

## **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 MEMBERS**

#### Co-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

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*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.*

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### **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

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### **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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](http://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.

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### **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**

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### **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.

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### **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 8<sup>th</sup> 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