performance and have learned about the need to diversify their portfolio.

This program truly expands the classroom curriculum while challenging the students to expand their thinking.

- ✓ **Update and file all state required improvement plans**

Completed for MLK, Paige, OMS, MPMS, and SAMSS and plans were submitted to the NYSED on September 28, 2011.

The following five schools have been identified as Schools In Need of Improvement.

1. Hamilton School
2. Lincoln School
3. FDR School
4. Roosevelt School

5. Woodlawn School

The schools have completed the School Quality Review as required under the NYSED's Differentiated Accountability System. Schools will present their evidence collection process in January to a Capital Region BOCES panel. Comprehensive Education Plans will be developed and submitted for approval based on the Panel's recommendations on February 1, 2012.

3. Board of Education/Superintendent Partnership

- **Review board operations this past year and agreements from last August**

A session to address this item is scheduled for late January 2012.

- **Review selected policies**

The Policy Committee completed their deliberations and submitted proposed policies to the Board of Education on 1) Family Life and 2) Discrimination and Harassment of Students and Employees. The committee has two remaining items to address this year – Social Media and Fundraising.

4. Recruit and Hire Key Staff Members

- **Superintendent of Schools**

Much of November was spent outlining the various phases of the search process. Special sessions were conducted to gather community input on the desired qualities and characteristics of a new superintendent. In addition, work began on identifying individuals to serve on one of three stakeholder groups. In December, the Board of Education reviewed the resumes of applicants and invited nine candidates for preliminary interview. From this process, five candidates were selected to meet with three stakeholder groups in January.

- **Senior High School Principal**

The process for identifying a permanent high school principal will begin in February 2012.

5. Complete Negotiations for New Contracts

- **Schenectady Federation of Teachers**

Bargaining sessions continue on a regular basis. The new state requirements for APPR continue to dominate discussions.

- **Operations and Maintenance Association**

Bargaining sessions continue to be held on a regular basis. In addition, a smaller work group team, comprised of the district and association, meet regularly to identify changes, process and practice improvements/enhancements to be included in the contract.

- **Middle Management Association**

With only 10 members in this unit, discussions to date have been informal.

6. Required Annual Profession Performance Review (APPR)

As required by law, an Annual Professional Performance Review Plan was developed to meet the requirements established by the Board of Regents. On August 17th, the Board of Education adopted the plan. The plan is on file in the District office and is posted to the District's website.

▪ **Negotiate required elements with SFT and SAA**

As noted above, APPR has been the major topic of discussion with our teachers.

On December 23rd the New York State Education Department advised the district that we were expected to submit an APPR plan, including all areas and items that required negotiation with the Schenectady Federation of Teachers (SFT) and the Schenectady Administrators Association (SAA), by December 31. SED threatened to freeze our School Improvement Grant funds if we did not satisfactorily meet this requirement. On December 29, after meeting with the SFT President, we hand delivered a status report on our efforts to comply.

▪ **Task Force on Final Grades**

In order to meet another SED requirement to provide the state with year-end numeric grades for all middle and high school students that reflect the actual level of student learning, we established a Task Force on Final Grades. The work of this Task Force began in late November and will continue through the months ahead.

7. Prepare 2012-13 Budget

▪ **Implement revised accounting and reporting systems beginning July 1**

New budget accounts were opened in July. Numerous training sessions were conducted for principals, coordinators, and other staff members.

▪ **Modify budget document format to reflect current and proposed years**

The work to address this need will begin in January.

8. Planning

▪ **School Organization – Initiate community engagement process**

- ✓ The Capital District Regional Planning Commission provided the SCSD with future year projections and presented the results at a BOE meeting on December 21, 2011.
- ✓ The district conducted five Community Engagement Sessions with parents, staff, and community stakeholder groups during December to determine “ideal” grade level configurations for our schools and to identify pros and cons for magnet and neighborhood schools. Summaries have been written for each session.
- ✓ A charge has been developed and a Long-Range Task Force will be created by the end of January.

- ✓ Currently partnering with Legacy Planning to develop program capacities of our existing schools.

- **Capital Project Plan**

A follow-up presentation summarizing the remaining elements of the original plans and a list of must-do's was made in December. This list will be reviewed in detail in January. This will provide the initial Board approval to continue capital project plans for the coming summer. It is anticipated that a quarterly update on the capital project will continue to be provided.

- **Develop multi-year plan for facility maintenance needs and upgrades**

A thorough list of plans, needs, and priorities will be presented in January. These items are reflected in the current Capital Project plans and noted in the same document for future capital projects.

9. Grant Development

- **Seek grants to support adopted district directions, priorities and specific areas of interest**

Full Service Neighborhood School – A full-service neighborhood schools' grant application was submitted for Martin Luther King Magnet School. We were not successful in securing grant funds for this project. We will continue to seek grant funds to support a full-service neighborhood school model. The RFP for this same grant will be released in late winter or early spring. We are planning on submitting an application.

Child Care Center – In late October, we met with stakeholders from the district, Department of Social Services, Parsons, SCAP and Childcare Coordination Council to explore this concept. It was recommended that we not proceed for the following reasons:

- Financial disincentive to use a center rather than family members for childcare
- Overall funding for childcare programs in Schenectady County has been and will continue to be significantly reduced.

1003(a) School Improvement Grant- submitted in early November. We have requested an expedited review. To date, we haven't been notified of approval. The budget amount for this grant is \$291,400. This will support the salaries and benefits of our Teaching and Learning Coaches in our Schools In Need of Improvement. This will support the implementation of Common Core State Standards and Using Data to Inform/Improve Instruction.

Local Government Efficiency Grant- This grant has been combined and now includes funding for planning and implementation. This grant application may include legal and consulting services for planning and implementing shared services across school districts. For example, shared services for business office functions including, but not limited to, purchasing, budgeting, etc. In addition, it can also provide funding for transitional employees moving into key leadership positions such as the Business Office Director.