

March 11, 2011

The response to the SED report for Automotive HS contains useful feedback which will be evaluated to produce more successful student outcomes for our students and provide opportunities for deliberate and thoughtful reflection in our school community.

Some of our achievements to date include:

- Graduation rate of the 2010 cohort was 59.7%, an improvement of 10 points since 2005 and 20 since 2001.
- Credit accumulation has improved for 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders compared to last year. This improvement demonstrated that our work to prevent student failure has been effective.
- 138 Seniors have completed college applications, with 80 families so far making use of the specialized consultations we have developed for them.
- Nearly 70% of juniors and sophomores took the PSAT, nearly double last year's results.
- Celebrations of student achievement are taking place, from attendance dinners and breakfasts to the Attendance Honor Roll. Grade teams are planning college trips to be sure that students have a concrete vision of their college goals.

However, there are some sections of the document that require clarification.

**1. The SED site visit team observed an environment that was not conducive to learning. The school did not appear to be safe. Teachers, however, stated that they felt the school was safe.**

**Clarification:** In the area of safety this year, our school has made clear and demonstrable progress that is recognized by our staff and students:

- Violent incidents have been reduced from 9 last year to 0
- Level 4 and 5 incidents have been reduced by 50% from last year
- Reports of and consequences for Level 1 & 2 incidents have increased from 97 to 224.
- Overall referrals have declined from 3,000 last year to 634 YTD.

**2. There was no evidence professional development is monitored and analyzed to ensure staff participation.**

**Clarification:** The statement is contradicted by multiple indicators in the report, listed below. A binder of professional development substantiation was provided by the Teacher Center Coordinator/UFT Chapter Leader, William Kalogeras. The team stated that they did not need to review the contents.

- School leaders reported a collaborative approach to professional development, which will take place on Tuesday mornings in the next semester for one and one-half hours each session.
- The coordinators meet weekly to plan professional development activities which are based on a teacher survey and cover a range of topics, from classroom management strategies to the use of Datacation and other tools. They will also address classroom strategies for reading and writing, classroom management through grade level teams, and making curricular connections across disciplines.
- Staff members have received professional development on various methods of team teaching to provide high quality instruction in the least restrictive environment.
- Staff and school leaders stated lesson plan study groups meet regularly to design and discuss lesson plans. They compare assessment results given after lesson delivery to determine effectiveness. Teachers lead these professional development sessions, where they focus on areas needing improvement according to the teacher survey administered in December, 2010.
- The administration stated teachers were “clamoring” for training in differentiated instruction. The teachers confirmed their increased commitment to it.



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3. *The SED site visit team observed limited evidence of instructional programming linked to needs assessment.*

**Clarification:** This same exact sentence appeared in at least three reports and, in all three, there was little evidence to support the conclusion.

- School leaders reported programmatic decisions have been made based on data evaluation, course design, sequences and electives. (p. 4)
- School leaders reported Saturday Regents preparation courses are organized by student needs.

Sincerely,

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