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Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education

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April 15, 2011

Mr. Daniel G. Lowengard
Superintendent
Syracuse City School District
1025 Erie Blvd. West
Syracuse, N.Y. 13204

Dear Superintendent Lowengard:

Commissioner's Regulations Part 100.2 requires a Joint Intervention Team (JIT) review for schools identified as Persistently Lowest-Achieving/School Under Registration Review (PLA/SURR) in school year 2010-11. The JIT consisted of an intensive two or three day on-site review of teaching and learning in areas that caused the school to be designated as PLA/SURR. Records, interviews and classroom observations focused on the school's educational program as it relates to the identified accountability measures, i.e., English language arts, mathematics and/or graduation rate.

The JIT Report with recommendations to improve student achievement is enclosed for **Henninger High School.** The findings and recommendations should be considered when determining the intervention model to be implemented in the school.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact Sandra Norfleet, Regional Education Coordinator at 718-722-2647.

Sincerely,

Ira Schwartz

Enclosure
cc: John B. King
Sally Bachofer
Christine Vogelsang
Pedro Ruiz
Sandra Norfleet
Sharon Holder
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# NYSED/SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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| **BEDS Code:** | 421800010040 |
| **School Name:** | Anthony A. Henninger High School |
| **School Address:** | 600 Robinson Street<br>Syracuse, New York 13206 |
| **Principal:** | David Cecile |
| **Restructuring Phase/Category:** | Persistently Lowest- Achieving/School Under Registration Review (PLA/SURR) |
| **Area(s) of Identification:** | Graduation Rate |
| **Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:** | January 10 – 13, 2011 |

## PART 1: INTRODUCTION

### A. Community and School Background

The Anthony A. Henninger High School (HS) is one of five high schools located within the Syracuse City School District. The school serves 1,654 students in grades 9 through 12. The school enrollment is 38 percent White, 37 percent Black, 11 percent Hispanic, seven percent Multiracial, five percent Asian, and two percent Native American.

The District has established feeder patterns that account for approximately 75 percent of high school student placements. Students transition to Henninger HS from the following three schools: Huntington School (a K-8 school in R*estructuring* accountability status), Lincoln School (a grade 6-8 school *In* G*ood Standing* accountability status), and Grant School (a grade 6-8 school in R*estructuring* accountability status and recently identified as *Persistently Lowest-Achieving*).

Twenty-two percent of the students are students with disabilities, a rate similar to the District overall classification rate of 21 percent. The special education programs and services provided include: 15:1, 12:1:1 and 12:1+3:1 special class programs, consultant teacher inclusion, resource room, and related services.

The English language learner (ELL) program that includes 66 students is being implemented for the first time during the current school year. The placement of ELLs is done through the District English as a Second Language (ESL) Department and, therefore, not all ELLs are enrolled in Henninger HS consistent with District feeder patterns.

The administrative team consists of the Principal, three Vice-Principals and an administrative intern. Each of the Vice-Principals and the administrative intern has assigned programs/areas of responsibility. The Principal has been in this position for six years. The three Vice-Principals have served for four years, two years, and one year. This is the first year in which an administrative intern has served in this capacity in the school.

Faculty members include 109 teachers, six guidance counselors, 29 teaching assistants, two speech language therapists, and one full-time and two part-time psychologists. There is little teacher turnover for reasons other than retirements and budget cuts. Eight teachers have worked at the school for fewer than three years. All teachers are highly qualified.

## PART 2: ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

### A. Performance on Key Indicators of Student Achievement Trends and School Progress

| Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-) | School Performance Indicators | ✓ |
|---|---|---|
| | **NYSED Quantitative Performance Measures** | |
| - | School is ten or more points away from meeting its Effective Annual Measurable Objective (EAMO) for one or more identified subgroups in subject/areas(s) of identification. | ✓ |
| - | Performance data for the school on NYSED Accountability Overview Reports (AOR) for the past two consecutive years show an increase in the number of subgroups that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in identified area(s). | ✓ |
| - | Performance data for the school on NYSED AOR for the past two consecutive years indicate an increase in the achievement gap between identified subgroups and the ***All Students*** sub group in one or more identified subject/area(s). | ✓ |
| - | For 2010-11, the school was identified as a **Persistently Lowest-Achieving school.** | ✓ |
| - | Total high school Cohort Graduation rate is below 60 percent. | ✓ |

### B. School Strengths

- There is a core of teachers from diverse program areas who have been identified (based on information from school administrators, teacher colleagues, parents and/or students) as having excellent content knowledge and teaching skills.

- There is good coordination by the school library media specialist with general education, special education and teachers of ELLs. Teacher needs across programs is ascertained in making purchases and information is provided to all teachers when materials are received. The number of books being checked out of the library is the highest of all the high schools in the District.

### A. Key Findings and Recommendations

**Summary of the key issues (causal factors), and other areas of concern, identified during the on-site diagnostic review that are negatively impacting student achievement in identified areas, as well as recommendations, as related to the seven JIT Indicator Categories**:

#### I. Curriculum

**Findings:**

- The curriculum adopted by the District is used across all schools. However, the curriculum is not followed in all classrooms. There is great variation in lesson plan development, i.e., from no lesson plans to well-developed lesson plans, and lesson plans developed for a single day rather than for a week or a unit. Special education reference sheets that specify important information/modifications for the presentation of content to students with disabilities are generally not completed.

- Administrators have conducted limited walkthroughs to monitor curriculum implementation.

- Students typically do not understand the goal of the lesson, i.e., what they should know and be able to do.

**Recommendations:**

- The administrative team should set a clear expectation that the District curriculum and pacing system are to be followed. Administrator classroom visits and teacher Annual Professional Performance Reviews (APPR) should include a review of the taught versus the written curriculum.

- The appropriate development and implementation of lesson plans should be monitored through walkthroughs by school leadership and used as a basis for colleague-to-colleague planning. This and the establishment of consistent language for school improvement will promote better instruction and improve teacher-to-teacher coordination across the general education, special education, and ELL programs. It will also contribute to the productivity of horizontal planning meetings that should be instituted.

- A common lesson planning template should be established and used with the expectation that students should know the learning goals and skills that they are responsible for learning/mastering.

## II. Teaching and Learning

**Findings:**

- Teaching quality and instructional rigor are evidenced in many of the special classes such as, the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) courses, Syracuse University Project Advance (SUPA) courses and Advanced Placement (AP) courses; however, this is not characteristic of all such classes. One ESF Writing course was observed to be low level, and students participated in the class without teacher instruction or direction. Current student enrollment in such courses by grade includes: grade 9- 171 students; grade 10- 214 students; grade 11- 247 students; and grade 12- 203 students. Noting that some students participate in more than one such course, the unduplicated student participation rate is 305 (approximately 18 percent of student enrollment). In addition, student enrollment in these classes does not reflect the diversity of students enrolled in the school. There is a lack of evidence of rigor and high expectations in many of the non-college level courses.

- Teachers include a core of personnel who are regarded by school administrators, teacher colleagues, parents and/or students to have excellent content knowledge and pedagogical skills. School leadership has begun to take action to recognize and capitalize upon highly effective teachers through the establishment of a peer teacher visitation pilot related to *Cognitive Coaching* where five high-performing classrooms teachers are modeling instructional strategies for other teachers. However, in the majority of classrooms visited, instruction is primarily presented in a teacher-directed manner, without differentiation.

- Students are generally able to pass algebra and global studies coursework, but success rates in concomitant Regents examinations are low. Students who pass the course but fail the examination are enrolled in the next course (geometry following algebra or US history following global studies). This procedure challenges students who need to gain skills and maintain examination preparedness in the area of the failed examination, while also taking the next subject in the course

sequence. It is also indicative of inconsistent/invalid classroom grading approaches and grade inflation.

- Most teachers and students indicate that they feel safe at school. However, some students indicated that they are hesitant to involve a school adult when an incident occurs because in the past their name had been shared with the student(s) who was initiating/instigating a confrontation.

- Educational technology resources are extremely lacking, though this problem may be beginning to be addressed since the school became e-rate eligible in December 2010. The available technology is generally well used, though due to insufficient numbers of computers and the quantity of broken computers, it is necessary that students sometimes use computers in groups. Repair requests typically take months. The computers currently available in the school are incompatible with one another, and therefore, programs that run on some computers will not run on others. Course related software, such as the already purchased and available CDs that support the global studies and US history textbooks, are not compatible with school computers or require extensive periods of time (20-25 minutes) to upload. Some teachers bring their personal laptops to school in order to access textbook support materials. It should also be noted that through an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant, Smart Boards and five desktop computers were purchased and PD has been provided to personnel. Although this equipment was received in October 2010, it remains uninstalled and unavailable to support instruction in the school.

- Appropriate materials for students with disabilities are not sufficient. Counseling, as a related service, is routinely excluded from student IEPs due to unavailability of services. Skilled consultant teachers are not used as the school does not employ a co-teaching approach, and special education teacher assistants are not effectively used. The new Prioritized Curriculum in living environment and global studies that identifies the most critical standards is an appropriate and strategic approach to concentrate attention on the most salient aspects of the program.

- ELLs are well grouped into, beginner, intermediate and advanced student categories and receive the required amount of ELL support. General education teachers are receptive to the inclusion of ELLs in their classes, but these teachers need training, support and opportunities for ELL/general education co-planning (horizontal alignment) to maximize opportunities for ELLs to benefit from the general education program.

- A number of general education classes are unbalanced, having high proportions (60 percent or more) of students with disabilities and ELLs.

- The Talent Development program is in place for incoming grade 9 students with less progressed skills in reading and literacy, mathematics and study skills. Talent Development incorporates a student advisory program, a study skills course, and transition for mathematics and reading. It also provides common planning time for teachers, and courses are more intensive, meeting 80-90 minutes every day for a semester. Although the Talent Development program is based on evidence-based strategies, it is not effectively implemented and is not meeting the needs of the majority of students. Expectations and instruction are low level and insufficient to enable students to reach grade level proficiencies. Moreover, there is a question as to whether Talent Development is appropriate for students with basic educational needs, such as those performing at level 1 or at low to mid level 2.

- Ongoing coaching for Talent Development teachers is not provided by highly-qualified coaches.

- All Talent Development Grade 9 Strategic Reading Program classes were observed. The course program is supposed to operate on a daily basis for one semester. It has multiple components, including time for teacher read aloud; teacher modeling of reading strategies, (more read aloud) followed by student questions; a focus lesson on specific reading comprehension skills; and student reading of self-selected reading. The following were noted:

  - Approximately half of the students failed Strategic Reading for the first semester and were retaking it, despite Talent Development's premise that "students do not repeat failed courses during the regular school day in a Talent Development High School." (From The Talent Development High School, McPartland, and Talent Development website).
  - Only one class was observed to be effectively taught, with planned instruction to meet student needs.
  - Observations and interviews with staff consistently revealed evidence of a lack of planning (especially with a focus on reading) and no differentiation, despite students with a range of reading levels from grade 2 through grade 8 and with varying academic needs. The course does not provide instruction for students with decoding and/or fluency problems. Those students, who need direct reading instruction, are unable to progress.
  - The reading course is basically preparation for high school English. All texts are narrative/fiction, and strategies focus on comprehension strategies for English literature, not on non-fiction/expository instruction that would support reading across the content areas.
  - Actual reading instruction was provided in only one class observed. In another class, students spent the period copying definitions for literary elements from the textbook glossary while the teacher sat in the center of the room. Students had no idea as to the purpose of this activity, and indicated that it was not review work. One ELL began with the first element and alphabetically worked to copy the entire glossary, as no guidance was provided as to what elements to find definitions for in preparation for the upcoming semester test.
  - In the majority of observed classes significant numbers of students were not engaged. One teacher posted colored pictures on the bulletin board, while a student spent 20 minutes putting on makeup and some students were listening to iPods or other devices instead of reading. Some students were observed sleeping during instruction and student use of cell phones in class was quite common. In other classes students kept up conversations, totally ignoring the teacher. During writing time, many students failed to complete even two words. There were no consequences for these actions.

- There are few occupational/career opportunities available for students at Henninger HS as well as students attending other high schools in the District. Although the school Health and Career Program is well developed and successful, there is a limited array of programs that are appropriate for students across a range of abilities and interests, including students who do not plan or desire to go to college. Many students do not feel that the high school program is relevant to their post secondary education plans.

- Instructional time is lost by the excessive time needed for students to transition from class to class. In some cases, classroom entrance windows are obscured and some teachers lock their classroom doors. There are constantly large numbers (50+ in one line of site) of students roaming the hallways without being approached and questioned by school personnel. Hall monitors and security are not regularly seen at assigned locations and do not move through hallways to support timely student class transitions (arrival before the bell rings) or to ensure that students do not roam the halls.

- The current five block schedule, except for Talent Development and science classes for which there are laboratory requirements, is seriously flawed. Teachers expressed that they were exhausted with having the additional block and, in some instances, it was observed that instruction was not effective. For all other students and teachers (and for school leadership and parents) "Block 5," which is not scheduled at a consistent time, is regarded as a study hall that many students treat as optional, thus further contributing to student absenteeism and tardiness. Due to staff reductions and the extension of the school day, students in grades 10, 11 and 12 have many study halls (three and, in some cases, up to four in a day of five periods). The current schedule also reduces common planning time for teachers and is an impediment to the development of special education reference sheets. Moreover, it has not increased teacher availability to meet with students who need extra help, and students who participate in sports or clubs after school must decide whether to see their teacher for additional help or to attend their sport/club.

**Recommendations:**

- The SUNY College of ESF, SUPA and AP courses should be continued, and actions should be taken to increase participation/enrollment. Local procedures should be reviewed to ensure that all subgroups are provided equitable opportunity and encouragement to participate. Also, the rigor and expectations for students in non-college level courses should increase and be appropriately linked to postsecondary education and college and career opportunities.

- The school pilot initiative of teachers opening their rooms to colleagues should be continued and protocols established to ensure that the programs are "models." Vetted, highly effective teachers should work on a colleague-to-colleague basis to facilitate the development of formative assessments and be available to colleagues to confer about effective implementation. The school may also capitalize upon in-house expertise through Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) and other peer coaching approaches.

- Students who pass the algebra or global studies course, but not the Regents examination, should receive the appropriate intensive levels of support needed during the next semester – every day for students who significantly under perform and on alternating days for students who failed by a small margin. Students should not be prematurely enrolled in the next course in the educational sequence. The content and assessments used in the initial classroom delivery of such instruction should be examined and monitored to ensure appropriate rigor and consistency with State Standards and assessments.

- School staff should be reminded of appropriate approaches to intervening in possibly dangerous student engagements and procedures for investigating allegations of coercion and bullying without divulging the names of reporting individuals without permission. Also, students should not be admitted into the building prior to the arrival of personnel at the single point of entry. School administrators should have a consistent understanding with police, sentries (parent and community volunteers) and hall monitors regarding their respective assignments. Their roles and protocols should be clearly outlined and consistently monitored.

- A technology plan should be developed to enhance technology resources and to replace obsolete/non-functional equipment. The plan should include targeted PD to ensure that the equipment is effectively used. More immediately, action should be taken in making the Smart Boards and computers purchased through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) grant available to the school and in ensuring ongoing, prompt repairs for technology equipment.

- In special education, timely action is needed to ensure that sufficient materials are available for the implementation of each student's IEP. Each IEP should be developed so as to include all services, including counseling services, determined to be necessary for the provision of an appropriate public education program. The District should continue to refine the delivery of instruction in connection with the Prioritized Curriculum.

- To improve the opportunity for ELLs to benefit from the general education program, the school schedule should be revised to promote ELL/general education co-planning opportunities. Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training should be provided to general education personnel in a targeted manner.

- Students with disabilities and ELLs should be scheduled first on the 2011-12 master schedule to ensure an appropriate balance with the number of general education students in a class.

- The Strategic Reading Program should be regularly visited by school leadership and by the District director of school reform to monitor and improve instructional planning and delivery. Student performance and improvement data should be regularly analyzed on a student, class and program basis to determine appropriate instructional and/or program revisions for 2011-12. Students with decoding and fluency problems need a program that provides direct instruction in those skills. Also, the course should focus at least half of the time on expository text and reading and writing across the content areas.

- The Talent Development program should be evaluated to determine the instructional and program modifications that are necessary in ensuring student progress and in identifying successful and unsuccessful components. School leadership and the District director of school reform should regularly conduct class visits to ensure and improve the quality of instruction. Data for each student should be analyzed on a regular basis to ensure that needs are being met, appropriate progress is being achieved, and students for whom additional or other instructional support is needed are identified. The District should comply with Talent Development's "Essential Components." Also, coaches for Talent Development need exceptionally strong instructional skills, such as those of the Instructional Support Teachers (IST).

- Additional occupational/career education opportunities should be made available to students across a range of academic abilities and school/career goals and real-life links should be built into all courses. Such availability will promote school engagement and student resiliency.

- School staff should implement procedures so that students are in classes, not in hallways or off campus. Procedures should include:
  - All available school staff should participate in the timely transition of students from class to class.
  - Hall monitors, sentries and police on duty should regularly move about the building rather than congregate in one location and focus on moving students into their classroom.
  - Exits should be monitored to ensure students do not leave campus. Teachers also need to ensure that classroom windows are clear of visual obstructions and that classroom doors are unlocked.

- Block 5 does not appear to be a productive use of school time, and for the great majority of interviewees, it is considered counterproductive in that it fosters a mindset that school attendance is optional. The school should implement an alternative schedule that provides for common planning time for grade 9 team teachers and for adequate lab time for science classes;

discontinues excessive study halls and provides the opportunity for meaningful student-teacher and teacher-teacher interaction

## III. School Leadership

**Findings:**

- School leadership indicated that the current school Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) was provided electronically to all teachers. However, most staff members were unaware that they had received the plan and are unfamiliar with its contents.

- The Principal and Vice-Principal conduct Annual Professional Performance Reviews (APPRs) for all teachers. The Principal has conducted APPRs for each of the Vice-Principals and for many teachers; however, he has not received a performance evaluation in the past four years.

- School leadership generally does not conduct regular classroom visits beyond those necessary for APPRs.

- Schoolwide systems are not in place or are ignored in regard to grading, homework assignment and follow-up, behavior management, class-to-class transition, tardiness/absenteeism and early exit. In some cases, teachers themselves do not follow school rules, such as prohibiting the use of personal technology devices in class.

**Recommendations:**

- The Restructuring Plan to be developed for 2011-12 should be broadly disseminated, and appropriate action should be taken to ensure that its contents are shared and understood by faculty, students and parents. Accountability for implementation with fidelity should be assigned to the Principal and to the District director of school reform. Commitment to implement the plan should be an important criterion in making faculty staffing determinations for the next school year.

- It is imperative that Principals receive APPRs on an annual basis, even if tenured, as a tool to promote Districtwide cohesiveness, to set goals and targets for the individual and for the school, and to recognize accomplishments and develop plans to address obstacles.

- Each member of the leadership team should conduct class visits on a regular schedule. A log/journal of such visits should be maintained to provide timely feedback to share with teachers and to plan for general and targeted PD.

- Systems should be established for a consistent schoolwide approach for grading; assigning homework and checking for its completion; prohibiting the use of personal electronic devices in class; implementing positive behavioral approaches and interventions; facilitating class-to-class transitions; having unobstructed classroom entry windows; and documenting tardiness, absence and early exit. The SLT should have an important role in supporting and rolling-out such policies for consistent implementation.

## IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

**Findings:**

- There is no generally recognized listing of students who are at academic risk. In grade 9, students experiencing academic challenges are discussed at grade level team meetings where corrective actions for implementation are determined and documented. For students at other grade levels, there is a reliance on staff "knowing who the at-risk students are and what they need," except for a small number of students with excessive attendance problems or recent dropouts who are monitored by the attendance team.

- Parents find information posted on the website to be helpful, although they note that the school is sometimes slow to update information.

- Scheduling at is poorly planned, with the majority of students scheduled into multiple study halls each day and into classes with a wide range of class sizes. There is also an imbalance across subgroup populations within classes, with some classes overloaded with at-risk students.

- Student absenteeism is high, and the number of unexcused absences far exceeds the number of excused absences. Tardiness is high and is under-reported as many teachers discontinue recording student tardiness in order to deliver instruction. The school is intended to be a "closed campus," but this is not the case as students freely enter and exit before and during the school day. Students begin to enter school 30 minutes before the school sentries are on duty. School sentries were not always present at the school's single point of entry, even after the specified time. Parents are inconsistently informed of their children's absence or tardiness, as the school does not have the capacity to complete all the telephone calls that are necessary (approximately 25 pages). The school has established an Attendance Team that has had some success but does not have the capacity to effectively address the magnitude of this issue. The team focuses primarily on students with serious attendance issues and recent dropouts.

- The rate of in-school suspension is high (168 students from September 9 to January 10), and the rate of out-of-school suspension is increasing (288 students from September 9 to January 10). Some teachers appear to have a lower threshold for referring students out of class for disciplinary reasons, and there is little connection between the instruction provided during in-school suspension and the instruction being missed in class. For students who are suspended out-of-school, there is better classroom connectivity with the instruction provided in the Positive Alternatives to School Suspension (PASS) program, but student participation in the program is low. It also appears that the rate of suspension for some subgroups is disproportionately high. A related consideration, the Alternative Program within the school is an effective, well run program to meet student needs over a longer period, e.g., a semester, with good connectivity to the classroom teachers.

**Recommendations:**

- A listing of at-risk students should be developed and maintained, including a description of why each student is "at-risk," and the services and supports to be provided to meet individual need. Such a listing should be developed in the context of the Four-Tier Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework. The Vice-Principal responsible for data, testing and attendance has information that will be helpful in this regard.

- The school should review local procedures related to posting and removing information on the website.

- The SLT should review and adjust procedures regarding supervision of students, including ensuring that adults are on duty when the school is open for students, monitoring of hallways and ensuring a "closed" campus, so that students are properly supervised. In addition, the following should be considered:

  - Greater attention should be directed to minimizing student absenteeism and tardiness;
  - An automated telephone system (with multilingual capacity for parents who are not English proficient) should be installed to ensure that all parents are contacted when their child is absent or late;
  - Two full-time personnel (school social worker and attendance officer) are needed to make parent contacts and home visits. Note: Such contacts/visits should not be focused only upon attendance/tardiness. Prior to making home contact, information should be obtained regarding academic performance. Such information should be shared with parents, and parents should be contacted when attendance/performance improves.
  - The school should consider the future roles of the Attendance Team and SLT as part of a schoolwide approach in maximizing attendance.

- At-risk students and or special small groups of students should be scheduled first to ensure they are equally spaced across classes; sufficient numbers of classes should be scheduled so that students have no more than one study hall (if that). There should be opportunities for all students to try for higher level classes. Class sizes should be equitable.

- The school should develop a comprehensive set of strategies that ensure that students' time out of class is kept to a minimum, whether because of absenteeism, misbehavior, or any other reason. For students suspended from class on an in-school basis, arrangements should be made for the classroom teacher to provide the ISS teacher with information and instructional materials connected to the class work being missed by the student. Teacher referrals (to in-school suspension) should be reviewed to determine the need for PD that may be needed by some teachers in regard to behavior management techniques to deescalate sensitive situations. Consideration should also be given to the establishment of a detention system to afford teachers and other school authorities a behavior consequence that will not reduce classroom instructional time. Student suspension policies should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised to ensure equitable treatment of student subgroups. Procedures should be revised to facilitate and increase student participation in the PASS program, such as offering the program during the school day.

## V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data

**Findings:**

- School leadership and instructional staff have an overall understanding of the State accountability data, but data is not used to differentiate instruction or to form the basis of instructional groupings.

- The school has an average daily attendance rate of 90 percent. However, classroom observations appeared to reflect a substantially lower attendance rate. Moreover, data, though incomplete, are not retrievable in regard to student tardiness.

**Recommendations:**

- Instructional Support Team (IST) personnel should provide individual and small group facilitation and guidance to instructional staff regarding the analysis of student data. Such support should also be provided on a cross-program/horizontal basis to enhance instructional cohesiveness. Additionally, locally determined cut points (intermediate performance measures) should be established to better track performance trends and denote the extent of improvement.

- Student attendance should be analyzed by block and month of year and cross-walked against other information such as health, behavior, etc. Data regarding student tardiness should be accurately reported by teachers, and be available for use and analysis by school leadership, the school social worker and attendance officer.

## VI. Professional Development

**Findings:**

- The school is at a pre-awareness stage in regard to the implementation of the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) program. Most staff are completely unfamiliar with the program, and have no knowledge of the plan or timeline for phasing-in the program.

- Staff reported that PD programs and priorities are largely set at the District level. Some faculty members indicate that they have been required to attend the same PD more than once (though possibly under different titles). In some instances, PD may be targeted for a particular strand, e.g., teachers of mathematics or teachers of special education, but it is not targeted for particular individuals. There is little or no connection between the individual APPR and the PD in which teachers participate.

- The roles and responsibilities set for Principals are substantially different than those set for Vice-Principals. Although the District has established a building level career ladder – administrative intern, vice-principal, principal – there is a need for more targeted support for new Principals.

**Recommendations:**

- Implementation of the PBIS program in 2011-12 will meet the school need for a consistent approach to recognize and reinforce appropriate student behavior and will capitalize upon the establishment of the program in feeder schools. It is essential that all staff receive PBIS training to ensure the consistent base of knowledge and understanding necessary for effective implementation.

- Individual staff require specific types of PD to better do their job and meet student needs. The types of PD completed and the types of PD needed should be tracked for each staff member. Examples of PD that may be targeted for individual members of the faculty include:

  - Strategies and approaches for master schedule development (for school leadership and guidance personnel assigned this responsibility)
  - Lesson planning
  - Differentiated instruction
  - Classroom/behavior management
  - Effective use of educational technology (based on purchased technology)

- SIOP training (for general education teachers working with ELLs)
- Effective provision of special education counseling services (for the three school psychologists)
- Subject specific training for special education resource room teachers (regarding the instructional content for which they are expected to provide supplementary support)
- Strategies for effectively employing teacher assistants (for special education teachers assigned teacher assistants)

The Principal and Vice-Principals should attend PD with instructional staff to signal the importance of training and to provide school leadership with first-hand knowledge of the PD so that evidence of implementation can be noted during subsequent classroom visits. School leadership should also clearly articulate the expectation that PD will be implemented at the classroom level and monitor that implementation.

- For new principals and for staff promoted to principals, appropriate support should be made available.

## VII. District Support

**Findings:**

- Due to District budget cuts, Henninger HS was forced to lay-off eight teachers, one dean and two office support staff for the current year. A severe budget deficit is projected for 2011-12 that is expected to result in the loss of approximately 500 personnel Districtwide.

- Sufficient resources are not currently available to meet the academic and support needs of all at-risk students enrolled, especially students returning from correctional facilities.

- The current student enrollment (1,654 students) constitutes an increase of 89 students over the prior school year. Some classrooms are over-crowded and do not have enough desks. Conversely, student enrollment in some classes is very low.

**Recommendations:**

- To the extent practicable, non-instructional reductions should be implemented in lieu of instructional staff. Therefore, school costs for the maintenance and operation of the school swimming pool should be analyzed. If there is an opportunity to re-allocate funds for the support of staff, the pool should be temporarily closed to minimize staff reductions.

- To augment the services currently available to meet the needs of students at risk, especially those students returning from correctional facilities, the District should engage appropriate local agencies and organizations, including the Department of Social Services, Department of Correctional Services, Commission on Protective Services, Probations, and Onondaga Case Management. Any additional services made available through such sources should be directed to schools in a prioritized, strategic manner.

- Course offerings and schedules should be analyzed and sequenced in a manner that makes the best use of available space.

**Other Concerns:**

**Systemic Considerations:**

- **Preparation of Students Prior to High School Entry**

  **Finding:**

  Henninger HS leadership reports that 60 percent of entering grade 9 students do not have grade level skills and knowledge. (The school CEP indicates that 52 percent of incoming grade 9 students have mathematics skills at Levels 1 or 2). Many students appeared to be "passed along" in middle school (and sometimes in elementary school) despite having substantially under-developed skills in reading and mathematics – hence, the necessity for the Talent Development program or a comparable program that provides intensive interventions.

  **Recommendations:**

  The practice of "passing along" students who have significant learning deficits, especially in reading and mathematics, should be discontinued at all levels. Especially in middle school, students having under-developed reading, literacy and /or mathematics skills should be identified and given priority to receive academic assistance during the school day, in summer school and/or in Saturday school – based on the needs of each student. The extent to which students transition to high school with severely under-developed foundation skills should be appropriately reflected in the APPR of middle school principals and teachers.

  The expectations and rigor of middle school programs should be examined and adjusted to more closely reflect high school requirements. This aspect of student transition should be included as an agenda item at principal and guidance counselor meetings.

- **Student Transition from Middle School to High School, and Configuration of High Schools**

  **Finding:**

  The current middle school feeder pattern to high schools is followed with approximately 75 percent fidelity and results in inequitable opportunities for student success (based on the relative proportions of students who are academically well-prepared versus those who are ill-prepared) on a high school to high school basis. Some high schools are further disadvantaged by negative reputations; all are challenged by the limited availability of occupational/career education opportunities that are relevant to students with a broad range of interests and abilities.

  **Recommendation:**

  A new middle school feeder pattern should be established that is primarily based upon student choice. To address current reputations and to foster school engagement, it is recommended that a theme/magnet approach be employed. The current array of occupational/career opportunities may be expanded on a citywide basis, aligned with the theme of each high school. To promote the monitoring of effective teaching practices and student success, strategies to bring about smaller learning communities, e.g., school within a school, should be considered. Such an approach may also permit the expansion of high school themes, e.g., two themes per school rather than one theme per school. Although George Fowler High School received a JIT review in April 2010, and is currently implementing its new Restructuring plan, the school Plan should be appropriately amended for 2011-12 so as to be included in the four-school systemic approach described above.

## PART 3: OVERALL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

### A. Overall Finding

| Reference | Review Team Finding | ✓ |
|---|---|---|
| (c) | The school has not made sufficient progress in identified areas, and is unlikely to make AYP under the current structure and organization. | ✓ |

### B. Overall Recommendation

| Reference | Review Team Recommendation | ✓ |
|---|---|---|
| (c) | Develop and implement a new plan that could include significant changes in staff, organizational structure, leadership and/or configuration, to address issues that continue to negatively impact student academic performance in identified areas. | ✓ |

### C. In the space below, include specific information to support the District in determining how the above recommendation should be accomplished.

- A detailed plan for restructuring the city's high schools should be presented to the Board of Education for approval. Such action is especially important in light of the school superintendent's pending retirement.

- Broad community input should be obtained in regard to high school themes and occupational/career opportunities, etc.

- District level and school level procedures should be reviewed/established and implemented to ensure effective implementation of the new school Restructuring Plan.