



Dr. William H. Johnson
SED Monitor
185 Peninsula Blvd.
Hempstead, NY 11550

March 1, 2021

Dr. Betty A. Rosa
Commissioner NYS Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234

Dear Commissioner Rosa:

In Accordance with Chapter 19 of the Laws of 2020, I am submitting for your review and comment, the Semi-annual Reports of the State Monitor for the Hempstead Public Schools.

The attached academic and financial reports cover the time period of July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. They summarize the District's actions in response to my recommendations for improvement and where needed and appropriate my response.

I know this is a draft and therefore look forward to discussing the reports with both you and NYSED staff.

Thank you for your continued support of the Monitors and the Hempstead Public Schools.

Sincerely,

William H. Johnson

William H. Johnson, Ed.D.

/WJ

Enclosures

c: Dr. Kimberly Young-Wilkins
Mr. Ira Schwartz
Mr. LaMont Johnson, President Hempstead BOE
Ms. Regina Armstrong, Interim Superintendent of Schools

Hempstead Public Schools
Mid-Year Report

William H. Johnson EdD

New York State Monitor

March 1, 2021

**Mid-Year Monitor's Academic & Fiscal Report for the
Hempstead Public Schools
July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020**

The work of the monitor began on July 1, 2020. Most of the time during the Fall was spent on gathering information, interviewing staff and community members and drafting a report that was reviewed and approved by the Board of Education in November and December. However, during the entire time that information was being gathered discussions were underway with the Superintendent's leadership team about the evolving content of the report and its recommendations. Consequently, work by the district on the implementation of the recommendations did not commence on or about December 1 but actually began much earlier as the school year unfolded. Consequently, the work reported by the District in many cases began long before the report was completed.

The State Legislature has viewed the Hempstead schools as a District with serious academic and fiscal problems. One remedy was to create the position of State Monitor which it did with provisions in Chapter 19 of the laws of 2020. The Monitor's primary responsibility is to provide oversight, guidance and technical assistance related to the fiscal and educational policies, practices, programs and decisions of the District, Board of Education and Superintendent. There continue to be both academic and fiscal challenges that need to be addressed. Academically the overarching issues are for the most part related to the underperformance of students in measures of reading and math. This is connected to the overarching fiscal issue of being underfunded. The money expended on Charter school tuition has been closely correlated to the shrinking of resources needed to provide a full range of instructional opportunities to all its students. A series of findings and recommendations were developed to remedy the problems in this and the following school years.

Process

The process used in developing this mid-year update is essentially the same as the process used in developing the original report presented to the Commissioner of Education in November of this school year. I have continued the review of data and documents related to the recommendations and have continued meeting with staff, legislators and community groups to follow the work being done to

Overview of Operational Status of the School District

Academic Plan

In general, the District administrative and leadership team have come to understand the role of the monitor and the need for change. At both the District and the building level there have been significant changes that reflect the fact that the district needed to embrace and respond to the many recommendations contained in the initial report. There is clearly an openness among the leaders in the district to work with the monitor in formulating strategies for bringing about the changes needed to improve student performance.

The use of data and the extensive staff development to implement the recommendations has demonstrated the willingness to hear from others how they may restructure and revise current practices to improve the outcomes for their students.

Many of the governance issues continue. The Board of education is deeply divided. Willingness to change is coming more slowly to the Board. However, that being said, the Board did put together an audit committee which has commenced its schedule of meetings. The Board also passed a conflict of interest and a purchasing policy.

While the spirit of change is encouraging, the work to be done is significant. The consistent use of standardized testing, the instruction of ELL's, the reconstructing of special education services to be more inclusive and the creative response to declining resources are among the many tasks that need to be addressed during this and subsequent school years.

Fiscal

The overall work of the district in developing and implementing efficient and effective practices in the management of its budget and resources has been very encouraging. As in the area of academics the willingness to embrace the work of the monitor and then to work with the monitor on effectuating change in its business practices has opened the door to the changes needed to insure that the resources are directed appropriately for the overall improvement of student performance.

Governance as mentioned above is a problem. The business office is not fully staffed and consequently continues to rely on consulting firms to assist in a portion of its operation. The staffing of the business office is a concern of some Board members, but they also register concern over the use of consultants. Even though more slowly than desirable, the Board is changing. It recently approved the interim Superintendent's recommendation to fill, for the balance of this year, the position of Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. The Board has also, as mentioned above commenced the work of the audit committee.

The spending plan for this current school year is being carefully monitored by the Assistant Superintendent for Business and the District treasurer and routinely discuss with the monitor projections through the end of June. The Board is also kept abreast of expenditures and cash flow in reports monthly by the treasurer.

The staff of the business office and the monitor meet since early January to work on both the revenue and expenditures proposed for next year. The most problematic revenue and expenditure issue is the money being spent on Charter school tuition and the small amount of aid attached to that expense. Despite the problems the District is committed to developing a balanced budget for the voters to consider in May.

Specific Findings and Recommendations

Organization of the District Response

The District response to the recommendations of the monitors report is put together in a block format arranged in five columns. The heading for the columns from left to right are Recommendations, Status, District Action(s), evidence of Action and Other Information. Columns 1,3,4 and five need no additional information to be understood. Column 2, Status requires some explanation. One of four colors appear for each recommendation. Blue means that the implementation is completed. Green means that the district is on schedule to implement this recommendation. Yellow means that work has started but is behind schedule. Red means that the District has not begun to implement this recommendation. And finally, NA (not applicable) means that the recommendation was not expected to be in implementation status during this reporting period.

Hempstead Union Free School District
 185 Peninsula Blvd Hempstead, New York 11550

Ms. Regina Armstrong – Interim Superintendent

Dr. William Johnson – SED Monitor

PROGRESS BENCHMARKS – February 15, 2021

Academic Action Plan

Blue = Implementation completed; The school district has satisfactorily completed this activity

Green = The district is on schedule to implement this recommendation.

Yellow = Implementation begun but behind schedule: The district has begun to implement the recommendation, but implementation is behind schedule.

Red = Implementation not yet begun: The district has not yet begun to implement this recommendation.

Not Applicable: The recommendation was not expected to be in implementation status during the period of the report.

Recommendation	Status ¹	District Action(s)	Evidence of Action	Other Information
Teaching and Learning: Elementary Schools				
The District continue its commitment to having each building become an IB school by the end of next year.	GREEN	The District has hired a Coordinator to oversee the implementation of Primary Years Program (PYP). Each building has identified an IB Coach to work with teachers on the implementation of IB principles and concepts, as wells to guide them through the creation of Units of	Six out of seven elementary schools have submitted their application for authorization. One school, Prospect has authorization visit dates of 3/22 and 3/23.	

			Inquiry and Program of Inquiry.	Elementary schools use Toddle to store POIs and UOIs. Middle School uses Atlas. Professional Development and PLCs are centered around implementation of IB in all schools.	
Staff development efforts focus on the uniform implementation of the many programs used to meet the standards.		GREEN	All PD efforts in the District are centered around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IB • New Generational Standards • Virtual Learning • Addressing components of the Receivership Plans 	PD is provided to staff 11 Wednesdays per year, as well as 2 half days. Two additional half days have been added to the calendar to address the teaching and learning needs across the District. PD is also given based on the needs of the individual staff member.	
Iready tests in reading and math be administered the first and last quarter of this school year to provide a means for measuring growth during the year;		GREEN	Students in grades K – 6 were administered the IReady in September/early October and in January. All students grades K – 8 will take the end of year IREADY assessment in June to analyze growth and determine summer school	Principals provided the SED Monitor the results of the beginning of year assessments. The assessment results will continue to be shared with the Monitor.	

			<p>learning needs. IReady data has been used to determine RTI levels of students and to create intervention plans to address students' achievement gaps toward meeting standards. Teachers also use the IReady progress monitoring tool to track students' progress throughout the year.</p>		
Teaching and Learning: Middle School					
<p>The District carefully review the data for sixth grade students, some of whom are in the elementary schools and some of whom are in the Middle School to determine if there are differences in the performance of students related to the grade configuration of the school the student attends. The District should then use the data to consider an appropriate configuration for the sixth grade.</p>		GREEN	<p>In reviewing the IREADY data and the data from the 2018-19 Math/ELA grade 6 assessment, it was noted that the students who attended grade 6 in the elementary school did slightly better on the assessment than students who attended grade 6 in the middle school. As a result, the District has decided to remove all grade 6 students from the middle school and revert to a self-contained model starting in 2021-22.</p>	<p>A Resolution will be placed before the Board of Education at its Feb.'s regular Board meeting to change the schools' grade configuration as follows starting 2021-22 SY: ABGS Middle School – grades 7-8, only. Front Street – grades 5 and 6; D. Paterson School and Joseph A. McNeil Schools – grades 1 – 6.</p>	

<p>To ensure consistency of instruction during the pandemic teachers and students should be routinely taught how to effectively use each device and all the software used to support instruction.</p>		<p>GREEN</p>	<p>The District has taken on the leadership ensuring all teachers receive training on how to use the technology needed (both hardware and software) to support a virtual learning environment. Teachers are responsible for students use of devices; however, any parent experiencing issues with how to use and access platforms have been aided either by the Tech Depart, a building administrator, or the Tech Coach in each building.</p>	<p>The District since March of 2020 has had ongoing training with staff on how to utilize the various platforms, inclusive of Learning Management System. Teachers have received training on Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Schoology, Google Classroom, creating of teacher page, etc. Teachers will also start receiving training on how to effectively utilize their Smartboards. The District has also placed at least one Tech Coach in every school to provide technical support and training for staff/parents as needed.</p>	
<p>The school should complete this school year the process to become a registered and accredited IB school.</p>		<p>GREEN</p>	<p>ABGS Middle School has a Coordinator of IB MYP to oversee the implementation and training of teachers in transforming teaching and learning as prescribed by IB. Currently, the Coordinator</p>	<p>All teachers and administrators have received ongoing professional development in the area of IB. Administrators</p>	

			and the IB Committee are completing the application process. Within the next two weeks, the application will be ready for submission.	conduct walkthroughs to capture evidence of teachers' change in practice aligned with IB. Grade 8 students have been assigned their end of year required Community Project. All teachers have access to Atlas where they store their Units of Inquiry and Programs of Inquiry aligned to Next Generational Standards. School's website is being updated to denote the current IB practices of the school/	
The performance of students needs to improve significantly. The Iready tests in reading and math should be offered in the first quarter of this school year to gather baseline data on each student. All teachers should be conversant in the data to assist them in the language arts component of every subject.		YELLOW	Unfortunately, students did not receive the IReady assessment in the beginning of the school year. This will be corrected for 2021-22. The school experienced some challenges in this area, but is being addressed to ensure the assessment will be administered in September of 2021 to collect the necessary baseline data. Students in the middle	Training for staff on how to effectively administer the IReady assessment, as well as how to use the results to drive instruction is now taking place. Data is being analyzed to determine learning loss and placement in extended day classes.	

			<p>school grades 6 – 8 were administered IReady in December/January. However, All students grades 6 – 8 will take the end of year IREADY assessment in June to analyze growth and determine summer school program.</p>		
<p>Staff development needs to focus on student engagement and assessment. Teachers need to be able to generate and interpret student performance data that enables them to routinely modify and improve instruction online and in the classroom.</p>		<p>GREEN</p>	<p>In the past, teachers were provided with student data from 3-8 assessments to analyze and plan for instruction. We are now using data from IReady assessments and math/science Regents tests to determine the academic needs of students. One area of concentration for professional development for staff has focused on data-driven standards-based instruction. Teachers are also working together and with their Instructional Coaches to use the data to create their intervention plans for students. Students who are experiencing gaps in learning are placed on the Accellus platform in their</p>	<p>School's leadership team meet weekly to determine the staff's professional development needs. Staff received training from either a content area Instructional Coach or from an outside expert to provide support in data analysis and how to use it to modify lessons to meet the needs of students.</p>	

			<p>area of need. Students have also been invited to attend after school and Saturday AIS programs. Training for staff on how to effectively administer the IReady assessment, as well as how to use the results to drive instruction is now taking place. Data is being analyzed to determine learning loss and placement in extended day classes.</p>		
<p>A computing device should be in the hands of every student. Students and teachers need to be trained to effectively use all software designed to provide and support the instructional program.</p>		<p>GREEN</p>	<p>Although the District has purchased a device and internet access for all students in need, not all parents/guardians have signed out a device for their child. Students in the middle school receive a laptop that is fully loaded with the software needed for learning.</p>	<p>District purchased laptops for all middle school students. Devices were received by the District in late October, early November 2020. Parents were contacted to pick up sign out a device for their child. District has created a Hotline to assist parents with use of device and to request a device/internet access. Hotline has been placed on the District's website.</p>	

<p>Although during this era of remote and hybrid learning it is difficult to accurately measure student attendance, attendance needs to be well above 90% on every day of the school year.</p>		<p>GREEN</p>	<p>The middle school's guidance and attendance departments meet weekly to review student attendance. The departments have been reaching out to parents of students who are not attending school on a regular bases. Teachers are also making parent contacts to discuss with them their child's attendance in school. Although efforts are being made in this area, it is a work in progress to hit the 90% target.</p>	<p>Principal conducts weekly meetings with key staff members in this area. Staff is tracking students' attendance to attempt to hit the 90% daily attendance. Community School partners are working with parents to offer attendance incentives.</p>	
<p>The sixth-grade problem needs to be resolved.</p>		<p>GREEN</p>	<p>Superintendent is making a recommendation to the Board of Education to remove all grade 6 students from the middle school and revert to a self-contained model starting in 2021-22. Sixth grade students will be educated in three elementary schools across the District with Front Street holding the majority of the students. Current 5th grade students from Barack Obama, Front, Jackson Annex and Jackson Main Schools will attend Front</p>	<p>A Resolution will be placed before the Board of Education at its Feb.'s regular Board meeting to change the identified schools' grade configuration as follows starting 2021-22 SY: ABGS Middle School – grades 7-8, only. Front Street – grades 5 and 6; D. Paterson School and Joseph A. McNeil Schools – grades 1 – 6.</p>	

			Street Elementary School for grade 6. David Paterson and Joseph McNeil Elementary Schools will maintain their 5 th grade in their building as grade 6 students in 2021-22.		
Teaching and Learning: High School					
The Regents graduation rate needs to continue incremental growth even though achieving in the mid-seventies is a laudable change.		GREEN	High School leadership team continue to monitor the Regents graduation rate. Although, the high school has demonstrated an increase in the number of students receiving Regents diplomas and Regents Diplomas with Distinction has slightly increase each year, the percentage of students meeting this goal has fallen short of the school's trget.	To assist the high school in increasing the number of students graduating in 4-years with a Regent diploma, we are implementing Regents classes in Math and Science at the middle school level. The schools have held articulation meetings to align curriculum and train teachers on how to successfully prepare students for Regents. Students at both the middle and high school are provided with AIS services to support their academic needs	

				and increase their chances on passing the Regents classes.	
Student schedules that reflect a commitment to education beyond high school need to include courses leading to a Regents with Advanced Designation.		GREEN	The District has increased the number of students being able to matriculate to take Algebra II, by increasing the number of 8 th grade students matriculating to the high school having passed Algebra I and a Science Regents (Earth Science/Living Environment).	More than 85% of the current 8 th students are enrolled in Algebra I and a Regents Science. There is also a Cohort of 8 th grade students enrolled in US History and Government. If successful, the majority of incoming 9 th grade students, Cohort 2021 could enter high school with 2-3 high school credits and Regents exams, ensuring they ability to earn an advanced Regents Designation.	
Enrollment in AP classes should continue to grow as should the options available to students. (Since the middle and elementary schools have opted to participate in IB, a study should be conducted to determine whether the High School should also pursue IB accreditation.)		GREEN	The District is confident that the more opportunity it provides for students in the middle school to take Regents classes will increase the number of students being able to participate in AP classes once they enter 9 th grade.	The District will work with the high school to see the feasibility of implementing IB Diploma Program. However, currently students are participating in the Syracuse University	

			<p>The District has also increased the number of AP courses offered to high school students. The District has not actively pursued implementing the IB Diploma Program at the high school level.</p>	<p>Project Advance Program. We have also implemented the Smart Scholars Program which students have been begun to enroll in our early high school college program in partnership with York College.</p>	
<p>100% of high school students should have access to a school supplied device.</p>		<p>GREEN</p>	<p>Although the District has purchased a device and internet access for all students in need, not all parents/guardians have signed out a device for their child. Students in the middle school receive a laptop that is fully loaded with the software needed for learning.</p>	<p>District purchased laptops for all students in grades 9 – 12. Parents continue to pick up devices daily. District has created a Hotline to assist parents with use of device and to request a device/internet access. Hotline has been placed on the District's website.</p>	
<p>Study carefully the success of students leaving for college, looking carefully at their completion rates.</p>		<p>GREEN</p>	<p>Under Receivership, the high school is required to track students' progress toward meeting the necessary requirements to graduate high school in four years. The high school has also maintained records of the number of scholarship</p>	<p>The high school graduation rate has increase to 78.3% as of the June/August of 2020.</p>	

			students have earned each year. The high school also maintains records of the college and/or postgraduate plans of all graduating students.		
Monitor carefully the participation of students in all grant programs and study the connection to success on Regents and AP coursework.		RED	Although the high school has experienced an increase in the graduation rate and the number of students graduating with Regents diplomas and completion of AP coursework, we have not directly connected the success to participation in grant funded programs.	The District will put in place a monitoring tool to see if there is a correlation between students' participation in grant funded program and their success on Regents and AP exams.	
Teaching and Learning: Special Education					
Develop plans for the appropriate return of some of the students in out of district placements and where appropriate send fewer students out of district.		GREEN	Throughout the school year the progress of students in out of district placements are monitored to see which students may be appropriate in an in-district program. The Special Education Office is evaluating the type of services the District must replicate to return students to District.	Weekly meeting are held with the compliance officers to examine how the district can better meet the needs of students in out of district placements. The SPED Office is working along with the Superintendent of Schools to locate classroom space within the District that can support the initiative to return	

				students to District. With the opening of Rhodes, the SPED Office should be able to return up to 30 students to District without comprising their required services.	
Where appropriate place fewer students in more restrictive environments.		GREEN	We currently have integrated co-teaching classes grades k-12. In our elementary schools we have two buildings that currently have ICT grades 1-6. We are also monitoring in district students who are currently in a self-contained program to see if any of them would be appropriate in a less restrictive placement such as resource room, inclusion, or related services only.	For the 2021-2022 school year the district will be expanding the ICT program to a third elementary school grades K-5 (Rhodes).	
Lower the proportion of student of color in special education.		GREEN	We are in the process of working with Regional Partnership and Family and Community Engagement centers to roll-out PDs to support teachers on ways to use data to informed instruction and address students' academic, instructional, and behavioral	Monies have been allocated in the IDEA grants for 2020-21 that will allow the District to take a proactive measure in this area. The District will invest and train staff in the LIONS GATES program. Program is	

			needs to reduce referrals to special education which in turn reduces the number of students being classified.	geared to assess and address students' social emotional behavior. It develops students' character, it has a parent component, and helps teachers to become more culturally aware to meet the needs of the diverse learner.	
Teaching and Learning: ENL/BIL					
Carefully examine the efficacy of the bilingual program to determine reasons for the continued low performance of the ELL students on all State measures of ELA and math		YELLOW	Although building principals have analyzed student data on all assessments, the District has not begun the work to investigate the root cause of this subgroup's consistent low performance on state exams.	The District will compose a committee to examine the past 5 years of ELL growth on state assessments (3-8 testing, Regents, and NYSESLATs) to determine trends and patterns of errors. The District will use this information to restructure its current programs to ensure more student success and close the academic gap between ELL and other subgroups.	

Increase the time ELL students spend in regular class settings.		GREEN	All ELL students are placed in a general education setting unless they have opted for a bilingual setting.	The District will examine its ELL programs to ensure equity and access for all students.	
Provide staff development opportunities to bilingual class teachers on the effective use of all reading and math tools used in regular classes.		BLUE	All teachers historically within the Hempstead School District receive the same training in the utilization of reading and math tools.	The District will continue its practice to expose all staff to the same professional development to ensure all teachers are trained on best practices.	
	Organizational Structure				
All members of the central office, including the Interim Superintendent, be given contracts that clearly state their terms and conditions of employment.		RED			
Although in the short term the current organizational configuration is working to bring about specific changes in the instructional program, the District needs to determine the degree to which the District would benefit from putting in place a more traditional organizational structure. For example, in most districts the Director of Technology reports to the Assistant Superintendent for		RED			

<p>Curriculum or the Assistant Superintendent for Business. In Hempstead, the Assistant Superintendent for Technology reports directly to the superintendent. In most districts the size of Hempstead, there is a Director of the Arts and a Director of Physical Education. These positions do not exist in Hempstead. Similarly, in most districts the size of Hempstead, the coordination of security, custodians and maintenance is overseen by the Business Office.</p>					
<p>The District needs a superintendent who is permanent. A search should be concluded by the end of this school year.</p>		<p>RED</p>			
	Accountability				
<p>Work with the receiver to ensure that the benchmarks contained in the District Comprehensive Achievement Plan are met.</p>		<p>GREEN</p>	<p>The District will recommend a District Comprehensive Team to review and analyze the goals identified in the DCIP. The team will make recommendation to the Receiver/Superintendent in this area.</p>	<p>The committee members will be recommended on the March's docket.</p>	
<p>Ensure all instructional staff are appropriately evaluated and the recommendations for improvement</p>		<p>GREEN</p>	<p>All staff is evaluated based on terms and conditions as indicated in their CBO.</p>	<p>All administrators participated in a review of the required</p>	

<p>included in the evaluations be monitored for implementation.</p>			<p>Based on COVID19 changes to the school day, the District is still in negotiations with the teachers to modify their APPR plan.</p>	<p>observation/evaluation of staff. Administrators also participated in an annual re-calibration professional development session to enhance their ability to capture evidence of teachers' practice aligned to standards, and assigned proper ratings.</p>	
	<p>Human Capital</p>				
<p>When teachers are hired, it is advisable that an assistant superintendent or the superintendent be involved. This will help to ensure consistency in the characteristics of the professional teaching staff.</p>		<p>GREEN</p>	<p>The Associate Superintendent for Human Resources is responsible for interviewing all recommended candidates prior to presenting to the BOE for approval.</p>	<p>HR is in the process of revamping the District hiring process inclusive of onboarding and separation.</p>	
<p>The District needs to conclude negotiations with its teachers during this school year.</p>		<p>GREEN</p>	<p>The District has been actively negotiating with the teachers' unit a new contract. Both sides have presented their asks. Teachers desired salary increase is beyond the District's financial capacity. District and Unit do not agree on terms and conditions.</p>	<p>The District's next negotiation meeting is scheduled for March 2, 2021.</p>	

Parent and Community Engagement					
Schools should conduct virtual online PTA meetings to which parents are invited. Using one or more technologies should increase attendance and participation in meetings.		BLUE	All schools conduct PTO/PTSA meetings, as well as CET meetings virtually. All schools have seen a drastic increase parent participation. All principals have included this as a part of their goals for the school to utilize the various platforms to communicate with parents.	The District will continue to use all available platforms to engage with parents. School currently use: Zoom and Microsoft TEAMS for virtual meetings.	
Technology should be used to disseminate the story of the Hempstead schools. Correspondence and messaging should be routinely shared with parents and the community at large. The District has a public relations firm to whom this should be assigned.		GREEN	The District has contracted with Gotham Group to serve as its Public Relationship Firm.	The District currently uses the following platforms to communicate with parents and community at large: Instagram, Website, Calling Post, and Twitter.	
School Climate and Social/Emotional Learning					
More SEL programs need to be brought into the District at every level of schooling.		GREEN	The District currently uses Newsela from K – 8 to address some of the students' social and emotional needs. The SPED department will be implementing LIONS Quest. This program will target	All schools have at least one Social Worker. All schools from grade 1 – 12 have at least one school psychologist. The District also has a lead person to serve	

			specific students as identified by the classroom teacher with the purpose of character building and avoiding students developing other social issues that may require more intense therapy. The District also uses its Social Workers and School Psychologists to work with classroom teachers to address SEL.	on the BOCES SEL Committee.	
Restorative programs need to be considered to help reduce the number of incidents, thus resulting in fewer suspension hearings. A thorough analysis of the circumstances connected to the reportable incidents should be conducted. Incidents themselves may be avoided by systemic or program changes.		RED			
	Operations				
Even though the District dedicates two full-time staff members to the problems associated with attendance at the secondary level and one to the elementary school, additional measures need to be considered to reduce these numbers. For example, a review		RED			

<p>should be conducted to determine the extent to which community groups can assist families in getting their children to school.</p>					
<p>The Board and administration commence a discussion about the short- and long- term facilities needs of the District prior to the development of next year's budget and include in that discussion the use of the new school and the assignment of sixth grade students.</p>		GREEN	<p>The District's architects held a presentation January 21st to review the assessment of the facilities needs in the District. The presentation spoke about the different options for a Capital Bond project to address the District's facilities.</p>	<p>There is a Resolution on the Board of Education agenda for Feb. 25, to convene a Committee to address the needed work in the District. The goal will be to float a Capital Bond by November of 2021.</p>	
<p>The District conducts an in-depth study of enrollment prior to the discussion about long-term capital plans.</p>		BLUE	<p>District engaged Western Suffolk BOCES to conduct an enrollment study.</p>	<p>The study was completed by the end of June 2020. A copy of the report has been shared with the Monitor.</p>	
<p>The District work with its legislators on a home rule bill that would reduce the limits in the Hempstead school district from 2 and 3 miles to .5 and 1 mile respectively. Expenses for transporting children beyond those limits would now be eligible for State aid.</p>		GREEN	<p>The State Monitor and Superintendent of Schools meet with the local legislatures to discuss the possibility of changing the transportation limits for students. It has also been discussed the need for first year startup funding.</p>	<p>State Monitor and Superintendent meet with the local legislatures bi-weekly. The District will compose letter to present to legislature regarding our need in this area.</p>	

<p>Should the District be successful in implementing Recommendation 1 in this section, the District should put before the voters a proposition for providing transportation to eligible riders.</p>		<p>RED</p>	<p>Movement in this section is contingent upon action in recommendation #1.</p>		
<p>In the short-term, although less than efficient, the current configuration should be retained. In the long-term, how technology is managed should be part of a larger plan to reorganize the District office and reassign responsibilities as a result.</p>		<p>RED</p>			
<p>The relationship between the District and BOCES should be examined carefully to maximize effectiveness, contain cost, and maximize State aid.</p>		<p>RED</p>			
<p>A plan for use of the remaining Smart Bond money should be in place for implementation in the 2021-2022 school year.</p>		<p>YELLOW</p>	<p>Working on the second phase of the Smart Bond monies were temporarily halted due to the pandemic and refocusing on making certain all students had devices and internet access for virtual learning. The Committee is expected to reconvene in March to revamp the spending plan.</p>	<p>District will reconvene the Committee starting in March 2021 with submission by June 30th, 2021.</p>	

<p>Some portion of the remaining Smart Bond money be used to increase the number of cameras and update the technology.</p>		<p>GREEN</p>	<p>The District has already installed new cameras in most school sites using both Smart bond monies and general funds. The rest of the updates needed across the District will be written in to Phase II of the Smart Bond funding.</p>	<p>The District has conducted a needs assessment to determine how many cameras are needed in each school and where to place them. The purchase will be included in the Smart Bond Phase II.</p>	
<p>The security staff levels needs a careful review to ensure that the District and especially the middle and high school are appropriately staffed.</p>		<p>YELLOW</p>	<p>Due to lack of funds and staff cuts, the District does not have adequate staffing to ensure the secondary level schools have sufficient security staff. This will be exacerbated by the District's budget for 2021-22. If the district does not receive adequate revenue to balance its expenses, we will not be able to ensure the safety of students in our secondary schools.</p>	<p>The District's PEL chart evidence the number of security aides that have been laid off over the past two years. We are down to less than half of the force we employed in the 2018-2019 school year.</p>	
<p>Security staff needs to be trained annually on the newest information related to the management of the school environment and their potential role in avoiding reportable incidents and participating in restorative practices.</p>		<p>RED</p>			

It is recommended that the District look carefully at incorporating the suggestions for modification in next year's budget.		NA			
It is recommended that the District broaden its efforts to have more children in the community enroll their children. At this time, fewer than 50% of the District's first graders have attended the preschool program.		RED			

Hempstead Union Free School District
185 Peninsula Blvd Hempstead, New York 11550

Ms. Regina Armstrong – Interim Superintendent

Dr. William Johnson – SED Monitor

PROGRESS BENCHMARKS – February 15, 2021

Financial Action Plan

Blue = Implementation completed; The school district has satisfactorily completed this activity

Green = The district is on schedule to implement this recommendation.

Yellow = Implementation begun but behind schedule: The district has begun to implement the recommendation, but implementation is behind schedule.

Red = Implementation not yet begun: The district has not yet begun to implement this recommendation.

Not Applicable: The recommendation was not expected to be in implantation status during the period of the report.

Recommendation	Status ¹	District Action(s)	Evidence of Action	Other Information
Governance and Leadership				
<p>1. The District shall work with the Legislature and Executive to secure additional aid to compensate for the cost of charter students, to secure additional Foundation Aid, and a home rule bill for reducing the limits for transportation eligibility.</p>	GREEN	<p>The Superintendent and Monitor have been meeting with the local legislatures bi-weekly to discuss the financial needs of the District. The legislatures are working with the Senate of the Education Committee to discuss the District financial assistance around Charter School cost, correction of the foundation aid, and changing the transportation limits.</p>	<p>Bi-weekly Zoom meetings are held with Senator Thomas and Assemblywoman Darling. Dr. Johnson and the Superintendent will construct funding letter to highlight District's needs.</p>	
<p>2. The District shall include in the 2021-22 school budget a plan to fully staff the Business Office.</p>	YELLOW	<p>The ASBO has presented a new table of organization to the BOE inclusive of the positions necessary to fully staff the business office. Adequate funds are preventing the District from fully hiring the needed staff.</p>	<p>Once positions are secured in the budget, the positions will be advertised and interviewed will be held to recommend the most qualified for each position.</p>	

<p>3. A plan will be included in the 2021-22 school budget for having a Board Of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), the New York State School Boards Association, or another qualified entity review and revise for consideration by the Board all policies related to the operation of the Business Office.</p>	<p>GREEN</p>	<p>The BOE has contracted NYSSBA to update BOE policies. This work is done in conjunction with General Counsel.</p>	<p>The BOE has adopted a revised purchasing policy as of January 2021.</p>	
<p>4. During this school year, the Board will select attorneys who have the knowledge and experience necessary to provide a full range of services and will seek to enter into retainer agreements with these attorneys to serve as labor and general counsel, so as to significantly reduce the cost of representation.</p>	<p>GREEN</p>	<p>The Board of Education has approved to continue and retain two different law firms. One serves as legal counsel and the other general counsel.</p>	<p>General counsel was approved on the December's docket and legal counsel was approved on the January 2021 docket for the remainder of the school year.</p>	
<p>5. The Board will try again to reach an agreement with the Teachers' Association and the Civil Service employees.</p>	<p>GREEN</p>	<p>The District continues to actively negotiate with both the HCTA and the HSCSA. Negotiations will continue in March.</p>	<p>Finances are impacting the district's ability to meet the salary increases desired by the units. Although the District is hopeful to</p>	

			settle the HSCSA contract by the end of March. The district is not certain as to when the teachers' contract will be settled.	
6. Financial reports will continue to be sent monthly for the Board's review and acceptance.	BLUE	District Clerk provides this information to the BOE monthly.	All financial documents are delivered to the five trustees home or via email.	
7. The Audit Committee will be formed and meet during this fiscal year.	GREEN	The Audit Committee has been formed and are meeting every other month via Zoom. The BOE voted on the community members to serve on the team. The chairperson of the audit committee is the BOE President.	A meeting schedule for the Audit Committee was created by the ASBO and shared with all members of the committee.	
8. Expenditures will not exceed the budget during this fiscal year unless an emergency budget adjustment is authorized in advance by the Board.				
9. District should during this fiscal year create an Educational Foundation.	RED	There has been no movement in this area, other than the BOE desire to start up a foundation and General Counsel looking into the legalities and perimeters for to take on this initiative.		
Governance and Programmatic Decision-making				

<p>10. Until a new Superintendent begins his or her tenure, positions as currently defined should remain intact since they are connected to positive changes underway within the District. In July 2021, when a permanent Superintendent is scheduled to begin, one of the Superintendent's first assignments should be the possible reorganization and reassignment of responsibilities in the Central office.</p>	<p>GREEN</p>	<p>The BOE has not made any adjustments with the current makeup of A/O. The BOE recently approved the Superintendent's recommendation to hire an acting assistant superintendent for curriculum and office.</p>	<p>No changes have been made to the current structure for central administration.</p>	
<p>11. By January 15, 2021, when the new legislative session begins, the District will have developed a strategic plan for sharing the cost of charter school students with the State.</p>	<p>GREEN</p>	<p>Same response as recommendation number 17. Response can be found in the Academic Plan as well.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Budget Development</p>				

12. By January 15, 2021, when the new legislative session begins, the District will have developed a strategic plan for sharing the cost of charter school students with the State.	GREEN	Same response as recommendation number 17. Response can be found in the Academic Plan as well.		
13. The District will develop a balanced budget within the time frame outlined in the adopted budget timeline.	GREEN	The district has met with all administrators to discuss their staffing and resource needs for 2021-22 school year. The needs will be utilized to compose a balance budget.	The business official and key business staff members meet weekly with the monitor to work on the budget for the upcoming school year 2021-22.	
Reimbursement Claims				
14. Until the District can fully fund a position or positions in the District to process STAC forms and Medicaid reimbursement, the District should continue to retain the services of its current consultant.	GREEN	<i>This recommendation will be implemented once funds are solidified in the 2021-22 budget to hire a full-time experienced person to assume this responsibility from the consultant firm. In the meantime, the District has maintained the services of the consultant firm to process STACS and apply for Medicaid reimbursement.</i>		
Next Steps/Recommendations				
15. The District needs to make every effort to conclude negotiations with its teachers and Civil	GREEN	<u>PLEASE NOTE:</u> <i>This recommendation update has been spelled out in the District's Academic Plan.</i>		

Service employees during this fiscal year.				
16. The District will need to seek to change the means by which charter schools are funded or seek additional aid to offset the expense in the budget.	GREEN	<i>PLEASE NOTE: This recommendation update has been spelled out in the District's Academic Plan.</i>		
17. The District will need to address the transportation needs of its students and seek a legislative remedy that makes it affordable for the Hempstead taxpayer.	GREEN	<i>PLEASE NOTE: This recommendation update has been spelled out in the District's Academic Plan.</i>		
18. The District will need during this fiscal year to engage under a retainer a legal firm with the expertise and experience to act as both general and labor council, which should control cost without compromising quality.	GREEN	The Board of Education has approved to retain two different law firms. One serves as legal counsel and the other general counsel. These two law firms have served the district in this capacity during the 18/19 and 19/20 school year as well.		

<p>19. The District will need to hold vendors accountable for goods and services provided.</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>The District will create a strategic plan to address this recommendation in the near future.</p>		
<p>20. The District will need to produce a study of its predicted enrollment for the next five years.</p>	<p>BLUE</p>	<p>The District solicited Western Suffolk BOCES to complete the enrollment study.</p>	<p>Enrollment study was completed June 2020. Study has been shared with the Monitor.</p>	
<p>21. The District will need to regularly push out information that describes the many changes it has made to improve the operation and the instruction within the District.</p>	<p>RED</p>	<p>The District has hired the GOTHAM Group to serve as the public relation firm for the District.</p>	<p>The BOE approved a resolution for the Superintendent of Schools to work with the PR firm to put out positive information about the district utilizing Social Media. District will be put out a newsletter in the near future to highlight all efforts the District has made to improve its academic and financial status.</p>	
<p>22. The District will need to examine alternative operational and instructional programs, services and systems that maximize State aid without compromising local control or quality.</p>	<p>NA</p>			

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Comments on Action Plans

Academic Action Plan

The district response within teaching and learning at all the buildings, in special education and in ELL instruction shows the depth and breadth of the work underway to bring about the changes that will hopefully improve performance across the board for all students.

The use of iReady for measuring the performance in reading and math for students in grades 1 through 8 will provide the structure needed to provide data driven decision making at the classroom, building and district levels. However, the District is not where it needs to be although it has taken many steps to insure its timely administration and use. The logistics needed for administration and the training of administrative and instructional staff to interpret and adjust programs and instruction is underway but not there yet. The interim Superintendent has taken a strong leadership role in making this happen and because of that leadership many of the problems witnessed this year should be corrected or remedied by next year.

There are a number of references made to the placement of a computing device in the hands of every student in the district. That did not happen by accident. From the very week in which I was working in the district it became evident that the upcoming school year was at best going to involve a hybrid model of instruction. At the time only about 2500 devices were available for student use. The District needed at least another 4000 units. So began the first two months work of the monitor and the interim Superintendent. Finding the money, finding a device that was reasonably priced and available for shipment in early Fall, developing plans for installation of software, inventorying each device and finally distributing them to students would not have happened without the leadership of the interim Superintendent and the cooperation and work of the Business and Technology

departments. It was the first example of how effective the administrative team could be in getting things done effectively, creatively and on time.

There are a number of grant programs in the district that provide students in need of supplemental services and instruction designed to help improving overall student performance. At this time there is no mechanism in place to adequately measure the impact of these opportunities on the performance of students.

Another area of concern are the program offerings and the instructional models in use with ELL students. With the arrival of the new Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction who has experience with the education of ELL's I am hopeful that the district will be able to reexamine its data and come up with creative ways to modify its programs and improve instruction.

The Board of Education has chosen not to give the interim Superintendent and her Central office staff contracts of employment. This is a continuing problem that will hopefully be rectified by the end of this school year. The Board of Education has yet to commence a search for a new superintendent.

The current organization of the District's central office needs revision. This task is not expected to be considered until a permanent superintendent is appointed for a July 1 start.

Restorative programs were not addressed by the district in this update. During the pandemic there has little to no disciplinary problems in either the middle or high school. This will need to be addressed before the opening of the next school year.

Attendance, even during this pandemic is a problem. The staff at the district and building levels are working to reach a 90% attendance rate for this school year.

There are a number of items that have not been addressed to date. These include issues related to transportation, security, enrollment in preschool, the working relation with BOCES, the technology department operation and the smart bond. These items will be addressed in the next report in June.

Financial Action Plan

The Superintendent has with other members of the central office met with legislators on a regular basis to seek help in resolving the serious revenue problems the district faces because of the Charter school tuition payments.

The business office needs to be fully staffed to insure that all the problems articulated in reports from the past do not reappear. The Board has not seen fit to fill those positions this year but will consider them as part of a plan in next year's budget.

The Board has not commenced work on the development of an educational foundation.

The district has serious capital needs. These will be addressed by a District Committee that will review recommended plans from the District Architect. The Committee will be composed of District employees and residents. The Committee, it is hoped, will be prepared to recommend a capital improvement plan for consideration by the voters sometime in the Fall of this year.

The Board of Education secured the services of a public relations firm to assist in getting out to the Community information that describes the many improvements made to the academic and the fiscal operations of the District. Little has been done

to accomplish the recommended changes to date. By June the District should be on its way to regularly inform the public using a variety of media.

A final note on the recommendation to secure legal representation that is more cost effective. The Board has appointed both general and labor counsel through the end of this fiscal year. However, the Board has agreed to put out in the spring a request for proposals for legal representation, conduct interviews of interested firms and select a firm for appointment at its reorganization meeting in July. Auditors from the State Education Department are currently conducting a review of the legal bills for the past three years as well as an examination of the process by which legal expenditures are approved. We are looking for guidance by mid-March.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Most but not all of the recommendations contained in the December academic and fiscal reports have been addressed. What is very important at this time is the apparent commitment of the interim Superintendent, the administrative leadership team and the staff to work with the monitor to make the improvement of student performance a reality. They have given every indication that they are willing to make the changes that will effectuate higher levels of student performance. It is also important to see the very same attitude when it comes to the business office and the management of expenses. The commitment and the competence of the business office bode well for the continued fiscal integrity of the District.

The District has a budget for the 2021-2022 school year. It is essentially a rollover budget that has taken the line by line expenses for this year and adjusted the cost on the basis of a number of variables such as contracts and reported Charter school enrollment. This expenditure plan is significantly higher at this time to

anticipated revenue and will need to be changed to come into line with revenues when they become better known later this month.

As part of the budget review process we are looking at contracted services. A list of all the vendors who have professional contracts with the school district has been generated by the business office and will become an integral part of the review of expenditures for next year. In addition to their expense the efficacy of the service they provide needs to be examined before committing to a continuation of the service.

While I appreciate and applaud the effort, the collaboration and willingness to change, there is still much on the horizon that needs to be done before we can declare that success has been achieved. I am confident that with the spirit and the will I have witnessed to date that success is within reach.