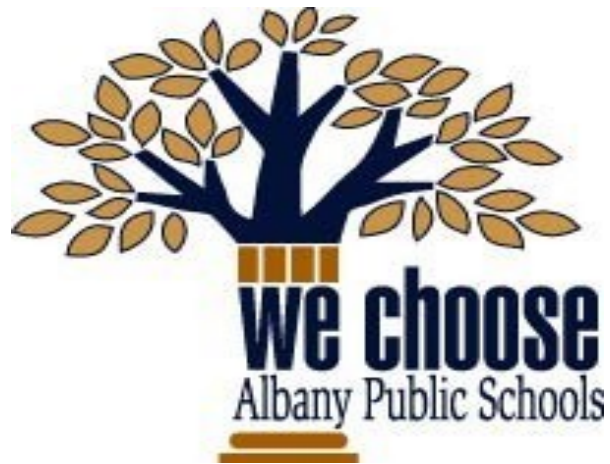


CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT of ALBANY



STRATEGIC PLAN

Board of Education
November 5, 2008

**CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ALBANY
STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM**

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City of Albany

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City School District of Albany Board of Education

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ENDURING VALUE STATEMENTS

1. We will fulfill our responsibilities and be accountable for ourselves and to each other for our actions at home, in school, and in the community.
2. We will communicate effectively in an open and honest manner.
3. We will embrace, respect, and celebrate our diversity, which is among our greatest assets.
4. We will consistently show care, concern, and respect toward one another.
5. We will uphold the right of everyone to learn, work, and live in a safe environment.
6. We are committed to continuous self-improvement, setting high expectations, assessing our progress, and modifying our course as needed.
7. We value education and promote lifelong learning.
8. We will value all students, families, employees, and the entire community as partners in our mission.

Definition:

An enduring value statement describes how everyone throughout the district is expected to communicate with, relate to, and treat one another. It applies to students, families, teachers, staff, administrators, board members, and community partners.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the City School District of Albany is to educate and nurture all students to be responsible citizens, critical thinkers, and life long learners to successfully compete in the global community by providing an academically rigorous and safe environment in partnership with parents, students, and the community.

Definition:

A Mission Statement is a concise statement that captures the strategic direction of the district. It states the district's purpose, identifies its clients, and explains broadly how the district will accomplish its purpose.

STRATEGIC BOUNDARIES

1. We will always work to enhance students' intellectual, emotional, and physical well being.
2. We will always make instructional, curricular, placement, and program decisions based on improving student performance and individual student needs and never arbitrary or discriminatory factors.
3. We will always offer professional development with appropriate ongoing support to teachers and staff.
4. We will always seek to involve affected students, parents, community members, and other stakeholders in decisions regarding our schools and the well being of our students.

Definition:

A strategic boundary is a self-imposed limit that states what the district will always do or never do. It guides the district to make substantive decisions consistent with its enduring values. Equally important, a strategic boundary further defines the mission. Strategic boundaries must be enforceable.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

1. 100% of students in Grades 3-8 will score at Level 3 and above on English Language Arts and Mathematics tests as measured by the New York State testing program.
2. 100% of the students attending the City School District of Albany will graduate in accordance with New York State graduation requirements.
3. The district's suspension rate will move incrementally to the State average by 2010.
4. 100% of students will attain a 95% attendance rate across the district, K-12.
5. 100% of students in middle and high school who are present in school will be on time and stay all day as measured by period-to-period attendance rate.
6. 100% of students in the City School District of Albany will abide by the rules of conduct set by the City School District of Albany in classrooms, buildings, and grounds as measured by suspension data and reports on classroom disruptions and conduct violations.

Definition:

A student performance statement describes a high expectation outcome that applies to all students in the school district. A student performance statement describes a high expectation for student achievement and/or performance and the way in which it will be observed demonstrated and/or measured. Student performance statements are driven by the enduring value statements and the aspirations reflected in the mission.

STRATEGIES

1. We will design and implement a more effective way to engage parents and families in the education of their children at home and at school.
2. We will ensure the emotional and physical safety and well-being of our students in collaboration with community and family partners.
3. We will assess and redesign all aspects of the high school with the community to ensure academic rigor and high-level student performance.
4. We will improve education in grades 6-8 in partnership with our community to address academic rigor and the disparity in academic achievement.
5. We will develop and implement more effective communication, ensuring input from all district stakeholders about matters affecting the well being of our students.
6. We will use all assessment data to drive academically rigorous instruction, Pre-K-12, to improve the performance of every learner.
7. We will develop a variety of ways for ensuring every student's access to all school education and extracurricular activities.

STRATEGY 1

We will design and implement a more effective way to engage parents and families in the education of their children at home and at school.

ACTION TEAM

Co-Leaders:

Linda Rudnick, Director of Instruction – City School District of Albany
Judy Rosen, Member, Board of Directors
Greater Capital Region Assoc. of Realtors

Team Members:

Denise Cokes, Director – Head Start
Leah Golby, Parent – School 19
Maureen Goldman, Teacher - Pine Hills Elementary School
Anuola Surgick, Adm. Assistant, MWBE & Community Relations (OGS)
Clarence Samuel Johnson, Teaching Assistant –
Philip Livingston Magnet Academy
Cecily Wilson, Principal - Sheridan Preparatory Academy

STRATEGY 1

We will design and implement a more effective way to engage parents and families in the education of their children at home and at school.

RESULT STATEMENTS

1.1 Create a standard elementary orientation program, customized at each school site, in collaboration with parents and community, to help parents and families contribute to student success in school.

1.2 Provide information and training for families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities.

1.3 Involve parents in school governance, ensuring that parents and families of a diverse nature such as socio-economic, race, special needs and English language learners are represented on District and school-wide planning committees and shared decision making bodies.

1.4 Orient and connect parents and families, to available key services and resources, to empower them to be an active participant in their children's education.

1.5 Design, in coordination with the City Council PTA or other agencies, a quality program framework and implementation strategy for effective volunteerism in our schools.

1.6 Provide modules of study to teachers and parents in school-based forums to foster and improve communication skills to support effective parent teacher collaboration.

1.7 Implement effective forms of one-way/two-way communication about children's progress, including report cards, progress or interim reports and bi-weekly updates (at the elementary level).

STRATEGY 1

We will design and implement a more effective way to engage parents and families in the education of their children at home and at school.

RESULT STATEMENT 1.1

Create a standard elementary orientation program, customized at each school site, in collaboration with parents and community, to help parents and families contribute to student success in school.

ACTION STEPS

1.1.1 To establish a team comprised of school, parent and community members to implement this plan

1.1.2 Define what constitutes a quality elementary orientation program using current national research

1.1.3 Identify elementary orientation programs currently operating in the District and elsewhere and look for common elements, themes and tenets

1.1.4 Measure the quality of existing programs against the exemplar(s) as cited in the research

1.1.5 Develop the orientation model for our District reflecting the best practices from the research

1.1.6 Invite Principals to review the designed orientation model (to vet the plan)

1.1.7 Agree to a common set of guidelines to help the Principals structure the orientation program (e.g. disseminate code of conduct, school handbook, contact information etc.) so that there are common elements across all schools

1.1.8 Provide the completed orientation plan, perhaps modified by administrative input, to the Superintendent for approval

1.1.9 Define the rationale for as well as roles for school staff regarding the system-wide orientation (possibly at a faculty or school-wide meeting)

1.1.10 Establish school-wide planning teams to organize the delivery of the orientation program (decide on documents to be disseminated, what aspects of school curriculum, procedures to present, etc.)

1.1.11 Develop a means to effectively communicate with parents about the orientation program at the school to encourage attendance (mail invitation, call home etc.)

1.1.12 Conduct school wide orientation congruent with agreed upon guidelines

1.1.13 Create an alternative session or way to effectively disseminate information to families who do not attend the orientation session

1.1.14 Develop a tool for parents/families to evaluate the effectiveness of the orientation program

1.1.15 Make program adjustments utilizing parent and staff feedback for future orientation sessions

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Reduction of stress about how school functions
- System-wide implementation = one District voice
- Established framework for Orientation Program – the blueprint has been drawn

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Staff resistance-one more thing for teachers to do
- Family resistance-not attending, not adhering to the schedule
- Additional sessions to schedule (make-up) if our goal is to personally reach all families
- Confusions that families who do not attend may have

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Decrease in office referrals
- Increase in the families' understanding of school protocols and expectation for school success
- Better adherence to school rules by students
- Improved parent-school relationships

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Printing costs for the school and District handbook
- Personnel for research, design, plan implementation schedule, training and survey analysis
- Refreshments for site-based sessions
- Raffle for families in attendance (school supplies; books, magazine subscriptions, etc.)
- Postage costs for mailings
- Website set-up and monitoring

STRATEGY 1

We will design and implement a more effective way to engage parents and families in the education of their children at home and at school.

RESULT STATEMENT 1.2

Provide information and training for families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities.

ACTION STEPS

1.2.1 Develop a system-wide letter that will go out to families that outlines the importance of homework and the schools' intent to conduct a series of workshops on engaging parents as partners in homework help and other curriculum-related activities

1.2.2 Provide parents with a list of common issues from the research that parents have in providing their children home support

1.2.3 Define what parents want help with in assisting their children with homework through a common survey circulated at each school site

1.2.4 Establish a protocol for disseminating and retrieving the parent surveys as well as establishing a calendar at the onset of the school year, so that the sessions are not delayed and are scheduled at reasonable intervals throughout the school year

1.2.5 Evaluate the survey data in a Building Leadership Team Meeting setting at each school site during the first month of school

1.2.6 Present the survey evaluation to school staff at a faculty meeting in late September

1.2.7 Utilize the survey evaluation to design a homework syllabus for each grade level, including guidelines for home projects that students will be asked to complete throughout the year

1.2.8 Establish a protocol to share out the homework syllabus

1.2.9 Design modules of study that will empower parents to successfully monitor student homework in core subjects as well as to provide needed academic support for the students

1.2.10 Decide whether a commercially prepared resource, such as booklets from the US Department of Education or the Urban League, will serve as a study and referent guide for parents or if teacher teams will develop the coursework for families

1.2.11 Establish a writing team as needed to develop modules of study

1.2.12 Deliver modules along an established timeline/continuum

1.2.13 Design a protocol to evaluate the effectiveness of the module designs, including parent input

1.2.14 Revisit the above procedures and modify as needed, at all levels

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Increased good will and better understanding of shared responsibility for a child's education
- Improved parent teacher relations
- Increased cooperation from parents in this and perhaps other curricular matters

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Families' inability to attend – what provisions for another means to reach them
- Time needed to develop the trainings and to find interested and competent staff to deliver training
- Staff misunderstanding of the why and how of the initiative
- Families would have to find a homework space in the home – how can this be made an absolute

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Improved quality of homework
- Increase quantity of homework
- Increase in students' academic performance
- Increase in students' organizational skills

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Personnel needed for workshop development, survey development, data analysis and review
- Homework Help Guide from US Department of Education (.50) per student plus shipping costs (10%)
- Refreshments
- Mailing
- Printing Costs

STRATEGY 1

We will design and implement a more effective way to engage parents and families in the education of their children at home and at school.

RESULT STATEMENT 1.3

Involve parents in school governance, ensuring that parents and families of a diverse nature such as socio-economic, race, special needs and English language learners are represented on District and school-wide planning committees and shared decision making bodies.

1.3.1 Cite Legislation (NCLB) that requires parents be members of school wide planning committees/SDM bodies

1.3.2 Establish the goal of 100% participation of a diverse groups parents in school governance at all levels

1.3.3 Identify all committees at the District and school levels that require parent membership

1.3.4 Ascertain current parent membership on all identified committees from school and District personnel

1.3.5 Define the role that parents may assume as committee members in a recruitment document (voting, advisory, participatory governance)

1.3.6 Share that definition as well as the regulation with the greater parent community through the formal notice or document

1.3.7 Establish eligibility criterion for serving on committees (interest, skill, contributions)

1.3.8 Work with Communications Department to post and/or distribute the notice

1.3.9 Enlist the help of school and District leadership teams to effectively recruit parents for committee work; this can be accomplished initially at system-wide parent orientation sessions

1.3.10 Enlist the help of community and/or faith-based organizations in recruitment efforts (advertising vacancies for committee membership (City wide PTA, NAACP) on all teams, bodies and committees), by way of example

1.3.11 Post vacancies on the District website and in correspondences circulated to homes such as school and District newsletter on an ongoing basis

1.3.12 Establish a simple training session (similar to/replicative of the SDM training) to familiarize parents with the types of roles that they may assume in serving on governance teams

1.3.13 Conduct periodic checks to monitor continuous involvement of parents, including sustained commitment to the work

1.3.14 Develop an evaluation instrument for parents to measure their attitude/effectiveness for having served as a committee member

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Parents request to have their voice heard is met
- True shared decision making process – added value of increased morale on the part of the parent community
- Better District-wide decisions made for schools

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Understand membership role- voting vs. advisory
- Selection process for membership; standardizing the eligibility to serve requirements
- Maintain a constant level of participation (filling vacancies)

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- In compliance with NCLB requirement
- Increased diversity and perspective of the committee when parents are active committee members

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Website advertisements and upkeep
- Postage for mailings to recruit parent members for committee work
- Refreshments for planning meetings for recruitment strategies
- Personnel costs- to train parents; development of an evaluation tool for parent satisfaction; monitor participation on all governing bodies

STRATEGY 1

We will design and implement a more effective way to engage parents and families in the education of their children at home and at school.

RESULT STATEMENT 1.4

Orient and connect parents and families, to available key services and resources to empower them to be an active participant in their children's education.

1.4.1 Define a quality process for connecting parents and families to key resources and services in the community

1.4.2 Research existing processes in the District/elsewhere for connecting parents and families to key resources and services

1.4.3 Informally survey parents about common issues, common needs and struggles that they have faced in accessing resources and services to date

1.4.4 Identify and create a directory of key resources and services available to parents and families

1.4.5 Connect with the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Community Relations to research the roles of Home School Coordinator and other staff that could assist with this process

1.4.6 Identify human resources necessary to assist parents in connecting to resources and services (Home-School Coordinators, Social Workers)

1.4.7 Develop a model for connecting parents/families to key resources, congruent with the research on exemplary outreach services, especially in non-full-service school buildings

1.4.8 Share the model with building administrators and affected staff for review and feedback

1.4.9 Submit the model and share the process with the Superintendent for approval and adoption as a standard protocol

1.4.10 Define roles and responsibilities for staff members who will assist parents with connecting to resources

1.4.11 Develop a process to effectively inform parents of the ability of the school to assist them in connecting to resources and services

1.4.12 Develop an instrument to measure parent satisfaction with the connection to resources and services

1.4.13 Develop an instrument for staff involved in the process to evaluate the effectiveness of the model

1.4.14 Make adjustments as needed to ensure that the goal of helping families make necessary connections is met

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Empowerment - reduced feelings of hopelessness
- Empowerment - parents are aware of services available to them
- Improved sense of security and stability for students who might otherwise worry about parents' basic needs
- Eventually all schools could move to the full service model; this can be the driving force

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Help staff to understand that families need to overcome socio-economic barriers and that schools have a responsibility to assist parents
- Develop a liaison relationship with service providers and agencies
- Finding staff appropriate to do the intake work
- Budgetary constraints for new hires

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Replication of the Full Service School model – use this as a gauge
- Increase in the number of parents coming to school for assistance and support
- Increase in student attendance

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Printing costs to create the Directory of Services
- Personnel costs to develop the Directory
- Stipend for the employee who would serve as the conduit/coordinator of information to families at all school sites, (embed this job responsibility in the role of the Home School Coordinator at schools that have this position)
- Evaluation/Parent Satisfaction Survey collection and analysis
- Space to meet with parents when they come to schools to inquire about services
- Computer access for coordinator

POTENTIAL

- Increase number of School Social Workers as needed

STRATEGY 1

We will design and implement a more effective way to engage parents and families in the education of their children at home and at school.

RESULT STATEMENT 1.5

Design, in coordination with the City Council PTA or other agencies, a quality program framework and implementation strategy for effective volunteerism in our schools

1.5.1 Define what constitutes a quality program for effective volunteerism in our schools (Who does this? A team of diverse stakeholders and key District personnel)

1.5.2 Identify volunteer programs currently operating in the District/ elsewhere and evaluate them according to the above definition

1.5.3 Decide upon and describe the components of the volunteer program to be used

1.5.4 Develop the volunteerism model for our District reflecting the best practices from the research (Good program for families could be *Three for Me*; good program for community volunteers could be *Project Appleseed*; *Florida State Worker Volunteer Program*)

1.5.5 Determine if one model is best for all levels or if more than one model is needed for elementary and secondary programming

1.5.6 Define what employee(s) of the District will coordinate volunteer program

1.5.7 Develop a process to identify volunteer opportunities (e.g. Survey for teachers, Principals)

1.5.8 Develop a process to match volunteers to volunteer opportunities (e.g. Survey for families)

1.5.9 Define factors to be considered in selecting volunteers (e.g. Skill sets, security clearance, availability, cultural competence)

1.5.10 Define criteria taking into account above factors for selecting volunteers

1.5.11 Develop a recruitment process for volunteers (e.g. Outreach to the school communities and to the greater community)

1.5.12 Determine a roll-out strategy to apprise the greater school community of the initiative; work with Communications Department for assistance

1.5.13 Match volunteers to opportunities based on agreed upon criteria

1.5.14 Design and provide a training program for volunteers to address items such as goals of program, expectations, resolving issues

1.5.15 Define roles and responsibilities of all participants

1.5.16 Develop a simple evaluation tool for teachers, administrators, parents and volunteers that provides feedback in order to periodically assess and improve program

1.5.17 Develop a schedule to communicate the program's progress to the greater community

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Increased student motivation
- Solidify home-school connections and school-community connections
- Broaden student experience through exposure to new people from different walks of life
- Improve community relations and school-District perception in the community

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Quality of Volunteers: Do we have the right matches in our schools to achieve desired outcomes?
- Logistics-School based personnel duty: who will take responsibility of monitoring volunteers once they are in the schools
- More teachers wanting volunteers than there are volunteers available
- Possible conflict between volunteer and teacher: personality; work style
- Increase in the level of work teachers would be required to do in association with having a volunteer (paperwork etc.)- staff dissatisfaction or criticism of the program
- Sustainability: do we have volunteers who are willing to make a long range commitment in order to maintain fidelity of the program?

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Greater student to adult ratio with volunteers who serve in classrooms as tutors or group leaders
- Increased community involvement in our schools at all levels
- Teachers feel valued when asked what they really need by way of support
- Potential increase in student achievement (ie College student tutors who support struggling students)

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Volunteer Coordinator Position
- Office Space/Computer set-up for Coordinator
- Website maintenance: Post forms for teachers to request volunteers and volunteers to sign up
- Mailings to recruit volunteers
- Personnel- research elements of quality programs; design program evaluation; disaggregate data

STRATEGY 1

We will design and implement a more effective way to engage parents and families in the education of their children at home and at school.

RESULT STATEMENT 1.6

Provide modules of study to teachers and parents in school-based forums to foster and improve communication skills to support effective parent teacher collaboration.

1.6.1 Develop a survey to identify existing communication barriers impacting student progress, among staff, parent, and administration

1.6.2 Look to the NUA school evaluation to gather information about collaboration among parents and teachers as a baseline

1.6.3 Establish protocol for disseminating and retrieving the survey to and from parents and staff

1.6.4 Analyze the survey results to find measurable commonalities (work closely with BLT)

1.6.5 Design a protocol to share out the analysis to both groups of stakeholders

1.6.6 Provide modules of study to foster and improve communication skills, to support effective teacher-student collaboration.

1.6.7 Identify the staff who will work to create the module or research existing models in the literature that have proven successful in achieving the state goal

1.6.8 Define who will deliver the training in the mediation model, including professional staff who contract to deliver such services

1.6.9 Provide training for staff and families on the processes of the mediation module

1.6.10 Evaluate the effectiveness of the mediation module through a bi-yearly survey

1.6.11 Determine additional topics that will continue to solidify the home-school connection and partnerships with families with training team

1.6.12 Engage additional staff, as needed, in developing module topics that were suggested from the parent community

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- The child is at the center
- Strengths are emphasized
- Raised level of understanding and tolerance
- Strengthening the understanding of the role of the home and the school in educating the child
- Greater parent investment

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Stress for the Principal to balance the needs of parents and teachers
- Some parent and staff resistance to what the module actually is
- Resistance to participation
- Effectively communicating the benefits and importance of the work

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Increased academic achievement
- Reduction of referrals to the office for discipline and other issues
- Increased level of parent and teacher cooperation

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Outside Consultant Fees to help staff develop the mediation model
- Personnel- research outreach to NUA, develop survey, make decisions based on survey results
- Printing
- Refreshments
- Stipend for teachers delivering the modules

STRATEGY 1

We will design and implement a more effective way to engage parents and families in the education of their children at home and at school.

RESULT STATEMENT 1.7

Implement effective forms of one-way/two-way communication about children's progress, including report cards, progress or interim reports and bi-weekly updates (at the elementary level).

1.7.1 Develop a schedule for review and revision of the current report cards and interim reports at each instructional level

1.7.2 Solicit from teachers information about what is working well with the current report structure and what needs to change to achieve a better outcome for both the teachers and the parents/ families and document the findings

1.7.3 Solicit from families information about what is working well with the current report structure and what needs to change to achieve a better outcome for the parents/families and document the findings

1.7.4 Collect an review research about effective reporting to parents in an attempt to design more parent friendly and parent useful assessment instruments

1.7.5 Assemble report card and interim progress report writing teams at each level

1.7.6 Invite parents to serve on report card and interim progress report writing teams at each level

1.7.7 Develop a guide to help teachers issue standardized grades and make effective comments that will inform parents and help set mutual goals for the student

1.7.8 Develop a guide to help parents understand the grading system and become informed as to how comments serve to set mutual goals for the student

1.7.9 Develop a calendar for the dissemination of the reports with the Chief Information Officer

1.7.10 Plan orientation sessions to roll out the new assessment instruments at all levels

At the elementary level

1.7.11 Assemble a bi-weekly report writing team of interested staff

1.7.12 Design a biweekly report that will inform parents as to student progress, conduct and effort, as well as testing results, field trips and other school events that may occur in a 2 week window

1.7.13 Share out document with affected staff in large and small group settings

1.7.14 Establish a school-wide distribution schedule for the reporting

1.7.15 Provide parents information about the nature and purpose of this document and their role in ensuring that it is signed and returned to school as a check and balance (monitor) of student progress

1.7.16 Gather feedback from both teachers and families as to the effectiveness of the instrument after the first year of implementation

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Expectations are clearly defined
- Systematic way of reporting to parents
- Awareness of student performance will guide parents on ways to assist their students

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Time to orient parents and raise the level of understanding of the report card
- Resistance to the increase amount of paperwork to produce more reports

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Parents serve on report card creation team
- Greater frequency of formal communication
- More detailed overview of the child's progress
- More parental understanding of taught concepts and academic rigor required for school success; graduation

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Personnel-research, design, implementation, guide development
- Printing
- Web design; Electronic document transfers
- Mailing/postage
- Refreshments for new report card orientation
- Need for an additional conference day to roll out progress reports

STRATEGY 2

We will ensure the emotional and physical safety and well being of our students in collaboration with community and family partners.

ACTION TEAM MEMBERS

Co-Leaders:

Linda Jackson-Chalmers, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

Daniel Gentile, Executive Director, Capital Region Workforce Investment Board

Team Members:

Dr. Mark Barth – Member, Board of Education

Rose Brandon – Community Member

Brother Yusef Burgess – Community Member

Brendan Cox – Commander, Albany Police Department

STRATEGY 2

We will ensure the emotional and physical safety and well being of our students in collaboration with community and family partners.

RESULT STATEMENTS

2.1 Provide a school based district-wide professional development for all school staff to respond constructively to unproductive, off-task behavior of students, helping all feel emotionally and physically safe.

2.2 Provide a school based safety program on a quarterly basis that reinforces personal responsibility and teamwork through a variety of techniques (such as movies, invited guest speakers, field trips to law enforcement, etc.)

2.3 Create a think tank to evaluate how our existing alternative educational programs are doing and research new innovative ideas.

2.4 Conduct a two-day summer orientation program for students transitioning to a new school that instills team-building and cooperation needed to succeed.

2.5 Create an accountability system that ensures all programs geared to ensuring the emotional and physical safety and well being of our students are being implemented throughout our schools.

STRATEGY 2

We will ensure the emotional and physical safety and well being of our students in collaboration with community and family partners.

RESULT STATEMENT 2.1

Provide a school based district-wide professional development for all school staff to respond constructively to unproductive, off-task behavior or students, helping all feel emotionally and physically safe.

ACTION STEPS

2.1.1 Identify professional development programs that have been successful in the City School District of Albany (CSDA), other local schools, and in comparable schools nationwide.

2.1.2 Get a master calendar and list of CSDA scheduled trainings.

2.1.3 Contact existing community resources that could supplement existing CSDA efforts, Examples including, but not limited to: Council of Community Services, the City of Albany (Departments of You and Workforce Services, Parks and Recreation); City and County Youth Bureaus, Albany Gang Prevention Program and Truancy Program, and NYS School Safety Council. These agencies can be instrumental in providing support and technical assistance to district schools in designing professional development workshops that will strengthen faculty and staff response to discipline problems.

2.1.4 Form a focus group of community leaders, including representatives of agencies listed above to develop professional development offerings. Include: school safety officers, representatives from all employee units, City and County government representatives (including, for example, Common Council and County Legislature members, Albany Policy Department). It is recommended that the Youth Safety Taskforce may be able to assume this task. Professional development can be offered during the required professional development offerings, as well as district-wide workshops.

2.1.5 Prepare a draft budget and look at community and CSDA resources for funding.

2.1.6 Develop a calendar of trainings for professional development as it relates to school safety.

2.1.7 Adopt and implement professional development offerings.

2.1.8 Design an evaluation mechanism that will indicate the ability level of staff to cope and successfully handle discipline problems.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Increase each schools budget by \$2,000 to cover the costs of providing professional development.

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Higher student achievement outcomes
- Increased staff skill and knowledge of behavior management techniques
- Evaluation of the impact of training on school decorum

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Increased time and effort on teachers' part, time taken away from other in-service training

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Improved student behavior and cooperation, more students on task, improved school climate
- More staff time on instruction and fewer behavior problems

STRATEGY 2

We will ensure the emotional and physical safety and well being of our students in collaboration with community and family partners.

RESULT STATEMENT 2.2

Provide a school based safety program for students on a quarterly basis that reinforces personal responsibility and teamwork through a variety of techniques, (such as movies, invited guest speakers, field trips to law enforcement, etc.).

ACTION STEPS

2.2.1 Assemble the school based safety committee (SBSC) that is representative of the whole school community (faculty, staff, students, parents and community members). Charge each principal with the responsibility for organizing the teams.

2.2.2 Charge the SBSC with reinforcing personal responsibility, maintaining a positive school climate, and developing the school safety program.

2.2.3 Determine the structure of the school safety program, (Create operating procedures, meeting timed, and schedule.)

2.2.4 Use all resources that are available through the school district and community-at-large to develop a list of speakers, agencies, and programs that can enhance the safety program (i.e., anti-gang, Council for Unity, etc.)

2.2.5 Develop a program through the SBSC for the year that has events, activities, or presentations on a quarterly basis.

2.2.6 Prepare a budget for each school's school safety activities. School prepare these budgets.

2.2.7 Submit the SBSC's safety plans to the Superintendent's Office each year by October 15.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- A small budget for staff salaries if activities extend before or after school, also funds for rentals and field trips: approximately \$650
- Two program coordinators per each quarterly program: \$260
 \$37.75 hourly teacher rate
 \$26.84 average support staff rate
- Two local field trips: \$184
- Miscellaneous expenses: \$200

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Fewer discipline referrals, fewer fights and altercations, fewer suspensions

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Increased time and effort on teachers' part, time taken away from other in-service training

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Reinforcement of Code of Conduct, personal responsibility, cooperation, and respect
- Increased focus on academic issues.

STRATEGY 2

We will ensure the emotional and physical safety and well being of our students in collaboration with community and family partners.

RESULT STATEMENT 2.3

Create a Think Tank to evaluate how our existing alternative education programs are doing, and research new and innovative ideas.

ACTION STEPS

- 2.3.1 Define the authority and charge of the Alternative Education Think Tank.
- 2.3.2 Establish member participation and composition of the Think Tank.
Recommended membership of approximately twenty (20)
- 2.3.3 Develop an organizational structure: Chair/Co-Chairs
- 2.3.4 Establish goals and objectives to be met
- 2.3.5 Establish guidelines for the operation of the Think Tank
- 2.3.6 Designate an administrator to provide oversight of the Think Tank
- 2.3.7 Designate Comprehensive District Education Planning Committee (CDEP) as the reporting mechanism for progress reports
- 2.3.8 Schedule meeting dates: monthly recommended
- 2.3.9 Establish protocols for making recommendations to:
 - Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education
 - CDEP
 - Superintendent
 - Board of Education
- 2.3.10 Establish method of communication with the public:
 - Board of Education Agenda
 - District Website
 - Community Forum
- 2.3.11 Determine the kind of support initially needed to organize
- 2.3.12 Implement the Think Tank as outlined

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Small budget for refreshments, materials, clerical support

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- More thoughtful analysis can be used to guide planning
- Less fits and starts

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Staff time

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Staff buy-in

STRATEGY 2

We will ensure the emotional and physical safety and well being of our students in collaboration with community and family partners.

RESULT STATEMENT 2.4

Conduct a two-day summer orientation program for students transitioning to a new school that instills team building and cooperation needed to succeed. (Take a baseline survey of current freshman before implementing.)

ACTION STEPS

2.4.1 Designate appropriate administrator or team to coordinate the orientation programs.

2.4.2 Establish the goals and objectives of the Summer Orientation Program.

2.4.3 Identify students' participation in the Summer Orientation Program (students transitioning from middle school to high school, students transitioning from 6th grade to middle school).

2.4.4 Identify locations for the Summer Orientation Program (activities at the school site followed by an outdoor adventure activity, i.e. Camp Opportunity, Berkshire Farms, and Camp Pinnacle).

2.4.5 Develop the logistics to deliver a two-day, five-hour per day program.

2.4.6 Develop an alternative program that meets the same goals and objectives for students who are unable to attend or late enrollees,

2.4.7 Determine staffing needs, considering outside experts and use of upper grade students and parents.

2.4.8 Determine how this may be accomplished in partnership with the City's Summer Youth Employment Program.

2.4.9 Develop a parent component to the orientation that can occur in conjunction with the orientation program.

2.4.10 Consult with the following to learn about other district experiences with summer orientation:

- Statewide organizations like PTA, NYSSSO, NYSUT, SAANYS
- Partners and associations with which we have ties, such as EnCon's Environmental Education Program, NUA, NYS Counseling Association, NAACP, and YMCA.
- Contact national groups familiar with this kind of activity like Outward Bound, George Lucas Education Foundation, and CASEL.

2.4.11 Develop a budget

2.4.12 Conduct the orientation program

2.4.13 Evaluate the program for future years

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Estimated costs:
 - \$4,125 for buses for approximately 1,300 students
 - \$5,000 for lunch/snacks
 - \$6,000 for workshop leaders for three separate sessions,

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Fewer documented student conflicts or altercations at the beginning of the school year
- Measurable reduction of student referrals and off-task behavior

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Getting staff committed to this level of time commitment
- Burden on schools to recruit and identify staff

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Students better transitioned into the school year
- Stronger sense of community in schools

STRATEGY 2

We will ensure the emotional and physical safety and well being of our students in collaboration with community and family partners.

RESULT STATEMENT 2.5

Create an accountability system that ensures all programs geared to ensuring the emotional and physical safety and well being of our students are being implemented throughout the schools.

ACTION STEPS

- 2.5.1 Assign responsibility for the Accountability System to the appropriate administrator.
- 2.5.2 Draft a preliminary structure for the Accountability System.
- 2.5.3 Direct the Accountability Committee to report to the Superintendent and Cabinet.
- 2.5.4 Formulate (for review) a list of current CSDA programs geared to ensuring the emotional and physical safety and well-being of our students.
- 2.5.5 Determine personnel needs.
- 2.5.6 Assess training needs.
- 2.5.7 Develop a form/checklist that will be used as a tool to record each school's progress in implementing its safety programs.
- 2.5.8 Determine what technology and materials will be necessary to implement this Accountability System.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Cost of staff training, stipend for coordinator: \$5,000.

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Programs and activities that exist will have better continuity.

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Additional responsibilities for school administrators.

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Awareness of the need for school safety remains high.
- A more consistent approach to improving school decorum, climate, and morale throughout the district.

ADDENDUM

The purpose of this Result Statement's (2.5) Action Steps is to ensure that all existing programs geared to ensuring the emotional and physical safety and well being of our students are being implemented throughout the schools in a consistent manner.

We envision that this Accountability System will be the responsibility of the revised Youth Safety Task Force, the Director of School Safety and Violence Prevention, or the Safe School Administrator, whichever is deemed to be the most appropriate. This entity will serve as the lead/coordinator and will review bi-annually each school's safety plans with principals and their SBSC's.

The Accountability System is designed to provide support and technical assistance to schools to enhance positive school environments that will allow for more focus on learning.

Definition:

A strategy is a board statement consistent with the district's values and strategic boundaries. It describes how resources will be used to achieve the mission and student performance statements. A strategy represents an idea in which the district is willing to invest energy, expertise, time and resources. Strategies are broad enough to yield a variety of programs, products, functions and/or services. Each strategy will support 5-8 action plans, which will be written later during the action planning.

STRATEGY 3

We will assess and redesign all aspects of the high school with the community to ensure academic rigor and high-level student performance.

ACTION TEAM MEMBERS

Co-Leaders:

Maxine Fantroy-Ford, Principal – Albany High School
Jackie Carrese, Former Instructional Supervisor for Science
Dr. Tresa Diggs, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education

Team Members:

Tony Armlin – Armlin, Damon & McMordie
Kimberly Baker, Guidance Counselor – Albany High School
Dr. Katherine Briar Lawson, Dean – School of Social Welfare, SUNY
Judy Collins, Assistant Principal – Harriet Gibbons High School
Earl Davis, Teacher – Albany High School
Lucia Gutierrez, Teacher – Albany High School
Alicia Holt-Riley, Teacher – Harriet Gibbons High School
Angelena Rouse-McCarthy, Student - Albany High School
Esther Thornton- Former Co-President – City Council PTA
Michelle Washington, Parent – Albany High School Student

STRATEGY 3

We will assess and redesign all aspects of the high school with the community to ensure academic rigor and high-level student performance.

RESULT STATEMENTS

3.1 Develop, design and implement a formal advisory/mentorship program to be built into all student schedules to foster true and positive relationships between students and faculty.

3.2 Create smaller learning communities for all Albany High School Students.

3.3 Redesign the high school facility to support the creation of smaller learning communities.

3.4 Provide mandatory professional training development for all administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals that will help them work with economically and culturally diverse students to ensure academic rigor and higher-level student performance.

3.5 Implement a series of programs to inform, engage, and increase participation of all students to enroll in and pass at least one advanced course of study prior to graduation.

3.6 Create a full service community resource center to provide parents/guardians with opportunities to interact with staff, to become familiar with program and curricular requirements for graduation and to participate/support their child in achieving success.

STRATEGY 3

We will assess and redesign all aspects of the high school with the community to ensure academic rigor and high-level student performance.

RESULT STATEMENT 3.1

Develop, design, and implement a formal advisory/mentorship program to be built into all student schedules to foster true and positive relationships between students and faculty.

ACTION STEPS

3.1.1. Create a committee with representatives from all community stakeholders, including but not limited to: students, parents, teachers, union representatives, high school administrators to carry out the committee charge.

3.1.2. Provide regular, on-going communication about the work of the committee to the large school community, including parents, faculty, and staff.

3.1.3 Conduct a student needs assessment (focus groups, survey) that asks about satisfaction, school culture, challenges, goals and dreams for themselves and the school, including feelings about academic success. An existing tool could be used. Questions could include long-term goals, social issues.

3.1.4 Conduct a staff needs assessment that parallels the student one for use in planning the advisory program.

3.1.5 Use the results of the needs assessment to determine short and long terms program goals

3.1.6 Research and analyze successful advisory programs in comparable high school environments (i.e. Poland Regional High School advisory program; research reported by Linda Darling Hammond in ASCD May 2008)

3.1.7 Use the research findings to identify components of a successful program that would fit this school culture.

3.1.8 Select, refine, design the program and develop a program proposal including the following:

- a. Short and long term goals
- b. Program description (including what are the experiences for students)
- c. Clarification of roles and responsibilities (who does what when) and policy guidelines (e.g. FAQ for how to handle a variety of situations)
- d. Orientation and training for adults (teachers and parents) and students (and other relevant parties, e.g. outside mentors)
- e. Discuss how students will be assigned
- f. Include an evaluation of the program and the impact on the students

3.1.9 Develop implementation time-line (implementation will depend on the program selected/designed)

3.1.10 Design and conduct evaluation

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Incentives
- Cultural enrichment activities (e.g. field trips)—transportation, tickets, extra staff time if after school
- Training/PD—perhaps through a summer institute for staff, which would involve summer stipends but no lost teaching time
- Coordinator position (if needed)—depends if the position is a faculty position, similar to Department head or whether it is a new hire, and whether it is full or part time. A district coordinator for a recent grant manager was advertised as \$80,000 FTE
- Researcher to conduct Needs Assessment—consultants cost approximately \$1000/day (total cost for developing and conducting a survey and writing a summary report, approximately \$2000); minimal extra expense for materials if focus groups are involved—approximately \$300 for incentives for the students - i.e. movie tickets—and a tape recorder--\$65
- Evaluator—consultants cost approximately \$1000/per day. A district evaluation position would be a professional salary, \$90,000+

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Improved student relationships with adults
- Improved climate and culture
- Improved student motivation
- Increased academic student success
- Improved attendance
- Decrease in disciplinary referrals
- Decrease in drop out rate

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Time

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Student growth and maturity
- Create improved relationships between students and adults in the school

STRATEGY 3

We will assess and redesign all aspects of the high school with the community to ensure academic rigor and high-level student performance.

RESULT STATEMENT 3.2

Create smaller learning communities for all Albany High School Students.

ACTION STEPS

3.2.1. Identify a high school restructuring team with representatives from all community stakeholders, including but not limited to: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education, High School Principal, Assistant Principal for Abrookin Extended Day Program, Principal and Assistant Principal of Harriet Gibbons Small Learning Community, representatives of academic and guidance departments, family services, community members, parents, and students. Secure an expert with extensive experience (both process and model) in high school restructuring to support the work of the restructuring team. ** Identify a person to assist with managing the work across committees and oversee public outreach, a Strategic Planning Coordinator (see Action Plan 3.3).

3.2.2. Collect and assess available research and recent district experience with smaller learning communities (visit Restructuring Albany High School document, 2005).

3.2.3. Secure an expert with extensive experience (both process and model) in high school restructuring to support the work of the educational restructuring team.

3.2.4. Identify a person to assist with managing the work across committees and oversee public outreach, a Strategic Planning coordinator, a Facilities representative or representative from the project planning Committee (See action plan 3.3).

3.2.5. Review the research compiled by the educational restructuring team, and define key terms such as smaller learning communities, houses, personalization, looping, and comprehensive high school. Research other successful high school restructuring efforts and identify key factors that contribute to the success of such efforts (An “expert” may be able to summarize the research and present successful programs from similar schools).

3.2.6 Develop a set of working principles that will provide the basis for restructuring the high school that account for serving all students, personalization, academic rigor, high student achievement, and providing a safe physical and emotional environment (visit Restructuring Albany High School document, 2005) and that also applies knowledge about best practices in such restructuring efforts (see High Schools for equity: Policy supports for student learning in communities of color, Friedlaender and Darling-Hammond, 2007* available:

www.srnleads.org/resources/publications/pdf/hsfe/hsfe_report.pdf)

3.2.7 Identify facility needs to accommodate teaching and learning in smaller communities, i.e. plan for facilities in light of current structure or proposed modifications.

3.2.8 Conduct an intensive two-day workshop to help design the plan and ensure stakeholder support. The workshop participants will describe in detail Design high school restructuring proposal “What Would the Restructured High School Look Like?” including organizational structure, staffing patterns, educational offerings/courses of study, student assignments to smaller learning communities, and facility modifications driven by the academic program prior to November budget cycle for 2009-2010. Note: there is a need to prepare budget forecasts for key cost factors in the restructuring efforts.

3.2.9 Extend and refine design resulting from the two-day workshop by using work groups that will complete the necessary tasks described in the steps that follow.

3.2.10 Develop a detailed restructuring proposal: activities, orientation for adults (teachers and parents) and students, training for relevant parties.

3.2.11 Develop the criteria and process to assign students to smaller learning communities.

3.2.12 Refine educational offerings and delivery systems consistent with smaller learning communities.

3.2.13 Identify professional development needs and develop programs to meet those needs.

3.2.14 Identify facility needs to accommodate teaching and learning in smaller communities and plan for necessary facilities adjustment in light of current structure or proposed modifications.

3.2.15 Create a timeline by utilizing an expert in high school restructuring (as referenced above) to devise an implementation schedule that includes a timeline for all activities in the appropriate sequence for restructuring the high school into smaller learning communities.

3.2.16 Develop a communication plan for the wider school community with an emphasis on students and parents that provides for:

- a. Defined collaboration and communication within the organizational structure
- b. A series of “information sessions” utilizing the hearing and speaking models developed by the communications office to communicate the restructuring design
- c. A series of “staff conversations” at the high school to introduce the working principles guiding restructuring, presenting the definitions and concepts necessary to understand the proposed restructuring design

3.2.17 Design appropriate roll out plan

3.2.18 Implement the rollout plan

3.2.19 Evaluate the progress of the implementation efforts

** For example, there is a School Redesign Network (SRN Leads) through Stanford University under the leadership of Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, an expert in school change and restructuring. SRN both conducts research and assists comprehensive high schools in the restructuring process. There is a school change series that we recommend the committee participate in. The School change series begins with participation in a High School Change Institute followed by California School Change Study Tours—these are designed for a team of up to 12 people from a school district. A team could include Board members, district staff and high school administrators and teachers. Information about the program can be found on the following websites:

<http://www.srnleads.org/about/mission.html>

<http://www.srnleads.org/partners/leads.html>

<http://www.srnleads.org/learning-events/current.html>

http://www.srnleads.org/press/news/newsweek_hillsdale.html

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Facility Renovation/Building Costs (see Results Statement 3.3)
- Professional Development cost (including staff time, materials and conferences— Research* suggests that funding should be provided for 10 days a year of professional development for teachers, though a summer learning as well as time during the week for teachers to plan and problem solve together); alternatively, the District could offer 11-month teacher contracts. The additional time would be used for PD, curriculum and action research design, and data analysis and planning (Tech Valley High School teachers work an 11-month contract).
- Communication/community outreach; marketing
- Kick off planning event—fee for use of building, refreshments, advertising, perhaps transportation and child care for parent participants
- Coordinator for work groups (district rate FTE: \$80,000)
- Consultants/experts—approximately \$1000/day plus expenses. Alternatively, the school change/restructuring process could participate in the SRN Leads process, which would likely be comparable to a dedicated consultant, provide cutting expertise to the district, and allow the district to be part of a cohort/support network with other school involved in a similar process. The cost for participation in the SRN LEADS School Change Series is approximately \$20,000 for a team of up to 12 people plus travel expenses. They also offer study visits for \$250 per participant, plus travel.***
- Curriculum development—part of the PD costs
- Site visits as part of planning—some site visit costs will be small if the site is local; to visit similar schools might require travel and more expense. (e.g. sending 10 teachers to Boston for 3 days to look at 3 schools would cost approximately \$2500 which includes a rental van and gas, hotels with double occupancy—if possible—and a per diem food stipend). Site visits are also part of the expert consultation through SRN LEADS if that option is chosen.
- Evaluation –consultants cost approximately \$1000/per day. A district evaluation position would be a professional salary, \$90,000+

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Improved academic outcomes for students
- Decreased drop out rate
- Improved school climate and culture
- Improved image of the school in the community

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Time
- Commitment
- Give up old patterns and expectations

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Improved relationship with students, adults and the community
- Improved PR
- Improved school morale
- Learn new ways to do things

* Freidlaender, D., and Darling-Hammond, L. with Andree, A., Lewis-Charp, H., McCloskey, L., Richardson, N., et. al. (2007) High schools for equity: Policy supports for student learning in communities of color. Stanford: CA: School Redesign Network at Stanford University.

Available: www.srnleads.org/resources/publications/pdf/hsfe/hsfe_report.pdf

* Darling-Hammond, L., and Friedlaender, D., (2008) Creating excellent and equitable schools in Education Leadership. Volume 65, No 8, pages 14-21.

STRATEGY 3

We will assess and redesign all aspects of the high school with the community to ensure academic rigor and high-level student performance.

RESULT STATEMENT 3.3

Redesign the high school facility to support the creation of smaller learning communities for all students.

ACTION STEPS

3.3.1 Charge the Superintendent with developing a High School Facilities Capital Improvement Referendum Plan. The plan will improve, reconstruct, restructure or expand the district's facilities to effectively and efficiently support the Albany High School educational program. The referendum shall be adopted by the Board of Education within 12 months of adopting the Strategic Plan but not later than December 31, 2009 for subsequent presentation to the district's voters.

3.3.2 Develop the work plan to include" an assessment of all prior high school restructuring proposals: the designation if a project manager (i.e. an independent architectural consultant) to guide the pre-referendum process; the selection of an architectural/educational consultant team through an RFP process; and the creation of the Project Planning Steering Committee. The Project Planning Steering Committee shall be comprised of members of the Board of Education, district administration, teachers, staff, parents, students and community members. All work plan steps will include Board approval.

3.3.3 Develop steps of a referendum master plan to be collaboratively designed by the Architectural/Educational Team and the Project Planning Steering Committee within 10 months. It is important to note that the Project Planning Steering Committee needs to be supportive, responsive to and coordinated with the activities and results of the Educational Restructuring Committee as outlined in action plan 3.2.

3.3.4 Conduct studies, assessments and investigations to develop and prepare referendum plan.

3.3.5 Make presentations to the Board of Education on the proposed referendum as necessary to develop a well-defined plan.

3.3.6 Follow the procedures that adhere to the public referendum requirements in the City of Albany.

3.3.7 Adopt the referendum by the Board of Education.

3.3.8 Submit the referendum to the voters of the Albany district.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time and effort invested by assigned district staff, Board of Education members, parents, community members, students and others in development of the High School Facilities Capital Improvement Referendum Plan. Quantification of this cost difficult but not impossible once the members of the planning teams and committees are finalized.
- Services and related expenses of a Project Planning Coordinator, Planning Consultants including: Architects, Engineers, Financial Planners, Attorneys, Educational Consultants for a 12 month period to prepare the Referendum Plan with estimated cost of \$500,000 to \$750,000.
- Use of District Facilities to conduct meetings, public presentations, etc. with an estimated cost of \$100 to \$500 per meeting with an estimated number of 50 or more meetings over the 12 month period.

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Provides a definitive plan for voter approval or rejection (as is required by law prior to undertaking capital improvement projects) to improve the district's facilities as required to sustain and improve an effective high school educational program.
- Provides a process in which educational program objectives, best practices, and smaller learning community concepts drive the facilities planning and improvement process.
- Provides a collaborative and inclusive process for planning facilities improvements in conjunction with the development of an improved and re-defined High School educational program.
- Provides a definitive timeframe in which the planning effort must be conducted and clear and well-articulated plan must be adopted for presentation to the district's voters.
- Ends a 10-year period of review, discussion and consideration of possible improvements to High School facilities with the creation and adoption of a definitive plan for voter approval or rejection.

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Time and effort invested by district staff, Board of Education members, parents, community members, students and others not directly assigned to the planning effort but who need to participate in the planning.
- Loss of Time on the Board of Education's monthly agendas which needs to be dedicated to this planning process making it a focused priority.

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Provides a path forward to resolve long-standing facility deficiencies and continued deterioration with an action plan providing students, parents, the community, faculty, staff and administration with a plan to provide adequate and sufficient classrooms, support space and other facilities/amenities designed to provide safe, sustainable and healthy learning environments where students can be better known, better served, better supervised and can succeed.

STRATEGY 3

We will assess and redesign all aspects of the high school with the community to ensure academic rigor and high-level student performance.

RESULT STATEMENT 3.4

Provide mandatory professional development for all administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals that will help them work with economically and culturally diverse students to ensure academic rigor and higher-level student performance.

ACTION STEPS

3.4.1 Create a High School Professional Development team, members shall include but not limited to, Director of Instruction, HS administrator, teachers and union members, paraprofessionals.

3.4.2 Align professional development opportunities to the results identified based on needs assessments already conducted including NUA, Culturally Responsive Classrooms, and Diversity Council Initiatives-- PD opportunities will be aligned to the results identified.

3.4.3 Align professional development activities should be aligned with National Staff Development Council Standards and District Professional Development Plan

3.4.4 Examine overlap with existing HS PDP—budget, calendar, schedule - and eliminate redundancies to streamline professional development offering

3.4.5 Design training modules to address needs identified by previous assessments (see 3.4.2).

3.4.6 Implement professional development through different options:

- a. Design methods for providing PD, including options for extending time that may include a combination of those listed below, such as:
 - i. During the school day—examine opportunities within the current school schedule
 - ii. Into the evening
 - iii. Summer institutes
 - iv. On-line options
 - v. Mentoring from other institutions

3.4.7 Present for approval to appropriate parties

3.4.8 Conduct evaluation

- a. Overall impact:
 - i. On the school program
 - ii. On teacher growth
 - iii. Student satisfaction and achievement
- b. Session by session

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Stipends if PD is beyond the current time frame of 1 hour/month
- Internal/External presenters—approximately \$1000 per day plus expenses; specific workshops may be on a per person cost basis or team (e.g. \$350 for a team of 3, each additional person \$100)
- Workshop materials and supplies (consumables)
- Evaluator—consultants cost approximately \$1000/per day. A district evaluation position would be a professional salary, \$90,000+

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Building capacity within the staff
- Increased teacher sense of professional community
- Improved teaching practices
- Increased student learning
- Increased student satisfaction
- Teacher retention
- Decrease in drop out rate
- Improved school climate/culture

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Contribution toward 20 hours of district PD for administrators and teachers, 15 hours for paraprofessional staff, and 175 hours needed over 5 years for new teachers.

STRATEGY 3

We will assess and redesign all aspects of the high school with the community to ensure academic rigor and high-level student performance.

RESULT STATEMENT 3.5

Implement a series of programs to inform, encourage, and increase participation of all students to enroll in and pass at least one advanced course of study prior to graduation

ACTION STEPS

3.5.1 Create a committee. Members of the committee shall include all stakeholders and include but not be limited to, representatives from the vertical integration committee, representatives from the middle school, teachers, parents and students to carry out the steps of the plan.

3.5.2 Identify all students not enrolled in or not passing advanced courses and conduct a needs assessment (what motivates you, hobbies, future goals, plans)

3.5.3 Conduct a needs assessment with these students, i.e. ask them the questions about what motivates them, such as:

- a. What is keeping you from taking more advanced courses?
- b. What would it take to get you there? (What can parents do? What can counselors do? What can teachers do?)

3.5.4 Develop a comprehensive program based on results of student focus groups that may include the following components:

- a. Peer recruitment
- b. Adult support, i.e. teachers, non-teachers referenced in result statement 3.1
- c. Advisory (connection to future opportunities) referenced in result statement 3.1
- d. Tutoring

3.5.5 Determine the number of courses needed and number of teachers needed to teach them.

3.5.6 Provide the professional development/training needed

- a. PD for teachers—giving teachers the necessary tools to teach to higher level

3.5.7 Conduct program evaluation

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Test Fees for students (already part of AHS budget)
- Materials (including student prep materials) approximately \$25/per student
- Professional development/training costs (refer to result statement 3.4)
- Class materials--\$150
- PD—refer to results statement 3.4
- Focus group facilitator (to conduct the focus groups and write a report) \$2000
- Evaluator— consultants cost approximately \$1000/per day. A district evaluation position would be a professional salary, \$90,000+

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Increase the number of students taking advanced courses who are ready to go to college and who will be successful in college
- Improved academic outcomes/achievement for students

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Time

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Increased teacher capacity
- Improved teacher morale
- Improved school climate and culture
- Increased student confidence, self-esteem
- Improved community perceptions of school

STRATEGY 3

We will assess and redesign all aspects of the high school with the community to ensure academic rigor and high-level student performance.

RESULT STATEMENT 3.6

Create a full service community resource center to provide parents/guardians with opportunities to interact with staff, to become familiar with program and curricular requirements for graduation and to participate/support their child in academics achieving success.

ACTION STEPS

3.6.1 Explore existing CSDA full service school models as well as research national full service schools models

3.6.2 Create a full service school steering committee. Members shall include all relevant stakeholder and include but not be limited to, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, HS administrator, teachers, community service providers in health and human service areas, parents and students.*

3.6.3 Conduct a parent and student needs assessment/focus group with a service needs focus in order to understand what they would like to see at full service resource center

3.6.4 Create guiding principles that incorporates parent and youth led initiatives to support student achievement.

3.6.5 Use data to design program components such as parent and youth based approaches to support student academic achievement; and youth outreach programs to address absenteeism, homework tutoring, and addressing service needs.

- a. The plan should address service integration as it relates to the family-youth community center—ensuring that services are streamlined, not duplicative, and are comprehensive, including a central entry point for services (e.g. single registration form)
- b. There should be a mechanism for service providers to meet to ensure that seamless service integration is occurring

3.6.6 Develop polices and protocols for student referrals.

3.6.7 Design training for service providers for how to link services to academic achievement and how to foster academic achievement and accountability to teachers

3.6.8 Design a marketing strategy for the full service center.

3.6.9 Conduct program evaluation

* Professionals in the field of youth engagement believe that parent and youth voices should predominate in the design and implementation plan, and therefore should constitute a significant presence on the committee.

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Incentives (e.g. time, \$\$)
- Stipends for parent and youth
- Facility modification (refer to results statement 3.3)
- Researcher to conduct needs assessment of parents and students—consultants cost approximately \$1000/day
- Evaluator—consultants cost approximately \$1000/day. A district evaluation position would be a professional salary, \$90,000+

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Rapid and tailored responses to high need youth and parents
- Decrease disciplinary problems
- Increased attendance
- Increased school safety
- Improved parental involvement in academic achievement
- Improved services for parents and youth with a focus on needs as well as academic success
- Improved academic outcomes achievement
- Improved after school opportunities

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Co-location of community service providers

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Greater sense of efficacy among teachers
- Greater sense of success among youth and parents
- Improved community school relations

STRATEGY 4

We will improve education in grades 6-8 in partnership with our community to address academic rigor and the disparity in academic achievement.

ACTION TEAM MEMBERSCo-Leaders:

Cathy Corbo, Middle School Teacher (President, APSTA)
Michele Bridgewater, Assistant Director, Special Education

Team Members:

Honorable Helena Heath-Roland, City Court Judge
Lisa House, Teacher, Philip Livingston Magnet Academy
Joan Moore, Higher Education Services Corporation
Randella Nurse, Parent, Philip Livingston Magnet Academy

STRATEGY 4

We will improve education in grades 6 - 8 in partnership with our community to address academic rigor and the disparity in academic achievement.

RESULT STATEMENTS

4.1 Implement an annual middle school orientation program for all parents and students.

4.2 Create a comprehensive middle school mentoring program in collaboration with community partners, staff, and students.

4.3 Identify the needs of at-risk middle school students and make resources available to address these needs.

4.4 Offer enrichment opportunities for all middle school students.

4.5 To address enrollment and ensure academic success, transition the middle school programs to two (2) 6 - 8 middle schools, one (1) K – 8, and evaluate other options in collaboration with parents and community members to address any excess enrollment.

STRATEGY 4

We will improve education in grades 6 - 8 in partnership with our community to address academic rigor and the disparity in academic achievement.

RESULT STATEMENT 4.1

Implement an annual middle school orientation program for all parents and students.

ACTION STEPS

4.1.1 Create a committee of middle school staff, parents and community members to design a middle school orientation program.

4.1.2 Coordinate with other District-wide committee's planning summer orientation programs to share ideas and prevent duplication.

4.1.3 Define what constitutes a quality orientation program that includes physical, interpersonal and social environment components; as well as organizational and motivational support.

4.1.4 Identify orientation programs currently operating in the district and evaluate them according to the above definition.

4.1.5 Decide upon and describe the program components of the orientation program to be used that may include; teaming - a core organizational concept, aspects of physical, interpersonal, or socio-cultural environment that can help students connect to school and parent involvement should be a strong focus.

4.1.6 Inform all middle school sites (Hackett Middle School, Philip Livingston Magnet Academy, Myers Middle School and North Albany Academy) about the orientation program that will be used.

4.1.7 Create committees to plan a customized orientation program for each site, consistent with previously defined components of a quality orientation program, including multiple opportunities for families to attend in late August.

4.1.8 Inform middle school families that their attendance is highly encouraged at the middle school orientation program. If there are indicators of little or no parent involvement the Albany City School District will provide assistance from Home-School Coordinators, Attendance Officers and/or our Full Service Community School personnel.

4.1.9 Develop an evaluation tool that measures the effectiveness of the orientation program and takes into account levels of participation, feedback, and gains in academic achievement.

4.1.10 Make program adjustments as indicated by periodic reviews.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time provided to define and develop the middle school orientation program, including evaluation tools:
 - 4 staff members, 80 hours each totaling 320 staff hours
 - Staff members need to come from each middle school site
- Time needed to 'plan' the orientation program annually:
 - 4 staff members from each middle school site, 120 hours
- Time needed to 'customize' the orientation program for each site
 - 4 staff members from each site, 20 hours each totaling 80 staff hours
- Cost of Xeroxing materials for families/community - \$200
- Cost of postage for mailings - \$200
- Cost of program publicity - \$200

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Improved school climate allowing trusting and respectful relationships to flourish
- Improved collaboration focusing on people working together for student success
- Improved academic achievement as a result of students having a greater sense of security
- Improved parent involvement as a result of having input from the early planning stage

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Staff time to plan and carry out the orientation program
- Parent/Community members time to attend the orientation program

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Students/Parents/Community have a positive attitude about middle school, a sense of safety and comfort and understanding of the middle schools may increase public support and decrease Charter School enrollments
- Students' self-image, improved self-image of students who participate in the orientation program
- Student attitudes, students may become more understanding and respectful of their classmates and adults as well as across cultural boundaries

STRATEGY 4

We will improve education in grades 6 - 8 in partnership with our community to address academic rigor and the disparity in academic achievement.

RESULT STATEMENT 4.2

Create a comprehensive middle school mentoring program in collaboration with community partners, staff, and students.

ACTION STEPS

- 4.2.1 Define what constitutes a quality mentoring program inclusive of academic, social, and cultural components.
- 4.2.2. Identify mentoring programs currently operating in the district/elsewhere and evaluate them according to the above definition (see Addendum for examples of Capital District area programs).
- 4.2.3 Decide upon and describe the program components of the mentoring program to be used.
- 4.2.4 Define factors to be evaluated to demonstrate students' need for mentors e.g. academic record, disciplinary record, teacher/administrator and social service referrals, number of absences, and student interest.
- 4.2.5 Define criteria, taking into account above factors, for selecting students for whom a mentor will be provided and/or for selecting students to participate in a mentoring program.
- 4.2.6 Select students based on criteria agreed upon.
- 4.2.7 Develop a simple process for enrolling students in the mentoring program and enroll them.
- 4.2.8 Define factors to be considered in selecting mentors e.g. skill sets, type of career, security clearances, availability, cultural competence.
- 4.2.9 Define criteria, taking into account above factors, for selecting mentors.
- 4.2.10 Develop a recruitment process for securing the number and type of mentors needed and select mentors based on criteria agreed upon.
- 4.2.11 Define roles and responsibilities for mentors and students participating in the mentoring program.
- 4.2.12 Develop a process for matching each student with a mentor or with a mentoring program (not necessarily involving a 1 to 1 student/mentor ratio) to meet each student's needs.

4.2.13 Use a committee of school and program representatives to coordinate a district wide mentoring program.

4.2.14 Create a procedure for resolving problems between mentors and students in a timely fashion.

4.2.15 Design and provide a training program for students and mentors to address items such as goals of program, student and mentor expectations, rules of conduct, program protocols, including problem resolution.

4.2.16 Develop a staff friendly evaluation tool that captures the components of a quality mentoring program, previously defined, and enables mentors and students to evaluate program effectiveness.

4.2.17 Use the evaluation tool to periodically assess the progress of the mentoring program.

4.2.18 Make program adjustments as indicated by periodic reviews.

4.2.19 Develop student directed activities (e.g. open houses, display of student work) to be held periodically to communicate the program's progress to the greater community, especially parents.

4.2.20 Publicize success stories in school newsletter, by word of mouth, in the press, and in formal school district communications to public consistent with the district's communications plan.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time needed to define and develop a middle school mentoring program, including evaluation tools:
 - 4 staff members, 80 hours each totaling 320 staff hours
 - 2 community members, 80 hours each totaling 160 hours
- Time needed to implement a middle school mentoring program annually:
 - 3 staff members from each middle school site, 30 hours each totaling 90 hours at each middle school site

3 community members each assigned to a middle school site, 30 hours each totaling 90 hours at each middle school site

- 80 mentors total, 40 hours each totaling 3200 hours
- Cost of Xeroxing materials for families and community - \$200
- Cost of postage for mailings - \$400
- Cost of program publicity - \$200

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Increased student knowledge of career options and steps needed to take in order to obtain career goals
- Increased collaboration between school district staff, students, and community members
- Improved academic achievement as a result of students becoming more motivated to achieve academic success to obtain career goals

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Time mentors expend to plan and prepare for their mentoring role and activities
- Time students devote to considering and identifying their career interests

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Increased student self esteem and confidence about their ability to achieve academic and career success
- Students gaining a positive attitude about their school, community, and overall outlook on life
- Expansion of opportunities for students to obtain job offers through their connection with their mentors
- Increased maturity of students as they take on new responsibilities and establish career goals

ADDENDUM TO ACTION PLAN FOR RESULT STATEMENT #2

1- Two Together, Inc. An after-school and summer literacy program for children of Albany's South End community who are enrolled in Kindergarten through 6th grade. The program is a self-sustaining and independent segment of the local YMCA's after-school network. It offers individualized one-on-one tutoring to strengthen children's social, cultural, and intellectual growth through improved language and literacy skills. President is Barbara J. Pryor, 434-9055.

2 - "Grow Girls" and "Boys Only" after-school programs. The Addictions Care Center of Albany located at 90 McCarty Avenue, 465-5829, sponsors these two programs at Giffen Elementary school. These self-esteem building programs are offered for an eight week period during the school year serving girls/boys ages 10-12 (or grades 5 and 6). Their purpose is to help young students to become resilient and protect themselves from engaging in risky behaviors, such as substance use and abuse and premature sexual activity. The programs include classroom lessons for language and reading skills development and bringing in guest speakers who are successful role models in fields of law, entertainment, business, education, and sports.

3 - Meyers Middle School Leadership Program. As part of this program, Meyers holds an annual "Career Exploration Day" where professionals are invited into the school to share with 8th grade students information about their profession/career and the organization they work for. Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Capital Region is a co-sponsor of this program (Liz Chipman, 862-1250 x 15). The Meyers program contact person is Ellen Gerard, 475-6430.

4 - University at Albany Liberty Partnership Program. This program, designed by UA's Center for Women in Government and Civil Society, is a drop out prevention program targeted at young adults in grades 7-12 who are at risk of leaving school prior to graduation. The program is designed to provide a comprehensive range of services that support and encourage young people to obtain their diploma, pursue higher education, and begin workforce preparation. Candi Griffin, Director, cgriffin@uamail.albany.edu

5 - Capital Region Sponsor A Scholar, Inc. This program assists economically disadvantaged young men and women in Troy, Albany, and Schenectady to graduate high school and attend college. In addition to academic support, the provides mentoring and financial scholarship opportunities. William Corbett, President, 935-1047 (www.crsas.org).

6 - Capital District YMCA Black and Latino Achievers Program. The central purpose of this program is to help middle school and high school students pursue higher education and career goals. The program helps students develop a positive sense of self, exposes them to diverse career options, and provides role models whose success and knowledge will inspire the youth to set and reach their goals. Urban Development Director, Capital District YMCA, 463-9622.

7 - Council for Unity. Its mission is to empower young people, individuals, and groups with the skills necessary to promote safety, unity, and achievement in schools and communities. The Albany City School District recently enlisted the help of the Council to address youth violence and promote gang prevention. Robert DeSena, President (212) 701-9440.

8 - CareerLinks: Creating Opportunities that Last, Inc. This organization provides vocational planning and employment programs and has a network of professionals who serve as mentors for teens and young adults. Marsha Lazarus, Executive Director, 465-4337 x 105.

9 - Potential additional mentor resources/community partners - bar association and legal organizations who currently utilize their members to visit schools and make "lawyer in the classroom" presentations. Those groups include the Capital District Black and Hispanic Bar Assn, Capital District Women's Bar Assn, and the Albany County Bar Association.

STRATEGY 4

We will improve education in grades 6 - 8 in partnership with our community to address academic rigor and the disparity in academic achievement.

RESULT STATEMENT 4.3

Identify the needs of at risk middle school students and make resources available to address these needs.

ACTION STEPS

- 4.3.1 Identify a team at each school site or task force to establish a quality at risk program inclusive of physical, social, emotional and intellectual components
- 4.3.2 Define the factors to be used in identifying at risk students
- 4.3.3 Review current at risk programs operating in and outside the district
- 4.3.4 Evaluate these programs according to the definitions and factors identified by the team
- 4.3.5 Decide upon and describe the program components of the at risk program to be used
- 4.3.6 Define the factors to be measured to determine program effectiveness
- 4.3.7 Define the criteria for selecting students to participate in the at risk program
- 4.3.8 Design and implement the at risk program to meet the needs of identified students in consultation with parent and community members.
- 4.3.9 Communicate with outside agencies serving at risk youth which may be additional resources for our students.
- 4.3.10 Evaluate the success of the program against pre-established goals
- 4.3.11 Make program adjustments as indicated by periodic review

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time provided to define and develop the at risk student program, included evaluation tools:
With 10 task force team members at each site, 10 hours per school week each totaling 390 hours each, at each site per task force member. This program should be conducted after school and given two hours per day. Also task force team members should be comprised of school faculties, students and community volunteers.
- Time needed to plan the at risk students program annually, including identifying task force team and students:
10 task force team members from each site, two hours per week for 10 weeks totaling 20 hours each site per team member, each school calendar year.
- Time needed to put the at risk student program in motion, including Implementing, scheduling, monitoring and evaluating the program review and resolving problem:
10 task force members from each site 2.50 hours per week for Five weeks totaling 12.50 per team member.
- Cost for designing and providing a training program for team members and students:
Cost for Trainer and training materials=\$2500.00
Cost for customized activity=\$1500.00
Cost for distribution and publicity =1000.00

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Students will rise with high expectation to excellence, graduate and move on to higher education.
- Students will gain ability and knowledge to handle educational, social, emotional and economic issues in school and also in their environments.
- Students will maximize academic achievement, gain self-respect and respect for others and feel secure in their school environment.

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Operation personnel who will define develop, implement and oversees the at risk program, should have time to do so.
- Be somewhat flexible with time and location.

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Promotes respect at all level and Improve home-school communication and parent access to school staff. This could improve student and parent participation and keep teachers and students focused on their goals.
- Increase awareness of resources and availability such as capacity for translation services and improve outreach to immigrant parents at the middle-grade level. Students can feel more secure in their ability to learn and communicate effectively.
- Promote a consistent risk-avoidance message, promotes self-sufficiency and expands educational opportunities and life skills for at risk youth. Also, reduces the desire to engage in destructive behaviors.

STRATEGY 4

We will improve the education in grades 6-8 in partnership with our community to address academic rigor and the disparity in academic achievement.

RESULT STATEMENT 4.4

Offer enrichment opportunities for all middle school students.

ACTION STEPS

4.4.1 Define quality enrichment programs with particular attention linking to classroom instruction.

4.4.2 Identify enrichment programs available to middle school students, including programs in and outside of school, academic and other enrichment activities.

4.4.3 Identify what enrichment programs are currently being used in the Albany City School District's Middle Schools.

4.4.4 Evaluate current program based on definition of what constitutes a quality enrichment program as above.

4.4.5 Define factors to be evaluated to sustain students needs (ie. student achievement, student interest).

4.4.6 Match students to the appropriate types of enrichment programs based on the tiers of Renzulli's Enrichment Triad Model.

4.4.7 Select students based on criteria agreed upon.

4.4.8 Develop a process to inform parents of enrichment opportunities and enroll students into enrichment programs.

4.4.9 Define factors to be used to identify adults (staff or community members) to facilitate enrichment program. (Specifically, skills sets, security clearance, availability, cultural competence).

4.4.10 Define criteria taking into account above factors for selecting facilitators for enrichment programs.

4.4.11 Develop a process to recruit facilitators for enrichment program.

4.4.12 Select facilitators based on criteria.

4.4.13 Develop a systematic process to monitor progress.

4.4.14 Define expectations/guidelines of students and facilitators participating in enrichment program.

4.4.15 Develop a staff friendly evaluation tool that captures the components of a quality enrichment program previously defined and enables facilitators, students, teachers, and administration to evaluate effectiveness.

4.4.16 Use the evaluation tool to periodically assess the progress of the program.

4.4.17 Make adjustments to program as indicated by periodic review.

4.4.18 Develop student directed activities (open house, display of student work) periodically to communicate the program's progress to greater community, especially parents.

ADDENDUM

Renzulli's Enrichment Triad Model is a three-tier model used to increase student achievement and student enjoyment of learning.

Type 1 Enrichment Activities are designed to expose students to a wide variety of disciplines, topics, occupations, hobbies, persons, places, and events that would not be covered in a regular classroom.

Type 2 Enrichment Activities promote the development of thinking and feeling processes such as creative thinking, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.

Type 3 Enrichment Activities involve pursuing "self-selected" areas (within guideline topics) for advanced content acquisition and process training in which students assume the role of first-hand inquirer.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time provided to define and develop the enrichment program.
- Cost of Renzulli model- approximately \$40
- Use of Title 1: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged
- Use of Title 5: Promoting Informed parent Choice and Innovative Programs

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Increase motivation of learners by 50%.
- Increase in attendance by 50%.
- Reduce behavior referrals by those participating in enrichment program.
- Increase class average by students participating in enrichment program.
- Increase positive attitudes of faculty and students.
- Increase academic achievement by 50% for those participating in program.

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Staff time to plan and carry out the enrichment programs

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- PTA, parent and community support.
- Community perspective on students and school improves with higher participation of students in school.
- Student's self-image improves due to actively participating in enrichment programs.

STRATEGY 4

We will improve education in grades 6-8 in partnership with our community to address academic rigor and the disparity in academic achievement.

RESULTS STATEMENT 4.5

To address declining enrollment and ensure academic success, transition the middle school programs to two (2) 6 - 8 middle schools, one (1) K - 8, and evaluate other options in collaboration with parents and community members to address any excess enrollment.

ACTION STEPS

4.5.1 Establish a Transition team that includes representatives from the community (i.e. parents, guardians, community partners) and representatives from each of the schools that will be impacted and who are guided by three principles

- Improve and sustain academic effectiveness
Minimize disruption to students, families and staff as much as possible
- Equity based on building capacity, building condition and infrastructure, enrollment and demographics (e.g. racial, special education programs, socio-economic status, English Language Learners)

4.5.2 Meet with the staff at all impacted schools to discuss the process and elicit comments

4.5.3 Conduct a community meeting in the Fall of 2008 to:

- Share enrollment data projections
- Share program availability/resources at receiving building
- Provide opportunity for public comments

4.5.4 Conduct a review and analysis of relevant to:

- Develop process for enrollment
- Develop program Recommendations
- Develop process for redistribution of staff
- Develop a communication plan

4.5.5 Develop a plan for implementation and a timeline

4.5.6 Explain to families the enrollment process and options through multiple sources of communications (e.g. district mailings, district's website, community partners' newsletter)

4.5.7 Hold meeting at each of the impacted schools to explain the process and decide upon student and family activities to foster a smooth transition process

- 4.5.8 Develop capacity of each schools' Building Leadership Team to:
- Plan for programmatic and infrastructure changes (e.g. scheduling, incorporation of new classrooms)
 - Build relationships with newly constituted staff
 - Support for relationship building among students

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time for members of the Transition Team to meet and plan 40 hours throughout school year
- Time for Building Leadership Teams to plan for transition 15 hours throughout school year
- Clerical Support to Transition Team 30 hours
- Communication budget (community meeting, enrollment \$1500 options)
- Substitute costs for teachers on the Transition Team \$2500 for all day meetings
- Time for community meeting 2 hours

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- 10 months for Transition Team to be deliberate in their planning throughout the school year
- 1 clearly defined process for the transition of schools
- 3 different avenues for input from all constituencies (e.g. Transition Team, Building Leadership Team, Community Meeting)
- 2 Middle Schools will have the opportunity to be considered as Magnet Middle School Programs (Hackett & Meyers)

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Increased time and commitment of Transition Team members
- Additional roles and responsibilities of Transition Team members and Building Leadership Teams
- Experience of loss for the community that loses one of its schools
- Stress from closing a school and reconstituting three other schools

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Increased morale for the students, families and staff who move into a relatively new school or newly renovated schools
- Students, families and staff no longer bear the stigma associated with Philip Livingston Magnet Academy
- Families have the option of having their children remain in one school from kindergarten through 8th grade on both the North and South ends of the city
- Reduction in tardiness due to the increased number of students who will receive transportation

STRATEGY 5

We will develop and implement more effective communication, ensuring input from all district stakeholders about matters affecting the well-being of our students.

ACTION TEAM MEMBERS

Co-Leaders:

Ron Lesko, Director of Communications

Shawn Morris, President, Albany Common Council

Team Members:

Barbara Smith, Common Council Member

Bill Stoneman, Journalist

Kim Wilkins, Principal, Stephen & Harriet Myers Middle School

STRATEGY 5

We will develop and implement more effective communications, ensuring input from all district stakeholders about matters affecting the well-being of our students.

STRATEGY 5

We will develop and implement more effective communications, ensuring input from all district stakeholders about matters affecting the well-being of our students.

RESULT STATEMENTS

- 5.1 Research and develop outreach and communication efforts to more effectively reach all families and communities, taking into account how messages are shaped and received.
- 5.2 Develop an annual communication blueprint to guide efforts at the district, building and classroom levels to provide greater integration and enhance clarity and access to information.
- 5.3 Support the establishment of a newsletter in each building of at least monthly frequency during the school year.
- 5.4 Implement a weekly or biweekly TV show featuring a variety of constituents to communicate the work and importance of public education in Albany.
- 5.5 Create public engagement models, including meeting and hearing to ensure that public input on major decisions is heard and processed.
- 5.6 Establish an informational phone line to provide access to information 24 hours a day.

STRATEGY 5

We will develop and implement more effective communications, ensuring input from all district stakeholders about matters affecting the well-being of our students.

RESULT STATEMENT 5.1

Research and develop outreach and communication efforts to more effectively reach all families and communities, taking into account how messages are shaped and received.

ACTION STEPS

5.1.1 Assemble individuals from community relations and communications areas for a series of meetings to discuss functions with a goal of creating an integrated office with all outreach and communications functions under one cabinet-level officer.

5.1.2 Based upon above discussion, combine community relations, communications and public information functions into one cabinet-level office in order to unify communications functions.

5.1.3 Create staffing design, with clearly written descriptions of duties and relationships, which may include reassignment of positions and new hires.

5.1.4 Develop “ombudsman”/outreach staff members, including those from underrepresented backgrounds, who will regularly seek out and interact with the public, with the purpose of enhancing student performance by increasing access to information, resources and involvement by underrepresented groups.

5.1.5 Recruit community volunteers, including students, as district “ambassadors” to assist in outreach efforts.

5.1.6 Explore possibility of some kind of reimbursement/per diem or other compensation for ambassadors.

5.1.7 Give newly combined office wide visibility, via outreach to community groups, elected officials, faith-based organizations, etc.

5.1.8 Develop a protocol for disseminating information, using a variety of formats and strategies to reach all constituents, including traditionally unserved and unserved communities. (For example: Use ombudsman and community volunteers to circulate district materials in nontraditional locations such as laundromats, physicians’ offices and social service offices.)

5.1.9 Develop benchmarks to be used for evaluating effectiveness of outreach efforts.

5.1.10 Conduct periodic focus groups, which are reflective of the City’s diverse communities each year to find out how effective the district’s overall communication efforts are, how and where they receive information and how communications can be improved.

5.1.11 Develop in-house database for district-wide and targeted distribution of informational materials.

5.1.12 Code database for multiple and targeted uses, using geographic information, building information, specified interests, etc.

5.1.13 Produce informational materials in a variety of formats in order to reach diverse constituencies. These include media packets, public service announcements, newsletters, brochures, fliers and e-mail and other Web-based outreach.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Adequately staff integrated Community Relations/Communications Office. For example, reporting to a cabinet-level officer:
 - One full-time clerical/office manager
 - Two full-time Communications professionals
 - Two full-time Community Relations professionals
 - One half-time graphic designer
- Purchase of database software (however, may be resident on computers, e.g. Microsoft Access)
- Staff time (or cost of consultant) to adapt program for district's needs and use.
- Staff time to maintain database
- Possible increased personnel costs, particularly within Ombudsman/Ambassador program.
- \$40,000 -\$50,000 (Grant money may be available for such positions, re: Waterbury, Conn.)

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Resistance of staff to make departmental changes, as well as changes in duties.

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Definable increase in the number of ways to reach more members of the community.
- Convenient and up to date database makes it possible to quickly notify large groups of people.
- Student performance increases as information about resources is improved.

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Goodwill – benefits of broader connections in the community and community members being better informed about district activities and news.
- More accessible information usually results in more engaged public, which is more likely to support district initiatives.

STRATEGY 5

We will develop and implement more effective communications, ensuring input from all district stakeholders about matters affecting the well-being of our students.

RESULT STATEMENT 5.2

Develop an annual communication blueprint to guide efforts at the district, building and classroom levels to provide greater integration and enhance clarity and access to information.

ACTION STEPS **

5.2.1 Contact each building principal in early August to schedule a meeting in September to discuss communications tools and tactics currently in place as well as unmet needs and strategic goals, defining issues that will need to be addressed during the coming year.

5.2.2 Contact the Albany City Council PTA and select other community organizations in early August to schedule a meeting in September to seek community input on unmet communications needs.

5.2.3 Meet with the Administrative Cabinet in August to identify strategic district-level communications and marketing goals, aligned with the district's mission, for the upcoming school year.

5.2.4 Meet with each building principal in September to identify communications tools and tactics currently in place as well as unmet needs and strategic goals.

5.2.5 Meet with the Albany City Council PTA in September to seek community input on unmet communications needs.

5.2.6 Develop strategic communications and marketing goals for the next fiscal year at the district and building levels by mid-October.

5.2.7 Provide an opportunity for each building principal to provide feedback on draft communications and marketing goals, with one opportunity for revisions. To be completed by the end of October.

5.2.8 Review draft communications and marketing goals with the superintendent in early November, revising as necessary to gain final approval.

5.2.9 Identify achievable tactics at the district and building levels, based on budget and staffing projections for the Community Relations/Communications Office and each school for the next fiscal year, that will address the approved communications and marketing goals.

5.2.10 Align communications and marketing tactics along a timeline that follows the fiscal year to create an annual communications blueprint by mid-November.

5.2.11 Provide an opportunity for each building principal to provide feedback on draft communications blueprint, providing one opportunity for revisions. To be completed by the end of the first week in December.

5.2.12 Review draft communications blueprint with the superintendent in early December, revising as necessary to gain final approval before the end of the calendar year.

5.2.13 Present a budget proposal to the superintendent by mid-January that reflects cost estimates for the Community Relations/Communications Office to execute the approved communications blueprint in the next fiscal year.

5.2.14 Revise annual communications blueprint as necessary through the budget development process, and pending the outcome of the school budget vote in May, providing an opportunity for the superintendent and each building principal to review any substantive changes to the plan.

5.2.15 Finalize the communications blueprint following adoption of the school budget, providing final versions to the superintendent, all members of the Administrative Cabinet and each building principal before the end of the current fiscal year.

5.2.16 Present the district's annual communications blueprint at an Albany City Council PTA meeting in July.

5.2.17 Present the district's annual communications blueprint at the district's Administrators Meeting at the end of August.

*** The timeline identified in these action steps is necessitated by the district's budget development process, to ensure proper resources to execute all elements of the final plan.*

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time for building principals (or designee) – approximately 1.5 hours each
- Time for Director of Communications – approximately 120 hours

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- People reluctant to engage in planning process
- Disappointment when an idea isn't in the plan

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Opportunities for more proactive communications year-round
- Better able to plan for events

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Increased good will with community organizations
- Increased community support

STRATEGY 5

We will develop and implement more effective communications, ensuring input from all district stakeholders about matters affecting the well-being of our students.

RESULT STATEMENT 5.3

Support the establishment of a newsletter in each building of at least monthly frequency during the school year.

ACTION STEPS

5.3.1 Select two staff members at each school to serve as editors, being sure that the editors are trained and adept at using the appropriate technology.

5.3.2 Charge editors with responsibility for meeting predetermined deadlines and ensuring that families of students are well informed about schools, including information such as classroom activities, deadlines for upcoming assignments, participation in activities and events, report cards being sent home, special events and important contact information.

5.3.3 Solicit ideas for newsletter content on regular basis, asking other staff members to prepare notes or narratives about interesting and important activities that they know about. Take special care to get information from all corners of the building, not just from teachers who talk about their own activities with greatest ease.

5.3.4 Encourage information to be provided to editors electronically, making it easier to handle than notes written on paper.

5.3.5 Provide building editors – via e-mail approximately once a week – with district-wide information from Community Relations/Communications Office on an ongoing basis. For example, information about snow days, report card distributions, district-wide testing, policies and procedures, and news about activities that relate to more than one building, such as the All-City music program.

5.3.6 Provide page layout templates to editors from Community Relations/Communications Office in desktop publishing format available to all schools, creating more professional design and ensuring similarity in appearance of newsletters from all buildings. Include standard guidelines regarding elements for each newsletter, including the name of the school in at least 30-point type, the name of the principal, the name of the editor(s), the building's phone number, the district's "We choose" logo and a section for district-wide information.

5.3.7 Schedule two annual meetings, organized and coordinated by Community Relations/Communications Office, to allow editors of all school newsletters to share best practices and receive training on publishing software and journalistic practices, i.e., identifying “news” when others informally mention activities and information that families ought to learn about.

5.3.8 Divide work between editors such that an “editor” writes text, headlines and photo captions and a “copy editor” reviews all material either before page layout, after page layout, or both to ensure accuracy, spelling, grammar and consistency in style. Copy editors flag any content that could cause some offense, ensuring that thorough consideration is given by editor or principal, if warranted, before publication.

5.3.9 Provide electronic copy of newsletters to webmaster for placement on the school’s and district’s websites.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Desktop publishing software in each building (Publisher, PageMaker, etc.)
- District Communications and/or Technology staff time to train building personnel with software and support
- Printing/production
- Staff time of building personnel to research, write, edit and produce
- Staff time of Communications Office personnel to assist with production]

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Resistance that it has to be done and that the district is telling building personnel how to do it

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Families, community and staff better informed
- Better support of building and district activities

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Building school/community spirit
- Better opportunities for family involvement

STRATEGY 5

We will develop and implement more effective communications, ensuring input from all district stakeholders about matters affecting the well-being of our students.

RESULT STATEMENT 5.4

Implement a weekly or biweekly TV show featuring a variety of constituents to communicate the work and importance of public education in Albany.

ACTION STEPS

5.4.1 Define criteria for what would constitute a successful City School District of Albany public television show, such as regularity and frequency of airing, appealing content, substantial viewership, and a capacity to present difficult issues as well as good news in an informative and useful way.

5.4.2 Identify school district television shows in the area and evaluate them according to the above criteria.

5.4.3 Decide upon and describe the format and content of Albany's public education television show, e.g. a "60 Minutes" magazine format, a newscast format or a talk show format.

5.4.4 Determine the access to cable television production facilities.

5.4.5 Designate staff producer and production team to include representatives from key stakeholder groups, i.e., Community Relations/Communications Office, teachers, students, parents/PTA. Work to ensure demographic diversity in the show's production team and in the show's content.

5.4.6 Develop the district's public television show in conjunction with the district's existing television courses.

5.4.7 Define the length and frequency of each program.

5.4.8 Develop an ongoing mechanism for identifying content for the public television show, with attention toward standard policies specifying rules for handling topics such as school board elections, budget votes and other topics in which a public decision could be affected by the timing and presentation of information.

5.4.9 Develop standard policies specifying rules for handling topics such as school board elections, budget votes and other topics in which a public decision could be affected by the timing and presentation of information.

5.4.10 Establish relationships with local media outlets and media professionals who will share expertise with student participants in television courses.

5.4.11 Establish relationships with local corporations and business organizations to enhance funding and in-kind support for television activities.

5.4.12 Develop a polling mechanism to find out about the viewership for the show and what the audience wants to watch.

5.4.13 Use the polling to improve and enhance the district's television offerings.

5.4.14 Develop an ongoing publicity and public relations campaign to inform parents and the community about the district's television show.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

- Costs (many will be unknown until contracts are in place between the city and Time Warner, such as equipment, studio time, production costs)

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time of Community Relations/Communications Office staff in developing program – writing, editing, scheduling
- Time of Community Relations/Communications Office staff in developing survey/polling mechanism for ongoing community feedback
- Time of Community Relations/Communications Office staff to publicize and establish relationships with media professionals to share expertise with student participants
- Time of Community Relations/Communications staff to establish relationships with local corporations and business organizations to enhance funding and in-kind support

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Competition for air time

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Families, community and staff better informed
- Better support of building and district activities
- Increased partnerships with businesses and community organizations
- Students gain experience in television journalism and production, enhanced career opportunities
- More people choosing Albany's public schools

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Building school/community spirit
- Better opportunities for family and community involvement
- Better public image for the school district
- Higher student satisfaction

STRATEGY 5

We will develop and implement more effective communications, ensuring input from all district stakeholders about matters affecting the well-being of our students.

RESULT STATEMENT 5.5

Create public engagement models, including meeting and hearing to ensure that public input on major decisions is heard and processed.

ACTION STEPS

5.5.1 Identify personnel in the Community Relations/Communications office that will handle district public engagement process.

5.5.2 Identify tools for public engagement using organizations like The Public Agenda and the International Association for Public Participation. See attached addendum.

5.5.3 Identify agencies (locally, Mediation Matters and Cornell University School of ILR; nationally, the Public Agenda) that provide training in meeting facilitation and community engagement.

5.5.4 Engage school board in exploring new models and locations for meetings that enhance public engagement. It is likely that special consultants would be needed.

5.5.5 Secure services for training.

5.5.6 Identify district personnel, community volunteers and students to be trained as facilitators, including all building principals.

5.5.7 Develop modules that take into account different types of training for various facilitator roles, e.g., students, principals, community volunteers, etc.

5.5.8 Review district issues to determine which are likely to require a public dialogue, working with district administration and Community Relations/Communications Office.

5.5.9 Develop consistent protocols for each model, for instance, development of briefing materials, effective public notice, media packets, etc.

5.5.10 Determine primary constituencies for each issue.

5.5.11 Utilize district's new database (Result Statement 1) to ensure widespread distribution of materials and invitations to participate in the public engagement process.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Staff time
- Training of staff, students and community volunteers
- Mediation Matters charges about \$800 per day to train up to 30 individuals.
- Costs of using outside facilitators
- Development and printing of informational material

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Resistance to public outreach/participation
- Resistance to training

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Greater inclusion of broad constituencies
- Better management of controversial issues
- Greater support of district initiatives
- More people choosing Albany's public schools
- More transparency in district decision making
- More support for the school budget and bonding

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Increased community satisfaction

STRATEGY 5

We will develop and implement more effective communications, ensuring input from all district stakeholders about matters affecting the well-being of our students.

RESULT STATEMENT 5.6

Establish an informational phone line to provide access to information 24 hours a day.

ACTION STEPS

5.6.1 Establish 475-INFO (4636) as the dedicated phone number for this service.

5.6.2 Meet with the Administrative Cabinet to identify Frequently Asked Questions and content areas following the information available on the district's Web site, www.albanyschools.org.

5.6.3 Once content areas are selected, meet with department leaders of each area to review information available on the Web and select specific sections for the phone service.

5.6.4 Write a script for each content area.

5.6.5 Provide an opportunity for each department leader to provide feedback on drafts, with one opportunity for revisions.

5.6.6 Present revised scripts to Administrative Cabinet for final approval, revising as necessary to get final approval.

5.6.7 Identify Community Relations/Communications staff member responsible for setting up the service and proactive maintenance of information.

5.6.8 Establish "0" as the number to press to be redirected to the district's main number – 475-6000 – and to leave a message.

5.6.9 Publicize and promote the information phone service, with a special focus on reaching all families and communities.

5.6.10 Establish a process for evaluating use to ensure that information available through the phone service is relevant to and meeting community needs.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Staff time for initial meetings with Administrative Cabinet and department leaders – approximately 1.5 hours each
- Staff time to write the scripts – approximately 40 hours
- Staff time for revisions and final approval process – approximately 20 hours
- Cost to establish a dedicated phone line outside the district's current 6000 series.
- Cost to develop novelty items such as magnets, pens, etc. to advertise the phone number.

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Opportunities to provide additional options for families and community members to receive important district information

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Increased good will with families and community organizations
- Increased community support

STRATEGY 6

We will use all assessment data to drive academically rigorous instruction, Pre-K to 12, to improve the performance of every learner.

ACTION TEAM MEMBERS

Co-Leaders:

Ken Cioffi, Chief Information Officer
Melissa Mackey, Board of Education Member

Team Members:

Faye Andrews, Commissioner, Youth & Family Services
John Viggiani, Staff Development Director, Albany County Youth Bureau
Felicia Green, Co-President, City Council PTA
Carol Hill, Parent - Montessori Middle School
Doreen Quinlan Mitchell, Instructional Supervisor for Mathematics

STRATEGY 6

We will use all assessment data to drive academically rigorous instruction, Pre-K-12, to improve the performance of every student.

RESULT STATEMENTS

6.1 Provide school level and district wide training for building and district administrators, teachers and instructional support staff in the use and application of a variety of assessment to target instruction that will promote students academic success.

6.2 Provide a series of trainings and information (written, face-to-face, web based) to support parents, students, family, community members and other stakeholders in their efforts to read, understand and interpret student, building and district reports presented in a variety of formats (SED report cards, student ISR etc.).

6.3 Develop a data warehouse system that allows for the collection of individual student assessment and other pertinent data points (i.e. absenteeism, mobility, # of elementary schools attended, services provided, etc.) that can be accessed by teachers, administrators and staff for the purpose of making informed academic program decisions.

6.4 Develop a program evaluation tool (template) that can be applied to existing programs that would assist in establishing programmatic benchmarks that determine the success of the program. This tool must use both student and program expense data to help inform decision making for future programming.

STRATEGY 6

We will use all assessment data to drive academically rigorous instruction, Pre-K-12, to improve the performance of every student.

RESULT STATEMENT 6.1

Provide school level and district wide training for building and district administrators, teachers and instructional support staff in the use and application of a variety of assessment to target instruction that will promote students academic success.

ACTION STEPS

- 6.1.1 Identify and compile all available assessment tools currently being used district-wide.
- 6.1.2 Assess the format of each assessment tool (e.g. hard copies, electronic, spreadsheets, raw data vs. clean data).
- 6.1.3 Identify current and anticipated technical needs (software, hardware, manpower, user proficiency)
- 6.1.4 Identify key elements contained in all assessment tools, e.g. what is being measured, when measured, etc.
- 6.1.5 Identify the purpose of each assessment tool and how it is intended to assist the district.
- 6.1.6 Create a glossary of commonly used terms for all currently utilized assessment tools.
- 6.1.7 Identify all sources of explanatory information currently available, e.g. interpretation instructions from NYSED.
- 6.1.8 Identify other agencies or departments who are currently conducting/using training on assessment tools, e.g. ACSD, NYSUT.
- 6.1.9 Identify current district staff skilled in assessment tool interpretation and use (particularly how results from different assessment tools can be integrated to form a more complete understanding of student achievement and areas for improvement).
- 6.1.10 Create a training staff who will develop in-person and web-based training tools. (Turn-key model)
- 6.1.11 Set schedule for development of written training module (online, hard copy) for each assessment tool.
- 6.1.12 Create written training modules for each assessment tool, using MS Word, PowerPoint, MS Publisher, etc.

- 6.1.13 Pilot training document with select administrators, teachers, and staff.
- 6.1.14 Modify training document based on information obtained through pilot process.
- 6.1.15 Finalize all training documents and print materials.
- 6.1.16 Create training evaluation tool to be administered following training. Include similar questionnaire for web-based training materials.
- 6.1.17 Identify the universe of trainees, e.g. numbers of teachers, administrators, etc. along with basic demographic information, e.g. which school and grade or subject area for each teacher/assistant teacher.
- 6.1.18 Identify venues for in-person trainings, e.g., at staff meetings, teacher conference days.
- 6.1.19 Determine whether trainings will be offered as requested or if they will be targeted, such as cross training involving teachers with administrators or teachers only.
- 6.1.20 Create a training schedule e.g., by grade level or by school depending on how trainees will be grouped.
- 6.1.21 Advertise training, including purpose and materials that will be presented.
- 6.1.22 Maintain a list of trainees, perhaps allowing those who have completed the training to become “assessment tool experts” within their school, grade level or subject area.
- 6.1.23 Communicate lists of trained staff to buildings.
- 6.1.24 Develop method for updating information regarding changes in assessment tools, or reporting (e.g. when new items are added or new scoring indices are created).
- 6.1.25 Collect training evaluation tools and maintain database of responses to modify future training.
- 6.1.26 Develop a method to update new employees who need training.

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time for review of reports and assessment data.
4 staff members 40 hours totaling 160 hours
- Printing, copy and presentation materials \$5,000
- Creation of Training Materials
4 staff members 40 hours totaling 160 hours
- Time for training of all staff.
4 Staff members 25 hours totaling 100 hours
- Creation of evaluation tool
2 staff members 40 hours totaling 80 hours.

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Staff will have a common terminology related to testing, assessment and reporting
- Greater availability of information to inform decisions to make curriculum and instruction adjustments.

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Need for increase skill set by all staff to interpret all data
- Resistance of staff to learning new information
- Increase need for additional professional development on all levels for staff

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Greater understanding of assessments administered to all students
- Increase in staff knowledge and comfort when reviewing data
- Staff will use this new understanding of assessment information to make adjustments in instruction

STRATEGY 6

We will use all assessment data to drive academically rigorous instruction, Pre-K-12, to improve the performance of every student.

Result Statement 6.2

Provide a series of trainings and information (written, face-to-face, web based) to support parents, students, family, community members and other stakeholders in their efforts to read, understand and interpret student, building and district reports presented in a variety of formats (SED report cards, student ISR etc.).

ACTION STEPS

6.2.1 Create a team to identify relevant reports related to student achievement and district accountability.

6.2.2 Identify and compile all current district and SED reports related to district accountability and student achievement.

6.2.3 Identify anticipated release dates of each report.

6.2.4 Identify what each report measures.

6.2.5 Outline contents of reports.

6.2.6 Use team members to create informational documents to describe each report for dissemination to stakeholders later in the process.

6.2.7 Create a glossary of commonly used terms for all current district and SED reports.

6.2.8 Develop a set of informational tools or materials, both electronic (web-based) and hard copy that will explain what each report measures and how it is used in district decision-making, and how it can be used by other stakeholders.

6.2.9 Use concrete examples using information and data contained in the actual district and state reports when developing informational tools/materials.

6.2.10 Make certain that language used in informational tools/materials is geared to the intended audience (e.g., minimize jargon, use plain language).

6.2.11 Identify current avenues for parent/community and district communication for information dissemination (e.g., PTA, district website, PAL, YMCA and JCC after school programs, mentoring programs, SDM, Citywide PTA, parent support groups, Public Library Branches, school board meetings, newspaper, newsletters, teacher conferences, etc.)

6.2.12 Disseminate information tools/materials, working within the district and with other community partners, through avenues sited above (6.2.11)

6.2.13 Identify training sites for the further dissemination of informational tools/materials

6.2.14 Developing a training protocol and evaluation tools, taking into account the different need of different stakeholders, to further articulate the current uses of each relevant report

6.2.15 Formulate a training schedule

6.2.16 Publicize the schedule through various media, e.g., district website, public access broadcast, various television stations, media advisories, etc.

6.2.17 Conduct in-person trainings at identified training sites

6.2.18 Disseminate, complete and collect training evaluation tools

6.2.19 Gather and analyze evaluation tool results

6.2.20 Formulate recommendations for future rollouts (e.g., additional information to be included, additional avenues for dissemination, suggestions to make information more user-friendly)

6.2.21 Incorporate recommendations in future informational trainings and training tools/materials

6.2.22 Continue rollouts of most current district and SED reports related to district accountability and student achievement

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time for review of reports and assessment data.
2 staff members 20 hours totaling 60 hours
- Time to create informational materials, both hard copy and web-based, and training evaluation tool
- Out reach to community and public
2 staff members 40 hours totaling 80 hours
- Creation of Training Materials
4 staff members 40 hours totaling 160 hours
- Initial cost of producing hard copy materials
500 four page documents @ \$.25 a page totaling \$500
- Creation of evaluation tool
2 staff members 40 hours totaling 80 hours

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- A complete listing and description of all assessment and testing reports
- A glossary of common terminology related to testing, assessment and reporting
- Development of training materials for parents and stakeholders
- Consistent and planned training opportunities for parents and community to receive information
- More resources available through a variety of sources
- Increased number of community members who are well-informed regarding student achievement and district accountability as measured by attendance at in-person trainings
- Clarification on what specific reports are of greatest concern to community stakeholders as identified in evaluations conducted following in-person trainings

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Staff discontentment over additional responsibilities
- Additional pressure on other departments to help with collection, preparation and dissemination of information
- Increased administrative oversight demands
- Criticism of district policy and practice when “negative” student achievement or district accountability information is more widely circulated
- Increase in anxiety, uncertainty and concern amongst community stakeholders when “negative” student achievement or district accountability information is presented
- Need to re-assure community stakeholders that “negative” information is being and will continue to be systematically addressed by the district
- Increased comparisons between the Albany City School District’s performance and other surrounding districts

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Parents will have more information available to help them assist their child at home and in school
- Opportunity to highlight positive student achievement and district accountability information
- Less suspicion amongst community members that district is “hiding” negative student achievement or district accountability information
- Stronger partnerships between district and community stakeholders in setting direction to increase student achievement using commonly understood assessment and accountability data
- Greater understanding of student assessment and district accountability data by community stakeholders
- Greater understanding regarding the connection between student testing, student achievement and curriculum development
- Strengthened partnerships between district and community partners who assist in disseminating information and providing training locations

STRATEGY 6

We will use all assessment data to drive academically rigorous instruction, Pre-K-12, to improve the performance of every student.

RESULTS STATEMENT 6.3

Develop a data warehouse system that allows for the collection of individual student assessment and other pertinent data points (i.e. absenteeism, mobility, number of elementary schools attended, services provided, etc.) that can be accessed by teachers, administrators and staff for the purpose of making informed academic program decisions.

ACTION PLAN

- 6.3.1 Identify all data sources currently available to the district and the format that the data is presented (e.g., electronic and hard copy)
- 6.3.2 Review current District software programs, which house all types of student data, to assess capabilities and capacity
- 6.3.3 Determine specific district data needs based on Student Performance Standards outlined in the District's Strategic Direction
- 6.3.4 Identify data points that should be included in the data warehouse
- 6.3.5 Compile information on current internal and commercial software, as well as systems used in other school districts, that collect and assess student performance
- 6.3.6 Determine which software program or data system would best meet district needs, including scope of information and ability for systems to interface with current district software programs and cost analysis.
- 6.3.7 Evaluate implementation costs, including software, training costs, upgrade costs, maintenance costs, consulting costs, at a minimum
- 6.3.8 Identify and hire staff for various phases of implementation/maintenance and on-going database management, based on an assessment of their current skill level, expected skill level, and knowledge of existing systems.
- 6.3.10 Develop time line for implementation in consultation with staff and/or vendor(s)
- 6.3.11 Input data into data warehouse on a timely and consistent bases
- 6.3.12 Determine training needs for staff including Administrators, Teachers, Teaching Assistants, and support staff
- 6.3.13 Develop, pilot, modify and produce a training model to enable staff to use data to increase student achievement.

- 6.3.14 Create an evaluation tool to be administered following rollout of data warehouse.
- 6.3.15 Determine base line data points for comparison and evaluation of data warehouse effectiveness.
- 6.3.16 Train all staff.
- 6.3.17 Implement data warehouse program.
- 6.3.18 Gather and analyze results from evaluation tool as compared to base line data.
- 6.3.19 Evaluate data warehouse program to determine: usage; utility in informing curriculum development and modification of instruction; and program's ability to assist meeting student performance standards
- 6.3.20 Adjust data needs as necessary

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time to define project and develop job descriptions for new staff
3 staff members 80 hours totaling 240 hours
- Time to assist new staff in collecting data sources from district offices
5 staff members 40 hours totaling 200 hours
- Costs associated with purchase of additional software
\$50,000-\$100,000
- Project Coordinator salary and benefits - \$120,000
- Computer programmer salary and benefits- \$77,500

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Improved access to student data for all staff
- Greater availability of information to inform decisions to make curriculum and instruction adjustments
- Greater access to data for Counselors and Teachers for placement of students transitioning from Elementary to Middle School and Middle School to High School
- Improve student performance, 20% increase in the number of students reaching Level 3 on grades 3-8 ELA and Math
- 15% increase in number of students meeting graduation requirements

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Staff resentment of additional duties associated with learning a new software program
- Increase responsibility for oversight by the technology department
- Need for increase skill set by all staff to interpret all data
- Increase need for additional professional development on all levels for staff

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Increase in teacher knowledge of student performance
- Increased confidence by staff that the decisions are being made based on specific data
- Improved parent perspective that academic decisions are based on solid data
- Increase in staff knowledge of student data and information

STRATEGY 6

We will use all assessment data to drive academically rigorous instruction, Pre-K-12, to improve the performance of every student.

Results Statement 6.4

Develop a program evaluation tool (template) that can be applied to existing programs that would assist in establishing programmatic benchmarks that determine the success of the program. This tool must use both student and program expense data to help inform decision making for future programming.

ACTION PLAN

6.4.1 Review the overall district mission to identify key goals to be accomplished by district programs (i.e. student performance, closing achievement gap, parental and community involvement)

6.4.2 Define the different types of programs offered by the district to include grant funded, general fund, community/district initiatives etc.

6.4.3 Identify the programs that will be evaluated with this tool

6.4.4 Collect, assess, review and evaluate tools utilized currently to evaluate programs

6.4.5 Identify the key criteria currently being used in these evaluation tools, including both qualitative and quantitative measures

6.4.6 Evaluate whether these measures and tools align with the key district goals

6.4.7 Modify and consolidate existing program evaluation tools to conform to a district wide evaluation tool.

6.4.8 Develop guidelines for the purpose of evaluating programs. The guidelines should reflect the criteria outlined in the Student Performance Standards in the Strategic Direction.

6.4.9 Identify the standard criteria to be included in the program evaluation guidelines (i.e. demographics, student current and past performance, costs, student/teacher ratio, training needs, identified resources, budget/actual comparative information)

6.4.10 Develop a standard format (template)

6.4.11 Provide overview training for template utilization

COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION

TANGIBLE COSTS

- Time for a review of the all programs offered in the district that address the key goals outlined
3 Staff members 40 hours totaling 120 hours
- Team work to define District program types
3 Staff members 10 hours totaling 30 hours
- Team work to identify evaluation instruments and programs that will be evaluated
3 Staff members 20 hours totaling 60 hours
- Team work to develop guidelines that reflect Student Performance Standards
3 Staff members 20 hours totaling 60 hours
- Team work to develop district tool for evaluation
3 Staff members 40 hours totaling 120 hours
- District Program Evaluator salary and benefits \$77,000

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- A complete list of all programs and their types would be completed
- All programs that address achievement would be identified
- A standard instrument would be developed that could be used with criteria
- Budget decisions would be based on quantifiable data

INTANGIBLE COSTS

- Staff members would have to do a lot of the leg work to collect information and this could take them away from their regular work
- Increase need for training

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Better decision making based on sound criteria
- Consistency of required data for evaluation of programs
- More accountability for staff who are project coordinators

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/cmsmad/esimple/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