

**NYSED/BINGHAMTON CSD JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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| <b>BEDS Code:</b>                          | 030200010021                                 |
| <b>School Name:</b>                        | Binghamton High School                       |
| <b>School Address:</b>                     | 31 Main Street<br>Binghamton, New York 13903 |
| <b>Principal:</b>                          | Albert Penna                                 |
| <b>Restructuring Phase/Category:</b>       | Restructuring Advanced                       |
| <b>Area of Identification:</b>             | Mathematics – Students with Disabilities     |
| <b>Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:</b> | February 27, 2012 - March 2, 2012            |

**PART 1: INTRODUCTION**

**Community and School Background**

Binghamton High School (BHS) serves 1570 students. The enrollment is one percent American Indian, 25 percent Black, seven percent Hispanic, four percent Asian and 63 percent White students. Of these students, 14 percent are students with disabilities.

The school leadership team consists of the Principal, two Associate Principals, and three Assistant Principals (APs). The Principal has served the school for 20 years, and the Associate and Assistant Principals have served between four to 14 years. There are 146 teachers on staff; one percent have been at the school for less than one year and eight percent for fewer than three years. Ninety-six percent of teachers are highly qualified. The rate of teacher turnover is three percent.

**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   | ✓ |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
|                                      | <b>NYSED Quantitative Performance Measures</b>  |   |
| -                                    | Negative trend data for one or more identified subject/areas and subgroups for the past two consecutive years, as indicated by a decrease in the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 and/or a decrease in the Performance Index.                                | ✓ |
| -                                    | School is ten or more points away from meeting its Effective Annual Measurable Objective (EAMO) for one or more identified subgroups in subject/area(s) of identification.  | ✓ |
| -                                    | Performance data for the school on NYSED Accountability Overview Reports (AOR) for the past two consecutive years indicate an increase in the achievement gap between identified subgroups and the <b><i>All Students</i></b> subgroup in one or more identified subject/area(s). | ✓ |

## **B. School Strengths**

- The school is welcoming and safe with a caring staff and friendly, responsive students.
- Students are supported in exploring and meeting their career goals through programs such as College Connection, Sister to Sister, Project Lead the Way, the Rod Serling School of Fine Arts, the PAL's program and extra-curricular activities. The school offers a full range of opportunities in student leadership, athletics, the arts and clubs.
- The school offers a strong program of advanced learning opportunities, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, Middle Years Program and Advanced Placement coursework.
- The building is clean and well-maintained, and all classrooms are equipped with SMART Board technology.

## **C. 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:**

- There is evidence of inequity in the programs available for students, including instances of small sections in advanced courses, crowded general education classes and not enough sections offered for Regents level courses. Open access to advanced courses is positive, but the dropout rate is high.
- Special education teachers and guidance staff are not consulted prior to the development of the master schedule. Course selections offered are limited and this results in inappropriate course placement of students with disabilities due to the lack of input from the guidance counselors and special education teachers. Special education teachers are deployed to general education classrooms but are not utilized as co-teachers during instructional delivery to meet the needs of students with disabilities. These issues contribute to the school's identification.

#### **Recommendations:**

- The school should support open access to advanced courses and augment this with stronger teacher commitment to deliver instructional approaches that enable the students who sign up to succeed, rather than drop out. The school should offer more courses on-site geared toward career readiness for students headed to two-year colleges and careers. Career and college planning should begin with a readiness assessment for incoming freshman. This will also help to highlight student skill deficiencies that should be immediately addressed.
- The school should develop the master schedule with more input from guidance and special education staff and more attention to student need. Guidance counselors should be charged with the responsibility to advise students in course and career planning. Inclusion classrooms should be planned in a way that enables the most effective deployment of special education staff. The school should re-evaluate and, if needed, plan differently for how the continuum of services is provided.

## II. Teaching and Learning

### Findings:

- Instruction is predominately teacher-driven, whole group lecture style that inhibits active engagement and sometimes results in a lack of academic rigor.
- The special education teaching staff was predominantly observed engaged in assisting students rather than delivering specially-designed instruction.
- The present grading policy that permits teachers to give grades as low as zero inhibits student motivation, learning and achievement. This is evidenced by the data on the percent of students scoring between zero and 65.

### Recommendations:

- The District and school should agree on a limited number of the most promising evidence-based instructional practices to increase differentiation and engagement, and implement them schoolwide. Some of the practices to consider are student engagement strategies, varied instructional groupings within the classroom, a greater range of instructional strategies for increased differentiation, and more effective classroom management.
- Classes containing students with disabilities should use specially-designed instruction to meet specific learning needs. Special education teachers should serve in an instructional, rather than teacher assistant role when in the classroom.
- The District and Board of Education should consider revising the grading policy and instituting a benchmark to standardize grades.

## III. School Leadership

### Findings:

- The Principal is committed and caring and has provided leadership in instituting rigorous programs such as the IB Program and Advanced Placement, Project Lead the Way, and the arts. He has encouraged students and families to accept the challenge of advanced work. However, the attrition rate from some of the IB and AP courses is problematic and student performance in Regents level classes, especially within the subgroups, continues to fall short.
- The school leadership team is not effectively organized and deployed to achieve best results. The approaches to unacceptable student behavior are inconsistently applied among school leaders and faculty. The current structure for academic leadership is ineffective. Curriculum liaisons have a very limited role and are not being effectively used to resolve instructional issues.

### Recommendations:

- The school leader should direct more effective schoolwide and in class support for students who struggle at all levels of the program to realize greater achievement for all students. The focus should be on identifying resources and implementing strategies to radically decrease course

failures and significantly increase student performance on the five required Regents in order to increase the graduation rate.

- School leadership should determine whether all current Assistant and Associate Principals clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and deploy the team differently for improved performance. A structure where the four Associate and Assistant Principals each loop with a class through their four years at the high school and assume overall responsibility for the success of all students in that class should be considered. The school leadership should consider establishing department teacher leader positions within ELA, mathematics, social studies, science, and special education departments as well as the Regents Academy. These positions should have primary responsibility for instructional coaching (not evaluation), student achievement, and professional development (PD) to improve student performance.

#### **IV. Infrastructure for Student Success**

##### **Findings:**

- While there are some student support programs, the school lacks a systematic approach to student intervention and support. All staff are not aware of the types of supports that currently exist and have not had the opportunity to join leaders in designing a model that reaches all students in need.
- Common formative and interim assessments are largely absent. Without subject area common assessments that are aligned with and predictive of performance on Regents exams and other year end assessments, teachers do not have the data available to adjust instruction for greater student success throughout the year.
- The school's code of conduct is not clearly and consistently implemented. This is true at the school leader and classroom level. Suspension data indicates that Black, Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students are the subgroups that are most frequently suspended despite the fact that they are a minority percentage in the school population.
- Student attendance and cutting of classes constitute a major problem identified by students, staff and school leadership. Multiple points of entrance and exit to the building, open campus during lunch, no available free bussing within the two-mile limit and a lack of communication with parents were all mentioned as aspects of the problem.

##### **Recommendations:**

- The school should develop a system that connects appropriate staff with students during their free periods to deliver intervention services. The Learning Lab should be changed from a social gathering spot to a true study hall environment. Literacy and mathematics skill-based labs focused on accelerating basic skill development in reading, writing and mathematics should be established. The In School Suspension (ISS) program should be converted from a day off to an academic setting where students focus on class work. It is important to use student data to determine the effectiveness of the intervention programs.
- Common formative and interim assessments that enable teams of teachers serving the same students to use student performance data to modify instruction should be developed.

- Stakeholders should be engaged in a focused revision of the Code of Conduct. The school leadership should ensure that the consequences for specific behaviors constitute an effective system of progressive discipline. Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies (PBIS) should be implemented schoolwide. The District should also rethink the delineation of the disciplinary roles of the associate and assistant principals. This delineation should be communicated to the faculty to avoid overlap and confusion. The *SchoolTool* student management system should be used to improve the timeliness of responses to referrals and the faculty's awareness of the action taken.
- The school leadership should consider instituting a SWIPE Card system and examine eliminating open lunch, or at least, restricting it to grades 11 and grade 12 students who pass all their classes. The District should explore ways to provide affordable bussing within the two-mile limit. Other positive steps to consider include: alternative or intervention programs outside the school day, mentoring for at-risk students, finding ways to ensure the continuing success of Regents Academy students, and starting the credit recovery program well before senior year.

## V. Collection, Analysis and Utilization of Data

### Findings:

- There is little evidence of a systematic procedure for the collection, analysis, and use of data to drive intervention and support for student success.
- While the District and the school collect data, leaders and teachers do not use this feedback to modify instruction to increase student achievement.

### Recommendations:

- The school should establish an effective system for the collection, analysis, and use of data to inform instruction, empower teachers and promote student performance.
- The school should use the daily teacher PD period as the time for teacher teams to review the data and make decisions regarding the need for intervention. School leaders should be responsible for coordinating each department's efforts in this regard. Faculty meetings, conference days, and any other time available should be used to pursue this schoolwide priority.

## VI. Professional Development

### Findings:

- There is a District-wide PD plan, but it has not resulted in improvement in overall instruction and student achievement results. Although the final period in a nine-period day is designated for PD, PD usually occurs only twice per month and is episodic.
- Professional Learning Communities (PLC) are present in name only. The culture and approach that PLC require has neither been established nor sustained.
- General education teachers observed by the review team had limited understanding of how to support students with disabilities and other students who are struggling to learn the content of the coursework.

- There was little evidence of staff incorporating strategies learned through PD into their daily practice. There is no plan for evaluating or measuring the impact PD has on the teaching and learning process.

**Recommendations:**

- The District and school should make consistent use of true PD during the designated ninth period. PD should be focused, continuous and job-embedded rather than episodic. It is essential to use this designated period to improve instructional practice and student results through team-based teacher collaboration.
- In order to truly implement PLC, teachers responsible for the same group of students, such as those who teach the same course, or are part of a team, should be scheduled for common planning time. The thrust of PD should be the development of specific, measurable improvements in student performance and use of student achievement data to inform the effort.
- The school should design a PD plan that includes teaching staff and paraprofessionals and is driven by closing the achievement gap for all underperforming students.
- School leaders should make the priority for PD to increase student achievement. School and teacher leaders should direct, monitor and support implementation of this priority.

**VII. District Support**

**Findings:**

- There was little evidence that the District has monitored the implementation of the building's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). The District has given resources and support to the school, but has not provided consistent direction to improve student achievement. The most visible instances of District direction have occurred during times of crisis in student behavior, rather than proactively throughout the school year.
- The District has provided access to data collection tools, but has not effectively assisted the school leaders and teachers in the interpretation of the data to develop actionable goals. The District has not monitored and evaluated the school's use of data.

**Recommendations:**

- District leaders should take professional responsibility for direct supervision of the implementation of the JIT report recommendations and follow through to ensure that the implementation continues and yields documented gains in student achievement.
- It is the District's responsibility to ensure data is used to establish specific, measurable goals for increased student achievement. The District should monitor the implementation of the CEP.

**PART 3: JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM 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 School Restructuring Plan that includes significant <u>changes in staff, organizational structure, leadership and/or configuration</u> 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 JIT recommendation should be implemented.**

Immediate and sustained implementation of the following and evaluation of the outcomes are essential to improve student results:

- School leadership should drive academic gains for all student subgroups; demonstrate openness to colleagues’ ideas, initiative, and innovation; and enhance staff morale and enthusiasm. The school leaders should emphasize and act upon these priorities, and lead a re-thinking and re-organization of the existing leadership team. The effort should also include provision for teacher academic leadership in the English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, social studies, special education departments, and Regents Academy.
- The school should establish specific, measurable goals for improving the graduation rate and student performance on the Regents exams and other state assessments. The school should consider basing their goals on the District’s identified goals.
- In order to realize the goals and achieve gains for all subgroups, the school should develop common formative and interim assessments that are predictive of student success in graduation and Regents results.
- Establishing effective academic leadership in every department is essential but not sufficient for student achievement gains. In order for this to occur, the school should use the contractual PD period for each teacher to actively participate in a team-based approach to meeting student needs and improving performance.
- The school’s approach to supporting students should change from remediation and scattered support programs to a proactive, systematic, integrated total school Response to Intervention (RtI) approach that guarantees any student who needs support receives it at the first sign of struggle.

- While many teachers recognize that they are primarily responsible for student achievement, this is not true of all staff. Each teacher should be encouraged to personally assume responsibility for the success of the students he or she serves.
- The current master schedule does not serve the school well and class sizes are not equitable across programs. Under the school leader's direction, the guidance and special education departments should provide greater input into scheduling.
- Attendance and class cutting are issues that must be addressed. The school should consider eliminating open lunch, closing the campus, and instituting a swipe card system for student accountability and safety. All student free time should be used to deliver the above-mentioned additional instruction and support for students who struggle.
- The Principal should take personal responsibility for ensuring that all school leaders and teachers uniformly and consistently implement the Code of Conduct. The assignment of discipline responsibilities among school leaders should be revisited and communicated to staff. The school should institute a progressive discipline approach, with the emphasis on turning around student behavior, including using the expertise of behavioral specialist. The PBIS approach should be implemented schoolwide in an effective and sustained way.
- District and school leaders should take personal responsibility to ensure that this action-oriented approach is implemented as quickly and completely as possible. To move the school forward, it is essential that all teachers join in this common endeavor. This total school approach should be continuously reviewed and revised to sustain and adjust for success. The proof will be in documented gains in student achievement and for all subgroups.