

**INTERIM REPORT OF THE DISTRICT GOALS 2016-2017  
FEBRUARY 2017**

**District Goals**

- 1. To implement the Union Middle School, Pierrepont Upper Elementary School, Pre – K3, Pre – K4, ABA Pre K and Middle School MD Program, and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of each. The evaluations will assess curriculum, school culture, and student growth utilizing formal and informal evaluations and district-developed rubrics.**

The district has successfully implemented the programs and the schedules included in this goal. Data was gathered based on over 300 formal observations and over 1800 “classroom walk-throughs” completed by the superintendent, administrators, and supervisors. Surveys were distributed to and completed by students, teachers/staff, and parents. Formal and informal meetings took place with parents, students and teachers. The forum for these meetings include the Superintendent’s Coffee Hour, the Superintendent’s Roundtable, PT Council meetings, building level PTA meetings, School Improvement Panel (ScIP) meetings, faculty, staff department and grade level meetings and administrators meeting with student leaders. A summary of data and observed evidence is listed below. Full surveys, meeting notes, and observation logs are on file in the Office of the Superintendent and/or school buildings.

Evaluation and Effectiveness of Programs

**Union Middle School**

- Makerspace - The media center is home to a “makerspace.” This area allows students to take control of their own learning and provides a physical laboratory for inquiry and project-based learning. Students work at various stations from a Take-Apart Tech Station, or “breaker space,” where computers are provided and designated for students specifically to disassemble, to investigate, and rebuild, to developing a “little bits bar” where students have the opportunity to use modular electronics to invent their own creations.
- Zspace – The Z–Space Lab in the media center allows students to conduct virtual experiments that lead to more advanced learning than would ever be possible in a typical classroom.
- Over 20 plus electives have been created, including Architecture, Coding, Robotics, Amusement Parks and Bridges and the History of the Broadway Musical. Students have a myriad of choices, which allows them to explore, discover and identify an interest.
- Robotics Team - The STEAM Team at UMS recently placed first out of thirty-two teams in a Robotics competition at North Brunswick and third in the state competition. They accrued enough points to be ranked 77 in the world. The STEAM Team also placed first in the South Bergen Drone and Bridge Building Competitions.
- Clubs - ten clubs including Newspaper Club, Odyssey of the Mind, STEAM Club, and Intramurals, allow students to work collaboratively and be actively engaged in their own learning process.

- A 56-minute rotating block schedule was introduced that allows for more academic classes including honor level courses. The increased amount of time has led to more inquiry and project-based learning and student initiative.
- The “4Cs”—Creativity, Communication, Critical Thinking and Collaboration—has the driving force in lesson plans.
- Discipline referrals have trended down. Last year there were 17 in semester one. This year there are 10.
- Suspensions (In-School and Out of School) are also trending down. Last year there were 11 and this year there are 7.
- HIBS have dropped from five to one for the same reporting period.
- Incidents reported to the state on Violence and Vandalism Report have declined from seven to one.
- Late arrivals have nearly doubled. The administration is looking into the code of conduct (currently students are allowed eight late arrivals before there is a consequence, the High School allows four), intervention by a counselor for frequently tardy students, and family counseling.
- Total absences have declined by 258 for the same time (September through January) last year.

#### **Pierrepoint Upper Elementary School**

- There are 16 co-curricular activities for students. Offerings include Band, Chorus, STEM club, Art Club, Book Club, and Service Club.
  - 98 fourth graders (44%) are participating in at least one club.
  - 95 fifth graders (47 %) are participating in at least one club.
  - 100 sixth graders (48%) are participating in at least one club
  - Band has 190 students participating
  - Chorus has 150 students participating
  - STEM club has 90 students participating.
- New cycle classes include STEM, Digital Arts, Computer Technology, and Spanish. Parents are invited to attend STEM and Digital Arts Showcases each quarter.
- The new schedule has allowed for increased student support through the RTI program. There is one math and one English Language Arts specialist assigned to each grade level for push-in and pullout interventions.
- The new schedule and realignment allows for common planning time for all grade level teachers.
- The new schedule increased the math block for sixth graders from 42 minutes to 90 minutes.
- The new schedule also allowed for an “open period” providing teachers the opportunity to work with their students on independent projects, academic interventions, or independent projects. A survey returned from 52 teachers indicate that independent reading, math and LAL interventions, new technology, individualize tutoring, character education, and make-up work dominate the period.
- On a scale of 1(low) to 5 (high) teachers rated the new schedule. Their comments in the survey were reviewed by the administration and discussed with faculty and/or ScIP.

- 17 rated it a 5.
- 13 rated it a 4
- 9 rated it a 3
- There were no 2 or 1 ratings.
- Student surveys were completed regarding cycle courses. Students were asked to rate and discuss what challenged them, what they enjoyed, what advice they would give a student taking the class, and to rate themselves on their growth and comprehension. Results from the surveys in STEM (307 responses) Spanish (295 responses) and computer classes (274 responses) will help teachers review and revise curriculum and projects. The survey is distributed each quarter.

### **Pre-School (Pre-K 3, Pre-K 4 and ABA Pre-K)**

- All sections are fully enrolled.
- The superintendent, administrators, supervisors, and teachers have visited Pre-K programs in Garfield, Hawthorne, Edison, and Upper Saddle River to assist in the development of the program. These visits have been on-going throughout the year.
- The District has initiated a consortium with other districts in the area that have programs.
- *The Creative Curriculum* is utilized in all three programs. The program includes group learning, individual learning, gross motor, and fine motor skills.
- In the ABA class, goals and objectives are aligned with The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skill (ABLLS)
- Surveys were distributed to parents and teachers.
- In the parent survey, with 1 being low and 5 being high, the parents replied as follows
  - 89% responded a 4 or higher when asked about the variety of activities/experiences to promote overall growth.
  - 89% Responded a 4 or higher when asked about academic program provided.
  - 79% responded a 4 or higher when asked about communication between school and home.
  - 94% responded a 4 or higher when asked about the overall experience in preschool.
  - 92% responded a 4 or higher when asked if they would recommend the program.
  - 80% responded a 4 or higher when asked about service provided through special education service providers.
- Teachers indicated:
  - Satisfaction with the curriculum
  - Goals and objectives from the IEP are easily infused into the curriculum
  - Service providers effectively communicate with the teachers

### **Multiply Disabled Class (Grade 7-8 Grade at Union School)**

- Five students are in the class. All were previously out - of – district.

- Core subjects are taken in the MD class.
- Electives and Physical Education are taken in general education classes.
- Goals, objectives, and behavior modification plans are in IEPs and infused into the curriculum.
- Specialized reading and math programs are used.
- Life skills are taught and practiced.
  - Students assist in main office.
  - Students operate a class store.
  - Students learn housekeeping chores and tasks.
  - Students learn self-care and personal safety.
- Data is logged daily by the teacher and the teacher assistants to monitor academic and behavior progress.
- Students participate in school activities such as Service Club and Choir.

### **Other New Programs**

#### **K Center**

- Hands on science labs with a science specialist.
- Spanish Instruction with a Spanish teacher.

#### **Lincoln School and Washington School**

- Lincoln Woods opened as a “living” science lab.
- Pre-School in each building
- Spanish Instruction with a Spanish teacher.

#### **Rutherford High School**

- There has been a successful transition to the new modified block schedule. In meetings and survey with students and staff, the feedback has been extremely positive. The schedule allows for more instructional time increasing period lengths from 42 to 56 minutes.
- The traditional final exam schedule has been modified. Quarterly benchmarks have been implemented at the conclusion of each marking period replacing one final exam at the end of the semester or school year. The feedback from students has been positive.
- Teachers responded to a survey about the new schedule as follows:
  - 95% felt the longer periods enable project based learning
  - 65 % felt they had more common planning time.
  - 68 % felt that not seeing their classes every day did not have a negative impact.
  - 66% felt that meeting classes four times in a five-day cycle had a positive impact.
  - 58% of teachers are using the lunch block to meet with students in either academic review or co-curricular activities.

### **Response to Intervention**

- On - line referral and intervention forms are being used and teachers report better efficiency in the program

- There are more frequent RTI team meetings.
- The dedicated RTI teachers and the use of Title One instructors have aided student progress.
- Universal screening has identified Tier 2 and Tier 3 students earlier in the academic year.

### **Pathways to Success**

- A total of two students have been serviced.
- A by-product of the program, the restructuring of the Student Assistance Counselors' role, may be a factor in fewer discipline referrals and out of district placements.

#### **2. In the third year of the Blended Curriculum Initiatives, to infuse technology based instruction as a tool in grades K-12. The flipped classroom, project – based instruction, interdisciplinary units of study and thematic units of study will be infused throughout the curriculum.**

- In the elementary grades each grade level has completed thematic units that include all the major academic areas. There are planning templates for each unit. Pullout classes (music, physical education) are included.
- In a survey conducted at Pierrepont School, 100% of the teachers have used Goggle classroom (G Suite) this year for technology-based instruction.
- Lesson plans, observations, and walkthroughs support that percentage is not an anomaly, but rather the norm District wide.
- The High School has documented 458 flipped classroom lessons, 391 project based assessments, and 33 interdisciplinary projects

#### **3. To develop a parent information video series addressing curriculum, programs and school policies and procedures.**

- A goal was set of four parent information videos per school by June.
- As of February 17,2017
  - K Center—5 videos
  - Lincoln School – 6 videos
  - Washington School- 5 videos
  - Pierrepont School – 5 videos
  - Union School—5 videos
  - High School – 6 videos
- Video topics differ from school to school but focus on math, reading, technology, guidance services, and wellness. The goal is to help the parents be able to help their children with homework, school activities, and stress.

Significant progress has also been made on the Board Goals.

### **Board Goals**

#### **1. To transition the District's Policy manual from New Jersey School Boards Association to Strauss Esmay Associates.**

- Meetings with the administrators, Policy Committee Chairman Mr. Chu, and representatives from Strauss Esmay took place in August.
- Strauss Esmay completed a first draft of the policy manual in October.
- The draft was reviewed and revised by administrators, supervisors, and appropriate school personnel.
- The revisions were sent to Strauss Esmay in February.
- A second draft is expected to be completed and returned to District in March.
- The administration and the Board Policy Committee will review the draft.
- It is expected that the new manual will be presented to the Board for approval in June.

#### **2. To identify and implement strategies to improve communication and visibility throughout the community.**

- The Board has revised its meeting format to allow for more discussion and public involvement.
- Board members attended the Superintendent's Coffee Hour and Superintendent's Roundtable.

#### **3. To develop with the administrators and the Long Term Strategic Planning Committee a five year fiscal plan for the continuation and expansion of programs.**

- In September, the Board appointed staff, parents, a student and a trustee to serve on the LTSP Committee.
- The committee has met three times with two more meetings scheduled.
- The committee has surveyed the school community and invited community leaders to meetings in order to gather information.
- Dr. Velechko, the chair of the committee, is scheduled to make a presentation to the Board in May.