

STRATEGY 7

We will develop a variety of ways for ensuring every student's access to all school education and extracurricular activities.

ACTION TEAM MEMBERS

Co-Leaders:

Gregory Jones, Principal - School 19

Debra Brown-Johnson, President - Albany Chapter NAACP

Team Members:

Lisa Angerame, Parent Representative

Thomas McGurn, Teacher - Albany High School

Nolene Smith, Parent - Stephen & Harriet Myers Middle School

STRATEGY 7

We will develop a variety of ways for ensuring every student's access to all school education and extracurricular activities.

RESULT STATEMENTS

- 7.1 Design a Personalized Educational Plan (PEP) format that will be used for each student that drives and supports academic rigor and high level performance.
- 7.2 Develop a plan to implement and monitor pilot to integrate Personalized Education Plans into the Albany School District.
- 7.3 Develop a Community and School Resource Guide to be used in support of the implementation of Personalized Education Plans.
- 7.4 Standardize and publicize in a guide requirements for class and program placements in clear and concise layman's terms. (This is what is sold at the supermarket.)
- 7.5 Provide professional development training to all teachers, guidance counselors and support staff on the concept of vertical integration that will work with economically and culturally diverse students to ensure academic rigor and high level performance.

STRATEGY 7

We will develop a variety of ways for ensuring every student's access to all school education and extracurricular activities.

RESULT STATEMENT 7.1

Design a Personalized Education Plan (PEP) format that will be used for each student that drives and support academic rigor and high level performance.

ACTION STEPS

7.1.1 Create a work team (to include parents, teachers and community advocates) to design the PEP and process.

7.1.2 Define guiding principles for the development of PEPs ensuring that the focus is on student interest leading to high level performance complemented by academic and social learning opportunities.

7.1.3 Provide orientation to design team on guiding principles and the concept of a PEP.

7.1.4 Include in the PEP three to five goals per year, which can be achieved within the school year and be academic and social in nature, including school programs, extra-curricular activities or community activities . . . (i.e. Bridgeport, CT).

7.1.5 Develop structural components that include but are not limited to: an integrated K-12 approach; PEP developed and reviewed annually; involvement of students, parents and appropriate school personnel; and learning experiences based on student interest and the NYS educational requirements.

7.1.6 Define the roles and responsibilities of all persons engaged in the implementation of the PEP.

7.1.7 Design training curriculum for staff on how to implement the PEP.

7.1.8 Design training for parents and students on how to participate in the PEP.

7.1.9 Create the criteria for selecting a site to pilot the PEP. Pilot sites include but are not limited to those with students that will be transferring into a new level of academic, social and emotional maturity.

7.1.10 Design a general timeline for implementation of the pilot.

7.1.11 Define evaluation criteria and protocols for determining success, when students have achieved their PEP goals, and indicating modifications needed.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time required to identify team members who are representatives from school, student body and community to design PEP.
- Time needed to design PEP.
- Staff time to develop curriculum for training of PEP participants. One staff person - 20 days @7.5 hrs per day.
- Time need to provide training to all participants.

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Improved student performance, 90% of students who successfully complete a PEP will show improvement on state achievement tests and successfully pass all classes.
- Improved student attendance, 90% of the students who successfully complete a PEP will attend school 95% of the scheduled school days.

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Addressing staff and students perceptions about PEP.

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Increased collaboration among school personnel, students, parents and community in improving student performance.

STRATEGY 7

We will develop a variety of ways for ensuring every student's access to all school education and extracurricular activities.

RESULT STATEMENT 7.2

Pilot and monitor Personal Education Plans (PEP) in the Albany School District.

7.2.1 Create a work team consisting of representatives from parents, teachers, students and community groups to serve as consultants and resource on the implementation plan.

7.2.2 Select pilot site according to criteria agreed to by design team and begin implementation

7.2.3 Implement training for staff on the PEP in pilot site.

7.2.4 Implement training for parents, students and community partners on the PEP in pilot site.

7.2.5 Convene initial meeting with students, parents and appropriate staff to draft the PEP for each student.

7.2.6 Include community and staff partners in future meetings to secure the resources and make program adjustments consistent with each student's PEP.

7.2.7 Determine mechanism, the data to be collected and timeline for data collection for each student's PEP.

7.2.8 Set schedule to monitor progress and evaluate results of each plan and make modifications.

7.2.9 Compile evaluation results from each plan to evaluate the pilot and make adjustments to the pilot.

7.2.10 Create a community/school activity to celebrate the pilot and its participants.

7.2.11 Continue pilot with different students who have similar characteristics with first pilot group. Pilot will continue for an additional academic year.

7.2.12 Evaluate and compare results between both groups. Make necessary adjustments to process.

7.2.13 Design and implement a plan for continued roll-out of PEP process in all schools in the District.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time and staff to provide training to all participants.
- Staff to manage implementation of pilot - one staff person full time.

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Improved student performance, 90% of students who successfully completes a PEP will show improvement on state achievement tests and successfully pass all classes.
- Improved student attendance, 90% of the students who successfully completes a PEP will attend school 95% of the scheduled school days.

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Addressing staff and students perceptions about PEP.

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Opportunity to work out bugs in the pilot before full implementation.
- Opportunity for continued marketing to teachers, parents, students and community.
- Increased collaboration among school personnel, students, parents and community in improving student performance.

STRATEGY 7

We will develop a variety of ways for ensuring every student's access to all school education and extracurricular activities.

RESULT STATEMENT 7.3

Develop a Community and School Resource Guide to be used in support of the implementation of Personal Education Plans (PEP).

7.3.1 Create resource guide by compiling a list of school programs and extracurricular school activities available in the School District and community resources

7.3.2 Make the guide available to teachers, students, parents and community supports.

7.3.3 Develop an evaluation on the use and effectiveness of the guide.

7.3.4 Develop procedures for continual update of the resource guide.

7.3.5 Update the guide on a regular basis based on changing resources and the evaluation results.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- School personnel to take lead responsibility to develop and continually update guide.
- One staff person part-time.
- Cost to print and distribute guide.

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- 90% of the middle and high school students will be able to directly contact community resources

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Save time for staff and students

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Staff and students increased knowledge of services and opportunities offered in the community.
- Saved staff time from having to research programs independently.

STRATEGY 7

We will develop a variety of ways for ensuring every student's access to all school education and extracurricular activities.

RESULTS STATEMENT 7.4

Train all teachers, guidance counselors and support staff on the concept of vertical integration to improve outcomes for economically and culturally diverse students to ensure academic rigor and high-level performance.

7.4.1 Create a work group of parents, teachers, guidance counselors, support staff, and administrators to explore the fundamentals of vertical teaming and its application.

7.4.2 Review the vertical teaming initiatives that begun at the July 2007 and July 2008 district wide vertical training seminars in order to build and refine the efforts that are currently supported by the District, APSTA, NYSUT, College Board, Capital District Teacher's Center and Gear-Up.

7.4.3 Publicize the results of these meetings to teachers, support staff, PTAs, PTOs, and PTSAs.

7.4.4 Develop the training modules in collaboration with parents, teachers, guidance counselors, support staff and administrators that will address topics such as: linking curricula i.e. Math to Science or Social Studies to ELA and vertically linking content and skills from one grade level to the next.

7.4.5 Implement training.

7.4.6 Evaluate the vertical teaming training conducted by the Office of Instruction.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Costs associated with training consultants.

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Faculty and staff increased knowledge of linkage of content and skills associated at each grade level.

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Increased demand upon teacher time for training.

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Improve teacher perception of student skills as a result of training over time linked to vertical integration

STRATEGY 7

We will develop a variety of ways for ensuring every student's access to all school education and extracurricular activities.

RESULTS STATEMENT 7.5

Standardize and publicize in a guide, requirements for class and program placements in clear and concise layman's terms. (This is what is sold at the supermarket.)

ACTION STEPS

7.5.1 Collect and review all descriptions of courses that are offered at elementary, middle and high school(s) through the Office of Instruction.

7.5.2 Assess if there are any inconsistencies that exist among the courses offered at the three levels and record those inconsistencies to discover patterns, to insure the same level of academic rigor.

7.5.3 Examine the percentage of students who entered each course/academic program by subgroup (i.e. socio-economic status, gender, English language learners).

7.5.4 Determine the percentage of students who successfully completed each course/academic program by subgroup.

7.5.5 Convene a broad based group of teachers, parents and students to review the information collected and make recommendations on how inconsistencies will be addressed to the Office of Instruction.

7.5.6 Provide parents/students an explanation of what and why each course is offered at all three levels (what reading level/language should be utilized).

7.5.7 Outline when, where and why a specific course/academic program is offered at a sole elementary, middle or high school.

7.5.8 Develop one comprehensive course/program guide that includes prerequisites, course description and sample academic pathway for elementary, middle and high school.

7.5.9 Distribute course/program guide to parents and students.

7.5.10 Update guide regularly.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Heighten awareness and accessibility of what academic offerings are available district wide.

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time required to collect, review course descriptions, assess and record inconsistencies.
- Time required designing the comprehensive course/program guide.
- Cost to print comprehensive course/program guide.

ADDENDUM

A key phrase in strategy #7 is “every student’s access”. The Team defined this statement to mean all students will have an opportunity to participate in any program, course or extracurricular activity offered in the School District. That all students will be assured the knowledge, skill and resources to fully participate in any school activity. The student’s goals and interests identified on their PEP will be considered when developing their class schedules. The location of a particular activity, course or program should not be seen as a barrier to the student’s participation in that activity. Ensuring student access must mean that all programs are open to all students. The district must revise any protocol or practice that will hinder a student’s participation in a desired program.

In order to achieve the mission of the City School District of Albany to develop students who are lifelong learners prepared to successfully compete in a global community we must ensure that students are engaged in rigorous challenging academic and social endeavors from pre-school through high school graduation. Toward that end the Strategy #7 team is recommending that the School District of Albany implement the following key strategies to improve student performance:

I. Personal Education Plans

Each student will have a “Personal Education Plan” that reflects their interests and goals. A Personalized Educational Plan (PEP) is a plan of activities and goals the student will participate in and achieve during the course of the year. It will reflect the student’s interest and desires and will expand and broaden as the student develops academically and socially. With the support of their teacher the student’s PEP will be revised annually to include academic and extracurricular goals and interests. The objective is to ensure that students are engaged in and exposed to activities that will help them build strong character, skills and identify goals that will prepare them for future endeavors. Parents, teachers and the outside community all have a role in helping the student achieve the identified goals. PEPs will be developed in pre-school or when the student first enters the district school. Goals will be age appropriate, attainable and driven by the student interests.

II. School programs and course curriculums must be standardized and publicized.

Many parents are not aware of the courses or programs offered at our schools. It is the District’s obligation to make parents and students alike aware of what courses or programs are offered so that students are afforded the maximum of academic opportunities. The District’s 10 elementary schools utilize the same academic programs for the delivery of ELA, Science, Math and Social Studies instruction. It is primarily at the middle school and high school level when students begin to select courses.

Therefore students and parents must be informed of all courses or programs that are offered by the District’s middle schools and the high school in order to develop the student’s academic pathway. The objective is to ensure equity amongst the District’s middle schools’ course or program selection opportunities as well as the high school.

III. Teachers must receive training and staff development that prepares them to teach future leaders. Vertical Teaming

"Vertical Teams consist of a group of educators from different grade levels who work together to develop a curriculum that provides a seamless transition from grade to grade. This method focuses on linking later elementary curriculum with middle level curriculum and middle level curriculum with high school curriculum. A team consists of discipline-based, committed middle and high school members who share a vision of student potential, knowledge of the curriculum at all grade levels, and an awareness of the skills required for success in advanced courses"

(<http://www.wku.edu/Dept/Support/AcadAffairs/Gifted/cmsmadexample/index.php?page=vertical-team>)

The goal of Vertical Teaming is to develop a dialogue between teachers and administrators on the elementary, middle, and high school levels. It is hoped that this dialogue would help to lay the foundation for the formation of discipline-related teams. These teams would develop curricula that would:

- encourage the development of critical thinking among our students
- introduce all of our students, teachers, administrators, and parents to the expectations embedded in Advanced Placement Courses
- directly link elementary and middle school teachers to the success of their students on AP Exams
- most importantly, VT would lay the foundation for the success of all of Albany's students in college level classes