

# **SCHENECTADY CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**2011-12**

## **District Directions and Priorities First Quarter Progress Report**

**October 2011**

## 1. Implement Initiatives Included in the 2011-12 Budget

### ▪ **New District Level Organization**

While announced much earlier, the new district level organization was not officially effective until July 1<sup>st</sup>. The new district leadership team has spent considerable time and effort during the summer months refining and adjusting the changing roles and responsibilities of individuals within each of the six major functional areas. Efforts are now focused on communicating the new roles and responsibilities. In addition, the transition to a new model for legal services has gone very well.

### ▪ **Initiate Early Intervention Teams**

Early Intervention Teams are established in all of our elementary schools. The Teaching and Learning Coaches are currently attending the Learning Forward Coaches Academy sponsored by BOCES where they are gaining a clear understanding of their roles as learning facilitators and as catalysts for change. In buildings, the Intervention teams are currently looking at their September assessments, identifying specific needs of students, and designing instructional plans around the district's curricular goals. These teams, along with the school's support staff, are working together to accelerate student progress by providing interventions and support more effectively.

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

- ✓ Five (5) new classrooms were established that mirrored the programs provided to identified students - Zoller 8:1:2; Paige 9:1:2; Lincoln 9:1:2; Mont Pleasant 9:1:2 and the Career and Leadership Academy at Steinmetz 9:1:2.
- ✓ Four additional students were returned to existing programs – three students to high school Life Skills Class 15:1:2 and one student to Woodlawn ES 12:1:4.
- ✓ Special Education Teachers, Speech Therapists and Social Workers were interviewed and recommended to be hired by a multi-discipline team of administrators, teachers and parents to fill the newly created positions needed for the new classes.
- ✓ Beginning in the spring of 2011 and again in the summer, principals, teachers, social workers, and therapists visited BOCES classrooms to meet the children, talk to BOCES staff, and start the transition process.
- ✓ Receiving schools invited parents and students to tour buildings, attend summer open house and participate in new family programs.
- ✓ Classroom furniture and curricular material needs were identified, ordered or assigned to those classrooms in order to facilitate set up by late summer.
- ✓ Instructional support personnel assisted the principals in identifying and implementing appropriate instructional programs and behavior management plans.

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

- ✓ A multi-discipline team of administrators, staff and parents screened, interviewed and recommended for hire -- replacements for 4 BOCES Special Education Itinerant teachers, 9 BOCES Elementary Counselors, 1 BOCES Itinerant Social Worker and 1 BOCES Itinerant School Psychologist. Some positions were filled by current staff moving into positions previously held by BOCES personnel and other positions were filled with new hires. Additionally, a current employee was given a part-time assignment for Assistive Technology, which was previously provided by BOCES.
- ✓ Advanced Therapy was the successful bidder to provide the Occupational and Physical Therapy services previously provided by BOCES.

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

- ✓ **K-6 at Pleasant Valley and Success Academy to Mont Pleasant**  
The adjustment in facilities and movement of furniture and equipment to support keeping both the kindergarten and sixth grade students at Pleasant Valley and moving the Success Academy to the Mont Pleasant facility were completed in time for the start of school in September.
- ✓ **FDR and Keane – return students to their home schools**  
The movement of primary grade students from these two schools to the school serving their neighborhood went well with most parents. A number of parents requested that their children remain at the previously attended school. The Citizens Review and Appeals Panel was asked to review these requests.
- ✓ **Suspend part of Mobility Policy and institute Citizens Review and Appeals Panel**  
The Citizens Review and Appeals Panel has been established and is operational. The Citizens Review and Appeals Panel has met on two occasions and will continue to meet as needed.
- ✓ **Relocate English as a Second Language (E.S.L) services**  
The plan to consolidate and relocate English as a Second Language services among the elementary schools was implemented in time for the opening of school in September. These changes helped to keep more students at or near their neighborhood school and helped to reduce transportation costs.
- ✓ **School starting and dismissal time changes**  
New starting and dismissal times were implemented as planned.

The change for the two K-8 schools will provide a common school day for all students in these schools and reduce transportation costs.

A set of expectations for using the time now available in the elementary school teachers' work day was collaboratively established with teacher and administrator representation. In addition, a small group of teachers and administrators will continue to review and monitor this initiative.

## ▪ **ATLAS Program Consolidation**

- ✓ The ATLAS program has been consolidated into the Washington Irving facility.
- ✓ A small work group, with the support of our new legal counsel has been charged to:
  - Review the processes, procedures and documents associated with long term suspensions of students, and
  - Explore the potential of creating alternatives to traditional suspensions including community service with community partners and “Return to School” agreements to shorten a suspension based upon the student achieving preset conditions including instructional and attendance goals.

## ▪ **High School Department Chairs and “In-Residency” program**

- ✓ **Department Chairs** – A formal description of expectations and responsibilities for a department chair assignment was prepared and sent with a letter of invitation for nominations and applications to all of the faculty members of high school English, Math, Social Studies, Science and Special Education departments. A school-based selection team of teachers and administrators reviewed the nominations and applications and worked with the Superintendent to make the final selections.
- ✓ **“In-Residency”** – A letter of invitation was sent to district teachers who had completed the requirements for administrative certification. Of those who submitted a letter of interest, four individuals were selected to begin the “In-Residency” program covering 12 elementary schools. We are in the process of identifying the four other individuals who will fill these positions in the second semester. As a part of the requirements under the grant funding most of these positions, the College of Saint Rose Institute for New Era Educational Leadership and Innovation is providing ongoing professional development for these individuals.

## 2. School Improvement Plans and Activities

### ▪ **Implement plans developed last spring**

All six schools identified as Schools in Need of Improvement – Paige, M.L. King, Mont Pleasant, Oneida, the Success Academy and the High School began the year implementing the plans they developed or updated last spring and refined over the summer. Teachers and administrators from Mont Pleasant and Oneida attended a board meeting in September to explain the process they followed to finalize their plan and described how their plans were being implemented in the schools.

### ▪ **Review and refocus instruction in selected areas**

- ✓ **K-12 English Language Arts** – We have begun to roll out the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in ELA across the district through faculty and school wide meetings in order to have a K-12 aligned ELA curriculum with clear expectations for all students. At the high school, our English Department Chair and English teachers recently met with the BOCES ELA coach to begin defining their curriculum calendar and the process for writing the curriculum. The middle level ELA literacy coaches and teachers have completed the curriculum calendar and have begun writing curriculum units that are aligned with the CCLS. The elementary ELA

curriculum is written and aligned with the CCLS through November. The K-6 District Literacy Coaches are collaborating with the Teaching and Learning Coaches and the elementary teachers to complete the alignment of the elementary ELA curriculum. All elementary teachers can now access the ELA core curriculum online through Curriculum Connector.

- ✓ **I.B – A.P. – University in the School** – A meeting with teachers and administrators was held during the summer to help refocus the program. As a result of that meeting an I.B. Leadership Team was created to resolve a list of identified issues and concerns and to strengthen the program. In addition, the Office of Instruction has been asked to review all advanced course sequences in all the content areas while researching a Course of Study. Advanced courses currently offered include IB, AP and University in the High School. Together the Office of Instruction and the I.B. Leadership Team will begin looking at evidence in order to strengthen and align our advanced course offerings for our students.
- ✓ **Team Information Explorers** – The Team Information Explorer (TIE) Enrichment program will begin on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Building on the first year’s experiences, the program has been strengthened and expanded to allow more students to benefit from this program. This has resulted in over 250 students district-wide qualifying for the program which is an increase of 70 more students than last year. A change to the qualification process has allowed the librarians to create a program in each of our elementary and K-8 schools, which was one of the program’s initial goals.

The librarians’ summer curriculum work produced a strong, curriculum-rich program. A few highlights of this year’s program are:

- The TIE Program aims to prepare our 21<sup>st</sup> 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 salary and job prospects, they will then create a realistic household budget based on expected salary.
- Students will research companies and create stock portfolios to be followed throughout the year. Weekly they will chart their stock’s gains and losses. Students will simulate buying and selling stocks and engage in a friendly program-wide competition based on their stocks’ performance.
- Students will gain a global perspective as they research immigration and the melting pot of the United States.
- Monthly, each TIE program will Skype with another TIE program serving to link our students together.
- The program will conclude in the spring as the students design and implement a building-wide community action project aiming to improve their school.

▪ **Update and file all state required improvement plans**

The required Comprehensive Education Plans for currently identified schools (Paige, M.L. King, Mont Pleasant, Oneida, Success Academy) were approved by the Board of Education in September and submitted to the State Education Department on September 28, 2011.

However, five elementary schools (Hamilton, Lincoln, Pleasant Valley, Roosevelt, and Woodlawn) have been newly identified as Schools in Need of Improvement (SINI) and will be required to develop a Comprehensive Education Plan. Meetings have been held with the principals of these schools regarding their status and next steps. Parents have been notified as required by federal and state regulations under NCLB. Supplemental Education Services packets have been shared and reviewed with all five principals. These packets are in the process of being duplicated and mailed home. A meeting has been scheduled with the state's representatives to discuss technical assistance and the process each school will use to develop the Comprehensive Education Plan. Newly identified schools have 90 days to complete the CEP process.

### **3. Board of Education/Superintendent Partnership**

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

A session to address this has not yet been scheduled.

- **Review selected policies**

The annual charge to the Policy Committee was updated to cover both carry-over items (e.g., Family Life) and to new items identified as areas of need (e.g., Social Media and Fund Raising). The co-chairs and other members of the committee have been identified and the committee is expected to hold its first meeting in mid October.

### **4. Recruit and Hire Key Staff Members**

- **Superintendent of Schools**

Dr. Charles Dedrick, District Superintendent of the Capital Region BOCES has been engaged to assist the Board of Education in designing the process and conducting the search for a new superintendent. A timeline of key events has been established with the new superintendent expected to take the post in early 2012. School and community stakeholder groups will be formed to participate in the interview process.

- **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 began during the summer and continue on a regular basis. The new state requirements for APPR have dominated discussions to date.

- **Operations and Maintenance Association**

Bargaining sessions continue to be held on a regular basis.

- **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 17<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Education adopted the plan. The plan is on file in the District office and is posted to the District's website. Implementation of this plan will require considerable work, including the following:

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

Our current contract with SFT is scheduled for renewal this year. Thus, discussions with SFT are more pressing than with SAA, whose contract is not due for renewal this year. As noted above, APPR has been the major topic of discussions in negotiations with the teachers.

- **Train lead evaluators**

Most administrators have attended the Lead Evaluator Training. Beginning in October, the balance of our administrators, department chairs and a number of invited teachers will have attended this training. In addition, a group of teachers and administrators have started the process to select the teacher professional practice rubric.

- **Resolve data collection issues**

Considerable efforts are underway to meet all of the new data collection and reporting requirements placed on us by the state under the Regents reform agenda and APPR.

A task force of teachers and administrators has been charged with preparing expectations and guidelines for determining end of year numeric grades to be reported to the state.

## 7. Prepare 2012-13 Budget

- **Implement revised accounting and reporting systems beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>**

New budget accounts were opened in July. The overall change in accounts will take some time for all affected parties to master, especially given the many new accounts that have been established at the school level. Special training sessions were conducted for secretarial and other staff members; however, more sessions may be needed.

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

The work to address this need will begin in December.

## 8. Planning

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

The original plan for scheduling community engagement sessions has been changed to avoid any conflict with the community sessions being planned as a part of the superintendent search process. However, preliminary plans for the engagement process have been prepared. Pressing concerns and the essential issues to be addressed have been identified; updated enrollment projections have been ordered, and preliminary work on program capacities has been started.

- **Capital Project Plan**

A progress report on the Capital Project Plan was presented in August summarizing the work by school that has been completed, outlining the various changes and additions to the scope of work made over time, reviewing the funds that have been spent to date and the funds that remain, and listing of originally planned work that has yet to be addressed. As a result of this report, the board asked administration to review the remaining elements of the original plans and prepare a list of the “must-do” items as the first step in the process of setting clear priorities for the remaining funds.

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

Such a plan will be developed for presentation to the board just after the first of the year. The recently completed Building Condition Survey will help to identify our needs and priorities.

## 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 has been submitted for Martin Luther King Magnet School. We are awaiting notification. Our development officer is continuously researching for grant opportunities to support adopted directions, priorities, and specific areas of interest.

**Child Care Center** – We are in the initial stage of planning for the Child Care Center at the high school. A meeting is currently being organized with key district stakeholders.