



OFFICE OF INNOVATIVE SCHOOL MODELS
ROOM 471 EBA
Tel. 518/474-1762
Fax 518/474-3209

January 11, 2011

Mr. Raymond Colucciello, Ed.D.
Acting Superintendent
Albany City School District
Academy Park
Albany, New York 12207

Dear Superintendent Colucciello:

Thank you for welcoming the Office of Innovative School Models Accountability Team to the Albany City School District on December 14, 2010. The team conducted a productive full-day visit to Albany High School, and the staff there should be commended for being well prepared and supportive during the visit. The school offered the team full access to their school improvement documents and to observe classrooms.

The purpose for the State Education Department's site visit was to gather evidence regarding Albany High School's implementation of its School Improvement 1003(a) grant and its Comprehensive Educational Plan. Additionally, the team sought to collect evidence which could demonstrate the school's readiness to meet the conditions to successfully apply for and receive 1003(g) funding to begin full implementation of the transformation model in the 2011-2012 school year.

Following is a bulleted summary of the school level evidence the team gathered during the visit.

- The school improvement manager (SIM) is in place, as per the 1003(a) grant. She provided the SED site visit team with evidence of coordination of funding streams and plans/recommendations which are aligned to each other, including: the 1003(a) grant, the Magnet School Assistance Program Grant, the 21st Century Small Learning Communities Program, and the Joint Intervention Team recommendations.
- The family engagement coordinator position, delineated in the 1003(a) grant application, has not yet been filled; however, a copy of the job description was provided and the SIM stated that the position would shortly be posted.
- The parent resource center is not yet operational, however it is planned to be opened subsequent to hire of the family engagement coordinator.
- The school improvement grant coordinator position is still vacant. The SIM and the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education, stated that the request for proposals (RFP) has been written for this position, and that the RFP was recently posted.
- District staff stated that no further discussions have taken place regarding revising the teachers' collective bargaining agreement.
- The district has completed extensive work on creating curriculum maps and pacing guides. Curriculum maps for English language arts and mathematics were submitted to the team for review. School leaders stated that walk-throughs are used to ensure that teachers are implementing the written curriculum and are on pace to cover all the material by the end of the school year.

- Data from the administration of benchmark assessments was not provided. The team saw data from the Diagnostic Online Reading Assessment (DORA).
- The district's Academic Intervention Services (AIS) plan that was submitted to the team expired in June 2010. Additionally, two of the AIS sites observed lacked lesson objectives, and academic work was not being completed by students.
- During focus group interviews, several teachers voiced a need for additional AIS and special education services for students, as well as a need for additional professional development in co-teaching integrated classes.
- The SED site visit teams observed that while classes were in session, students were repeatedly seen roaming the hallways. In several instances, students in the hallways were noisy. Additionally, many students were observed being tardy to class.
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is listed in the Restructuring Plan as a program that will be implemented this year at Albany High School; however, the team did not see evidence of this program in use, and district and school staff stated that it is not being fully implemented.
- Parents and teachers interviewed stated frustration with the level of parental involvement in the school. Several parents specifically stated that they would like to see a more diverse group of parents participate in school planning.
- Parents stated that they would like to receive more information on the lottery system and the restructuring plan for the district. They also stated that communication can be improved (e.g., parent newsletter, evening meetings for working parents).
- School administration stated that an RFP was awarded to the Capital Area School Development Association; however this work still needs to be completed.

Once again, thank you for allowing the team to gather evidence regarding the district's implementation of intervention systems. We would like to conduct our next site visit on Tuesday, March 8, 2011, and we will be in touch with your staff to confirm or reschedule this date.

If you or your district staff would like to submit a response to this gathered evidence, please direct your questions to LoriAnn Curtin via email at lcurtin@mail.nysed.gov, or at the following address.

LoriAnn Curtin
 Associate in Education Improvement Services
 Office of Innovative School Models
 New York State Education Department
 89 Washington Avenue
 Room 465 EBA
 Albany, New York 12234

Sincerely,

Sharon Holder

Sharon Holder, Ed. D.
 Supervisor of Education Programs
 Office of Innovation

c: Sally Bachofer
 Mr. David McCalla
 Ms. Dale Getto