

July 30, 2013

To: John King, Commissioner

From: Judy Elliott, Distinguished Educator 

Re: Third Quarterly Action Plan Update - Buffalo City School District

Attached please find the third quarterly Action Plan Status Update for the Buffalo City School District. This update reflects a year in review as it pertains to the work completed within the Action Plan for SY 2012-13.

The status update lists many activities that have been conducted and are underway by central office. Supporting documents/appendices were submitted and are referenced in this update, but are not included. However, they remain available for your review upon request.

Each action step has been highlighted in green, yellow or red. Green representing accomplished, yellow in progress, and red not yet progressing. Staff provided the information in the column entitled 'Status Update as of July 31, 2013.'

It should be noted that some areas remain red for several reasons. Some action steps were not undertaken in this year (e.g., review of Criterion Schools). Others (e.g., promotion and retention) will need coordinated focus within the context of District-wide and school-based data based practices around core instruction, prevention, and intervention for academics and behavior. To that end, the District is completing a plan for the Multi-tiered System of Support that can be a corner stone of the work around promotion and retention policy review. Finally, others (e.g., professional development plan) were not able to be coordinated, as the structure for supervision, support, and in-district decision-making were not well established.

Given the new reorganization structure, it is anticipated that better coordination and communication across offices will occur.

In general, the District has made progress in several areas to include the implementation of school based budgets as well as Administrator certification in the APPR process. While many areas remain yellow, the District has made progress under the support the Systemic Support Grant. In collaboration with AIR, plans for professional development and training around data use and decision-making began in June. While calendars of support, complete with dates and topics are drafted for the upcoming school year, it is critical that the fidelity to the schedule with which these trainings are held and plans implemented is critical.

As noted in the April Status Update, this review asked for data to be available as a summative review of several action steps. The absence of such data precluded some action steps from being coded green, and two action items returning to red.

While the District has taken a positive step toward creating more data dialogue this year, it is critical that infrastructure be built that readily provides systemic data to be available to allow leadership to make informed systemic decisions, monitor progress, and evaluate return on investment.

The District continues to refine its data dashboard, adding early warning indicators which will aide in monitoring school based trends and progress. Specific central data requests (e.g., EL, Special Education) continue to be a challenge.

In summary, the Action Plan was originally and collaboratively designed to serve as a blueprint for the Buffalo City School District to improve systems, structures, accountability and support for all schools, and specifically the 28 Priority Schools.

There has been much effort put forth centrally regarding reorganization, a 2nd semester credit accrual program, as securing a new vendor for common formative assessments. Priority schools, however, continue to be in critical need of differentiated support, communication, and accountability.

Should you have any questions or additional requests regarding this update, please contact me at your convenience.

Cc: Board of Education
Pam Brown, Superintendent