



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Commissioner of Education  
President of the University of the State of New York  
89 Washington Avenue, Room 111  
Albany, New York 12234

E-mail: commissioner@nysed.gov  
Twitter: @NYSEDNews  
Tel: (518) 474-5844  
Fax: (518) 473-4909

January 8, 2018

Mrs. Maribel Touré, President  
Board of Education  
Hempstead Union Free School District  
185 Peninsula Boulevard  
Hempstead, NY 11550

Dear Mrs. Touré:

I am writing to share the attached report that was submitted to me for approval by Dr. Jack Bierwirth, the Distinguished Educator I appointed to the Hempstead School District effective October 2, 2017. Although the results of Dr. Bierwirth's assessment are serious and of great concern, I was encouraged to read that the school community expressed optimism about the future, and I know you share my commitment to ensuring that any and all actions taken as a result of the recommendations and comprehensive action plan described in the report put the needs of students at the forefront.

I hereby approve Dr. Bierwirth's findings and recommendations and expect the Board to fully comply therewith, beginning with the submission of a response plan no later than February 2, 2018.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Hempstead's students.

Sincerely,

MaryEllen Elia  
Commissioner

Enclosure

c: Dr. Shimon Waronker, Superintendent

MaryEllen Elia  
Commissioner  
New York State Education Department  
89 Washington Avenue  
Albany, NY 12234

Commissioner Elia:

On September 14, 2017, you announced my appointment as Distinguished Educator (DE) to the Hempstead Union Free School District ("HUFSD" or "District"), effective October 2, 2017.

In my charge to address the District's significant academic and school governance issues, you directed me to be:

*"Engaged with staff from the District's public schools and the New York State Education Department ("NYSED") assessing the academic, operational and fiscal health of the District in terms of the District's ability to support increased student performance and systems improvements, with an emphasis on supporting full and effective intervention plans for the school identified as 'Priority' and 'Focus.'*

You also directed me to develop an action plan as follows:

*"...In collaboration with the Commissioner and/or her designee(s), and with the District, you should develop by November 17, 2017 an action plan outlining your goals and objectives as the Distinguished Educator and for the District for the ensuing school year in terms of assisting the District to support increased student performance and systems improvements, with a focus on developing and implementing fully and effectively, the District's plans for Priority and Focus Schools. Upon approval of the plan by the Commissioner, you shall provide a copy of the action plan to the District and review any of the District's existing approved improvement plans, and any plans submitted for approval between August 1, 2017 and October 1, 2018."*

I am hereby submitting my findings and recommendations and action steps. Please be advised that, as used in this report, both the terms 'recommendations' and 'action steps' are to be considered, pursuant to Section 211-c of Education Law and Section 100.17 of Commissioner's Regulations, 'recommendations for modifications' to the District's Comprehensive Education Plan, associated School Comprehensive Improvement Plans

and Corrective Action Plans, and such other plans as must be modified to implement these recommendations. As specified in law and regulation, upon my submission of these recommendations for modifications, the Hempstead Board of Education must now either modify the appropriate plans accordingly or provide a written explanation to the Commissioner of its reasons for not adopting such recommendations.

I am requesting that by February 2, 2018, the HUFSD Board of Education provide me either written evidence of how these recommendations have been incorporated into existing plans or evidence that the District has received a determination from the Commissioner that the District's written explanation for not adopting such recommendations has compelling merit.

Sincerely,

Jack Bierwirth, Ed.D.  
Distinguished Educator

**NOTE: During the period the draft report was being reviewed by the Commissioner additional facts surfaced and additional events occurred which were relevant to this report. They did not change the concerns noted in the draft report but did substantially deepen them as well as paint a more complete picture. Accordingly, they were incorporated into the draft report.**

## **DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR ACTION PLAN**

**Distinguished Educator:** Jack Bierwirth, Ed.D.

**District:** Hempstead Union Free School District

In late 2004, shortly after the graduating class of 2017 entered kindergarten, a team of 40 professionals from the New York State Education Department ("NYSED") visited the Hempstead Union Free School District ("HUFSD" or "District") to assess the District and make recommendations for improvement. Had the issues identified in the 2004 NYSED report been addressed promptly and thoroughly, the educational journey of the students in the class of 2017 might have been very different.

Further, in 2014, the Office of the New York State Comptroller ("OSC") conducted an audit of the District and made recommendations. Had the serious issues identified in the 2014 OSC report been properly addressed, the District's expenditures in 2014-2015 would not have exceeded the taxpayer approved budget by \$8.6 million.

To a large degree, the concerns expressed and resulting recommendations in both the aforementioned prior reports are consistent with the issues the Hempstead community brought to my attention in my role of Distinguished Educator. Accordingly, both reports are referred to in the proceeding action plan to illustrate that many issues facing the District are longstanding and systemic, and that past Corrective Action Plans have been inadequately implemented, if at all.

I cannot overstate the extraordinary candor demonstrated by members of the Board of Education, Superintendent, school administrators, educators, staff, parents, students, and community members during the development of this report and plan. Their assessments of the state of affairs in the District were often painful to hear. However, their suggestions for improvement proved helpful and reflected genuine optimism that what should be done could be done.

I share the community's optimism and commitment to making immediate and sustainable change that will ensure that current and future Hempstead students receive the educational opportunities they deserve.

As requested in the Commissioner's October 2, 2017 charge to me, this report also constitutes an "action plan" outlining the goals and objectives for the district and for the Distinguished Educator. This report addresses 10 areas of concern that are most critical

to the District's ability to support increased student performance and systems improvements:

1. Governance
2. Budget and Fiscal Operations
3. School Safety and Security
4. Facilities Management
5. High School Instruction
6. PreK-8 Instruction
7. Special Education
8. English Language Learners
9. Nutrition and Food Services
10. Information Technology Infrastructure

When relevant to the identified area of concern, I included findings and recommendations from the 2004 NYSED report and the 2014 Office of the State Comptroller Report. Following the recent findings for each area, the Distinguished Educator's recommendations and a plan of action are identified. NYSED and I will provide any guidance and technical assistance needed to assist the District in its efforts to implement the recommendations in this plan of action.

## AREAS OF CONCERN

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## 1. GOVERNANCE

### I. FINDINGS

Concerns regarding the Board of Education's practices were at or near the top of issues identified by most parents, community members, and HUFSD staff. Stakeholders spoke about deep divisions, long and rancorous Board meetings, an inability to collaborate even on commonly shared concerns, a failure to prioritize student needs, an inability to attract and retain administrative talent, a lack of consistency, a lack of follow-through on agreed upon plans, and a lack of transparency.

Overall, my assessment and evaluation of the District's operations and practices reveals that **governance is the single most significant barrier to the District focusing its efforts and resources on the education of its students, which should be of paramount concern.** A review of recent legal proceedings before the Commissioner clearly illustrates the inordinate amount of the District's attention and resources that have been expended on Board issues. Since 2014, several appeals and/or applications for removal have been filed with the Commissioner of Education regarding the District. These proceedings include challenges to the District's May 2014, 2015, and 2016 election results; the Board's alleged violations of the Open Meetings Law; challenges to the Board's contracting and procurement practices; and challenges to the Board's removal of one of its members. Most of these challenges have been mounted by the Board itself or by various groups of Board members.

Based on the record in these appeals, the Commissioner has been compelled to overturn the results of the May 2014 Board of Education election and order that the District cooperate fully with election monitors (Decision No. 16,660), and annul the Board's action in removing one of its members (Decision No. 17,263). Indeed, in such decisions, the Commissioner has routinely commented on the pervasive governance issues plaguing the District. For example, in her recent Decision No. 17,263, she stated:

Finally, I am compelled to comment on the controversy surrounding respondent board in recent years which continues to plague this district, as evidenced by the record in this and several other cases involving the district (see e.g. Appeal of Watson, et al., 56 Ed Dept Rep, Decision No. 17,082; Appeal of the Bd. of Educ. of the Hempstead Union Free School Dist., 55 id., Decision No. 16,878; Appeal of Touré, et al., 54 id., Decision No. 16,660). Due to the significant academic and school governance issues the district continues to experience, effective October 6, 2017, I appointed a Distinguished Educator to the district in accordance with Education Law §211-c. In light of the above, **I again admonish the district and the board, as I have in previous appeals, to take all steps necessary to ensure that such controversy does not continue and that the district's leadership and resources are focused on the paramount goal of providing successful outcomes for students. To this end, I am directing Dr. Jack Bierwirth, the**

**appointed Distinguished Educator, to provide guidance and technical assistance to the district to ensure that this occurs**  
(emphasis added).

During my assessment as well as in the six months prior, many of the practices that were of express concern in the 2014 report by the Office of State Comptroller continued to be exhibited by the Hempstead Board of Education. In 2014, OSC noted that the Board exhibited a lack of transparency and a failure to adhere to Open Meetings Laws. OSC also expressed serious concerns about the Board's improper employment practices, including an admonishment for retaining two superintendents at the same time. The Board had appointed administrators, changed administrators, and entered into as well as amended agreements with no documented plan, reason, or clear benefit to the District.

In a direct example of a lack of follow-through on prior recommendations, in the spring of 2017, the Board employed a new superintendent one month before the end of the prior superintendent's contract, resulting in the District needlessly paying two superintendents simultaneously. In October 2017, the same Board majority approved the appointment of legal counsel for special investigations retroactive to August 1, an action contrary to the most basic of appropriate business practices and contrary to the expectations delineated by the Comptroller.

In late November 2017, the new majority resulting from the Commissioner's aforementioned reversal of the Board's action to remove a sitting member (Decision No. 17,263) immediately called an emergency meeting. The meeting was broadcast to the community as a discussion meeting, but resolutions dismissing the sitting counsel for special investigations and appointing a firm that had been previously employed by the District were hand carried into the meeting and approved. Neither the substance of the action to be considered nor the rationale were shared with the public in advance.

One week later, at a regularly scheduled Board of Education "work" session, additional resolutions were hand carried into the meeting and approved. These resolutions removed another law firm employed by the District effective immediately and transferred that firm's work to a different firm that had previously done work for the District.

Both successor firms that had previously worked for the District charge notably high fees (see Appendix A). Reverting to these firms' services during the school year on short notice with pending cases demonstrates questionable priorities and judgement.

Additionally, shortly after hiring the new superintendent to begin in June 2017, the same Board majority hired four "master teachers," approved a consulting contract of just under half a million dollars, and employed a deputy superintendent. In total, these additions represent annual expenditures of roughly \$1.5 million that were not in the budget approved by the taxpayers in May 2017.



Questions have been raised about the manner of these new appointments given the apparently close connections between the new superintendent, the individuals selected as master teachers, the organization employed for consulting, and the deputy superintendent. The master teachers do not have job descriptions, their role is unclear to other school staff and parents, and they are not part of any bargaining unit. Furthermore, there has been no formal reorganization of administrative responsibilities to justify these roles. Whether the responsibility for defining these jobs rests with the Board or the superintendent is less important than the fact that they remain undefined while putting undue strain on the District's budget.

In addition to the specific issues resulting from the Board's decisions to date, their actions suggest that they lack a commitment to the level of transparency in the school budget development process mandated in State Education Law. This was illustrated by the District's planned purchase of new school buses through vaguely worded language in its 2017-18 budget. Before the purchase could occur, SED discovered that the District lacked the budget propositions and State approvals required by the property tax levy limit and State aid statutes. Due to the Board's failure to follow protocol, if the District had made the purchases, it would have risked being ineligible for State aid. In addition, the resulting payments would not have been appropriately treated as capital expenditures under the tax levy limit and therefore could have depleted the funds available for instruction. This example raises a red flag that the Board of Education lacks a basic understanding of the requirements of lawful and responsible school district budgeting.

While members of the Board of Education made assurances during the Distinguished Educator's assessment that they would put aside differences to address critical issues such as school safety, facilities management, and high school instruction – all of which Board members indicated they agreed on – those aspirations have not been realized. In fact, little or no time has been spent on these high-priority issues other than answering concerns raised by members of the public at Board meetings. **When meeting as a group, this Board has proven completely unable to meet the critical challenges facing the District as detailed in this report.**

It is noteworthy that this behavior was consistent during the leadership of two different Board majorities. Further, it is evident that the superintendent has been drawn into the clear divisions among the current Board majority and minority. The overwhelming perception of parents and the staff is that the superintendent was allied with the majority that was in leadership from June until the Commissioner's November decision that altered the balance of power. It is doubtful whether any leader could have successfully straddled the entrenched divide within the Board, but these political issues complicate the superintendent's capacity to lead the District.

## **II. GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN**

Both the Board of Education and Superintendent would benefit from a clear understanding of their roles in providing sound leadership in an open and transparent manner.

1. The Board should immediately undergo Open Meetings Law training provided by the New York State Committee on Open Government. Such training should focus on ensuring greater transparency and the proper methods of conducting public meetings in compliance with the law, including but not limited to the proper use of executive sessions and the confidentiality that attaches to duly convened executive sessions. The Board of Education should put policies in place to ensure that all Board members participate in this training once annually.
2. The Board should engage in training provided by an appropriate entity (e.g., the New York State School Boards Association or a similar entity approved by NYSED) covering issues such as school district governance and board and community relations.
3. The Superintendent should undergo training provided by an appropriate entity (e.g., the New York State Council of School Superintendents or a similar entity approved by NYSED) regarding the roles and responsibilities of a superintendent and building and maintaining an appropriate working relationship with a board of education.
4. The Commissioner should continue to engage BOCES District Superintendents from other areas of the State to provide election monitoring services at the District's annual budget vote and election.

## 2. BUDGET AND FISCAL OPERATIONS

### I. FINDINGS

The current financial situation in the District is a result of chronic mismanagement. According to staff in the District Business Office, there have been 20 different assistant superintendents for business in the past 21 years. Even if every appointee was a competent steward of school funds, this rate of turnover would be demoralizing and destabilizing. More importantly, there is little evidence that the concerns raised by auditors or the Office of the State Comptroller were given appropriate attention by any previous Boards of Education or superintendents. There was little follow through on corrective action plans, resulting in a continual degradation of Business Office operations.

The Comptroller's 2014 report noted concerns regarding overspending on employee compensation and on special education services. Supervisors were not providing oversight as to the accuracy and completeness of timesheets, and each department implemented its own timesheet format. As a result, there was an increased risk that employees were being paid for time not worked. In addition, OSC found that special education services, including diagnostic and health support services, were costing HUFSD more than necessary because the District did not apply for Medicaid reimbursement for eligible services,<sup>1</sup> did not apply for all available State aid, and did not ensure that professional services were obtained in the most efficient and economical manner.<sup>2</sup>

Subsequent to the 2014 audit by the Office of the State Comptroller, the District exceeded its taxpayer-approved budget by \$8.6 million. In a report by the District's auditors, Nawrocki Smith, for the school year that ended June 30, 2015, two material weaknesses and one significant deficiency were noted:

#### **Nawrocki Smith June 30, 2015**

##### **Material Weaknesses**

##### **Finding 15-01**

Criteria: We considered the preparation of timely, monthly bank reconciliations.

Condition: The District did not perform reconciliations of its bank accounts for a seven month period.

Effect: The lack of monthly reconciliations increases the risk of misstating cash balances, thereby putting the District in a situation where there may be inadequate cash flow for operations and improper activity that could occur and go undetected.

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<sup>1</sup> The Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988 made it possible for school districts to obtain Medicaid reimbursement for many special education services that they provide to Medicaid-eligible students. SED and the New York State Department of Health jointly established the School Supportive Health Services Program to help school districts obtain Medicaid reimbursement for diagnostic and health support services provided to eligible students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and for case management review.

<sup>2</sup> OSC calculated that the District could have been reimbursed by Medicaid for up to \$42,096 for services provided to the 16 Medicaid-eligible students who were referred during the 2012-2013 school year.

Recommendation: We recommend that the District implement policies and procedures to ensure bank account reconciliations are completed on a timely, monthly basis.

**Finding 15-02**

Criteria: We considered the District's actual vs. budgeted expenditures for the fiscal year.

Condition: The District's General Fund expenditures exceeded the taxpayer approved budget by \$8.6 million.

Effect: The District has depleted its reserves and is now in a situation where it seeks legislative relief to borrow funds to be paid in the future to resolve problems of the past.

Recommendation: We recommend that the District consider the establishment of an independent Fiscal Oversight Authority, comprised of seasoned business officials and independent consultants, to provide impartial oversight and monitoring of the District's budget and fiscal operations.

Response: The District is considering the recommendation and will pursue opportunities for strengthening fiscal oversight in the upcoming year.

**Significant Deficiency**

**Finding 15-03**

Criteria: We considered the District's expenditures for tutoring services during the past fiscal year.

Condition: The District expends considerably more on tutoring than surrounding school districts and was unable to provide any formal, approved contracts with the entities that provided tutoring services.

Effect: The District appears to have been overbilled by certain tutoring contractors based on improper billing rates on invoices compared to rate schedules provided by the tutoring companies and excessive hours billed for tutoring services. In addition, there was a lack of monitoring and evidence to determine whether tutoring services were actually provided.

Recommendation: We recommend that the District perform a complete review and evaluation of its tutoring procedures and establish more formal, written guidelines for the proper planning, evaluation, procurement, administration and monitoring of this area. Additional, we recommend that the District consider having a complete forensic investigation performed with respect to expenditures made in recent periods.

Response: The District is considering this recommendation and will address the matter internally before seeking outside assistance.

The Board did not establish an "Independent Fiscal Oversight Authority" as recommended by the auditors.

Audits by other firms have noted similar serious issues. For example, in April 2016, the internal control auditors, Darchangelo CO., LLP, issued a risk assessment with a high proportion of areas identified with a "severe" or "high" risk and a "severe" or "high" control risk. (See Appendix B)

In 2017, the District's internal auditor, EFPR Group stated the following regarding employee compensation:

"In order to gain an understanding of processes and internal controls, we reviewed reports previously issued by the internal auditor. A large part of our testing required us to examine vendor invoices in order to verify historical transactions. It was noted that these invoices were not readily available. ... During our review of the payroll process, it was noted that there was no lag time for payroll disbursements. Employees are currently being paid on the last day of the payroll period. Typically, payroll is disbursed one week after the last day of the payroll period."

**Serious concerns that pose risks to the District's financial stability have been raised repeatedly across three audits and remain largely unaddressed.** There is a high likelihood that the dysfunction of District leadership has led to a) funds being returned, b) aid the District was due not filed for, and/or c) opportunities missed. One auditor's report suggested that roughly \$1.0 million in aid has been missed.

The District lacks basic operational protocols and procedures in many areas. For example, during the period of this assessment, the District was notified about numerous bills that were six months or more overdue. In addition, the fact that the fund balance for 2016-2017 was considerably above expectations and not discovered until months after the close of the fiscal year due to poor fiscal monitoring would be a deep concern in any district but was of special concern in a district which had just completed a year with a deep deficit also due to poor fiscal planning.

The District does not have a good current assessment of 2017-2018 spending levels. Significant items included in the 2017-2018 budget adopted by the Board and approved by District residents have been cut in practice, without public notice or input. These have not been identified to date. As noted in the governance section, significant new spending items connected directly or indirectly with New American Schools were added to the budget after Board adoption and taxpayer approval. What these additions displaced have not been identified to date.

At the same time, the District's budget for the 2017-18 school year contained vaguely worded language addressing the intent of the Board to purchase several school buses. However, the proposed purchases were not treated as separate capital provisions under the properly tax levy limit law and were never submitted for approval to the appropriate office at NYSED. If the purchase had occurred, it might have been ineligible for State aid, and it would not have been subject to the capital expenditure exemption allowable under the levy limit. That means that

the entire cost of the bus purchase would have come from the limited funds available for instructional activities. This suggests a failure to understand and comply with State law, regulations, and guidance regarding school budgeting, which could have a detrimental impact in an already constrained environment.

Planning activities for grants are months behind the planning for the general fund and the District consistently misses deadlines to apply for State funds to which it is entitled. The District was allocated a grant of up to \$5.4 million for 'community schools' for 2017-2018. That grant could have been used beginning in September 2017, but a plan was not submitted for approval by SED's Office of Innovation and School Reform in a timely fashion and still has not been submitted four months into the school year. The Office has contacted the District over 15 times since August 1, 2017 to prompt the submission of its plan to no avail. (It should be noted that the Office has provided technical assistance to District staff at several points and made its staff available for consultation at any point upon request.) Contracts for consultants at the high school through the State's School Improvement Grant were not approved until November, three months after the start of the school year.

Grant funds are inadequately tied to overall District budget and programs.

To the District's credit, in response to the June 2015 recommendation of Nawrocki Smith to budget for a forensic auditor in the 2017-2018 budget, the District hired Plante Moran, the highly respected firm which conducted the forensic audit of the Detroit Public Schools. However, since that time, I have requested updates and documentation regarding the progress of this critical forensic audit and, to date, none have been provided. Instead, various Board members have objected to my request for such information, arguing that providing such information to the Board that engaged the auditor would essentially lead to the information becoming public, thus compromising the integrity of the audit. This needs to be completed in an unpolitical and untarnished manner so that a) any corruption that is uncovered can be prosecuted, and b) the cloud lifted can be lifted from those found to be competent and trustworthy.

## **II. BUDGET AND FISCAL OPERATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN**

District business operations are severely stressed and significantly outdated in many areas. The District is paying \$400,000 for the services of the forensic auditor and, in the interest of its fiscal and governance responsibilities, the Board must treat this audit with the urgency and importance it requires.

1. The Board should require regular reports and updates from the forensic auditor to ensure that the audit is proceeding according to the agreed-to plan and timeline. Once the forensic audit is complete and the results are available, any findings must be referred to the appropriate independent governmental officials – e.g., NYS Comptroller's Office, NYS Education Department or FBI – to ensure compliance with any findings or corrective actions required.

2. The HUFSD Business Office, with the assistance of a team from Nassau BOCES, should develop by the end of January 2018 and implement by the end of March 2018 a plan to bring District business operations fully up to date.
3. Appropriate HUFSD personnel should participate in trainings offered by entities such as Questar III State Aid Planning, NYSED, and the New York State Association of School Business Officials so that appropriate steps are taken to follow State aid and district budgeting statutes, regulations, and guidance, and avoid unnecessary losses of state aid or tax levy issues.
4. The Superintendent and the Business Office must be required to ensure full implementation of all corrective action plan steps previously prescribed to the extent practicable by no later than June 2018. The District must hold the Superintendent and the Business Office accountable if steps that could reasonably be taken are not. For those corrective actions that could not be implemented by June 2018 date for legitimate reasons, the Superintendent and the Business Office, in consultation with the Distinguished Educator, must set a firm timeline and process for future implementation.
5. The Distinguished Educator and NYSED will provide the District with technical assistance and resources and will monitor and evaluate timely and satisfactory completion to ensure compliance.

### 3. SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

#### I. FINDINGS

School safety was the top issue raised by many parents and community members during this assessment, particularly with regards to the high school. Safety issues are also a factor in other areas of concern covered in this report, as research suggests that the “quality of the school climate may be the single most predictive factor in any school’s capacity to promote student achievement.”<sup>3</sup>

The District is plagued by school safety issues that have been obscured by inaccurate data (both past and present), politics, and efforts to assign blame. **Students must have a safe and secure environment in which to learn, and the adults governing the District must make this their absolute priority, which has not occurred to date.** At a minimum, the Board and District must redirect resources from litigation and in-fighting to developing and sustaining a safe and positive educational environment. Ultimately, with cultural and behavioral shifts at the highest levels, the District’s adults will also help in this effort by modeling the behavior that their students need to exhibit to be productive members of 21<sup>st</sup> century society.

Safety and security were also issues in SED’s 2004 report,<sup>4</sup> which noted gang activity; poor training and deployment of security staff; and a lack of definition of pupil services roles, responsibilities, and relationships. At the time, SED indicated significant data management issues with tracking attendance, discipline, and safety. The high school exhibited poor rates of daily and period-by-period attendance, exacerbated by an open campus policy. The reported suspension rate for 2003-04 was high at 12.4 percent.

Gang presence and recruitment remains a bona fide concern in this district and many neighboring districts and communities. In September 2017, the presence of the gang MS-13 in communities on Long Island prompted the governor to deploy a Gang Violence Prevention unit of the New York State Police to Long Island to work collaboratively with local police agencies and schools to educate communities about the early warning signs of gang presence and recruitment.

Recent violent incidents in Hempstead schools include physical altercations that have sometimes resulted in serious injuries and the presence of weapons on school property. **Well over 50 fights have taken place in the high school since September. Just prior to the November 2017 Board of Education meeting, over 30 gunshots were recorded in the neighborhood adjacent to the high school.** Parents are justifiably concerned.

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<sup>3</sup> Shindler, J., Jones, A., Williams, A.D., Taylor, C., Cardenia, H. (2016). The school climate-student achievement connection: If we want achievement gains, we need to begin by improving the climate. *Journal of School Administration Research and Development* 1(1), 9-16.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on the 2004 report, see Appendix C.



In the past several weeks, the superintendent has spent a significant percentage of his time on-site at the high school observing the climate and attempting to make proactive changes to improve the situation. In addition, more security staff have been hired across all District buildings and the office of the District Director of Security has been relocated to the high school. These are steps in the right direction, but it will take a more systemic change to ensure a truly safe and secure school environment.

## II. SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

The District's current security issues are exacerbated by a) high administrative turnover, and b) severe overcrowding which is likely to get much worse over the next 7-8 years (overcrowding is further explored in the Facilities Management section). The District must recognize the effect of school environment on academic achievement and take steps to ensure that HUFSD environments are safe and positive so that students devote their full attention to their education and parents feel comfortable sending their children to school each day.

1. The District must first review and revise its code of conduct (last updated on 2012-13) and should develop a new comprehensive School Safety Plan by February 1, 2018, with input from staff, students, and parents.<sup>5</sup> The plan should at a minimum:
  - Include a school climate framework that incorporates effective strategies to promote school climate such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, restorative practices, trauma-informed care, social emotional learning, among others.
  - Commit to participating in the School Climate Index Pilot in the 2017-18 school year; include a plan to administer the school climate surveys as a part of the School Climate Index Pilot; establish a Community Engagement Team (CET) to analyze the data from the school climate surveys, chronic absenteeism reports, and the VADIR/DASA reports; and determine an action plan to address any needs identified by the CET.<sup>6</sup>
  - Ensure that all students have access to support for their social-emotional well-being.
  - Provide all students access to extracurricular opportunities so they can volunteer in their schools and their communities, participate in community-based internships, and engage in sports and the arts.

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<sup>5</sup> Section 2801-a (Chapter 16, Title II, Article 55) of Education Law requires that every board of education in every school district in the state adopt and amend a comprehensive district-wide school safety plan and building-level school safety plans regarding crisis intervention, emergency response, and management. More information about the requirements for school safety plans is available at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/lawsregs/2801a.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Approximately 50 districts are participating in the NYSED School Climate Index Pilot during the 2017-18 school year with a plan for full implementation statewide in the 2018-19 school year. The School Climate Index comprises three major components: 1) administering the US Department of Education's school climate surveys to parents, students, and school personnel; 2) reviewing Violent and Disruptive Incident Reports (VADIR) and the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) data; and 3) producing chronic absenteeism reports. The results of the data from these three components should be reviewed by a Community Engagement Team comprised of parents, students, teachers, school board members, non-instructional staff, school officials, business community, among others.

- Promote trust, cultural responsiveness, and respect between schools and families, recognizing that student achievement and school improvement are shared responsibility and extend that trust, cultural responsiveness, and respect among schools and families to include the Hempstead Police Department and all of the partner agencies supporting District schools.
2. It is critical that the District take proactive steps to keep students safe from bullying and harassment. Responsiveness starts with prevention and, to be successful, the District must:
    - Develop a school climate mission statement for the District with input from the Community Engagement Team. Work collaboratively with stakeholders to begin to embed these practices in all areas.
    - Communicate with students, staff, and parents about their roles in prevention and intervention and send a unified message against bullying, harassment, intimidation, and discrimination.
    - Take student complaints seriously and ensure that they are addressed quickly and competently.
    - Ensure that student discipline is administered equitably and is proportionate to the transgression. Reduce the overuse of punitive and exclusionary responses to student misbehavior.
  3. Educators and District staff should be trained in practices proven to improve school safety and climate:
    - Social-emotional Learning Practices to help students learn the essential skills that affect every area of their lives, including how to understand and manage emotions and how to establish and maintain positive relationships. Research shows that social-emotional learning has had a significant impact on reducing at-risk behaviors including substance use, emotional distress, anxiety, social withdrawal, and mental health problems.
    - Trauma-Informed Practices. One out of four children attending school has been exposed to a traumatic event that can affect learning and/or behavior.<sup>7</sup> Trauma can affect student performance and learning and cause unpredictable or impulsive behavior, as well as physical and emotional distress. It is critical to develop and create trauma-sensitive schools that help children feel safe so that they can learn.
    - Restorative Practices. Evaluate current school discipline practice, move away from zero-tolerance discipline policies, and encourage the use of practices that encourage healthy relationships between staff and students and seek to resolve conflict rather than simply punishing offenders.
  4. Other recommendations include the following:
    - Advocate for investment in and expansion of support staff in schools (school counselors, psychologists, social workers, etc.).

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<sup>7</sup> The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators, October 2008.

- Integrate school rules, code of conduct, and school climate into the school curriculum so that is better understood by students and parents.
- Include information on the Dignity Act Coordinator and safe and healthy school climate in annual staff, student, and parent orientations.
- Expand School Safety Plans to include protocols for school buses/transporters and locations outside of the school building as well as to include before- and after-school programs.
- Continue the process of organizing smaller learning environments within the high school so teachers, administrators, students, and their parents are more closely and personally connected. Continue the same process of organizing smaller learning environments in the middle school.
- Work more closely with outside agencies, including the Hempstead Police Department, to monitor and stay ahead of gang-related activities.
- Provide additional training for security personnel (PreK-12) with clear performance expectations with an emphasis on pro-active and positive student contact. Provide clear feedback to security staff from the director of security, school principals, assistant principals, and deans.
- Require reports at regular Board of Education meetings on steps taken to respond to fights and weapons incidents during the prior month.
- Replace dysfunctional and low-quality security cameras.

The Distinguished Educator and NYSED will provide guidance and technical assistance and will monitor each step of implementation to ensure every step is completed in a timely and satisfactory manner.

## 4. FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

### I. FINDINGS

The District's capacity for day-to-day facilities operations and maintenance is stretched thin, with inadequate regular maintenance. SED's 2004 report noted that many buildings were deteriorating for lack of maintenance and repairs; safety, heating and ventilation problems existed at many locations; and there was significant overcrowding.<sup>8</sup> These and other **previously unaddressed issues are now "coming home to roost."** This is illustrated by the repeated failures of various school heating plants in late November 2017 with school cancelled in one case and inadequately heated buildings in several other cases. Maintenance plans for heating plants seem to have been cancelled 7-8 years ago, resulting in failures that could have been prevented through proper upkeep. The District's ability to address these maintenance concerns is compounded by the failure to pay some contractors promptly and fully.

In addition, while facilities plans have been developed over the years, it does not appear that the District has developed and maintained a Comprehensive Long-Range Plan pertaining to educational facilities as required by Commissioner's Regulations 155.1(a). It is also not apparent that the district has prepared and updated on an annual basis, a Five-Year Capital Facilities Plan as required by Commissioner's Regulations 155.1(a)(4). The effects of this inattention are best illustrated by the fact Rhodes Elementary School has not been used for 17 years and was condemned a decade ago; it is an eyesore that poses a health and safety risk to the neighborhood.

The District submitted Building Condition Surveys in 2015 for occupied buildings in accordance with Education Law 3641(4) and Commissioner's Regulations 155.4(b)(1). Of note, it appears that the overall building ratings included in the Building Condition Surveys indicated that most buildings were in 'satisfactory' condition. However, these ratings were assigned without consultation with a district health and safety committee, so it may be suspect. Moreover, it is unclear whether the District has been establishing a safety rating for each occupied school building as required by Commissioner's Regulations 155.4(c)(1), and whether these ratings were developed after consultation with a district health and safety committee.

The District's buildings are already overcrowded, and that issue will only be compounded in the coming years: Demographic projections prepared in June 2016 show that the secondary schools will have to accommodate almost 1,000 more students than at present. There are already dozens of portable classrooms in use across the District's schools. They are 30-40 years old, in bad condition, expensive to maintain, and some pose health concerns for students and staff. In addition to not having enough classrooms, there is inadequate space to provide students with opportunities to explore art, music, library/media, and technology.

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<sup>8</sup> For further information on the 2004 report, see Appendix D.

It should be noted that Prospect School was upgraded through a bond issue following the 2004 report. The situation regarding most of the rest of the District's facilities remains, however, much as it was in 2004.

## **II. FACILITIES MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN**

These pressing facilities issues must be immediately addressed.

1. The Board of Education and the District administrators must develop a Comprehensive Long-Range Plan and a Five-Year Capital Facilities Plan with the assistance of Nassau BOCES and the District's architectural and engineering firm. These plans should be subject to public input and brought to completion with adoption by the Board no later than February 2018.
2. The District must request a Facilities Assessment be conducted by the New York State School Facilities Association as soon as possible. Within six weeks of the completion of that assessment, the District administrators should prepare an implementation timeline and process for each step recommended by the group.
3. The Distinguished Educator will monitor and evaluate timely and satisfactory completion of all steps.

## 5. HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUCTION

### I. FINDINGS

NYSED's 2004 report cited significant concerns regarding high school instruction, including:<sup>9</sup>

- Few Regents Diplomas were awarded (the cohort graduation rate for 1999 was 44 percent) and the dropout rate was high (18.8 percent in 2003-04).
- Instructional resources for English Language Arts and mathematics were not sufficient to provide all students an opportunity to learn and to demonstrate mastery of State learning standards.
- There was inadequate coordination and collaboration among general education, special education, and English as a second language administrators and teachers, adversely affecting curriculum development, professional development, and teacher proficiency in curricula.
- Teaching assistants were pulled away from duties in special education, general education, and classes for English Language Learners (ELLs) to substitute teach, and, in some cases, were filling long-term vacancies.
- Guidance counselors provided limited student services and class scheduling was inefficient (class sizes ranged from 2 to 36 students). Students' needs and abilities were not considered in scheduling.
- The middle school and high school programs were operated in isolation, with no building-to-building (nor grade-to-grade at the middle school) articulation.

Unfortunately, many of these concerns regarding the District's high school instruction from more than a decade ago still stand. A request for information to the administration of the high school on the number of students in grade 12 and their progress towards graduation in June 2018 took over a month to fulfill. Initially, even the raw number of students in the senior class was difficult to pin down with reported values ranging widely from 575 to 875. (The actual figure, which includes fifth and sixth year students, was 872.)

When a review of each grade 12 student's credit status was completed, almost 300 students were determined to have dropped out since September 2017 (although some may have been "no shows" for much longer)\*, approximately 250 were determined to currently be ready or on track to graduation by June 2018, and many of the remainder were determined to have earned very few credits over the past 3½ to 5½ years. Over the past couple of weeks, plans to help each student sub-group have begun to emerge, but this kind of status review is something that should be commonplace to support students in their educational journey, not to be evaluated only upon an external request and particularly not in a school in receivership.

*\* Note: This is a drop-out rate of 34% (294 of 872 Grade 12 students)*

**Hempstead students, in general, perform well below their potential. Far too few graduate and of those who do graduate, few do so with the skills and knowledge they**

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<sup>9</sup> For more information from the 2004 report, see Appendix E.

**need to succeed in college, career, and civic life.** An analysis of grade 12 students determined that a substantial proportion of the class had 0-10 credits and 0 or 1 Regents credits. (Students who are on track to graduation by the end of Grade 11 would normally have--at a minimum--16-17 credits including 5 Regents credits.) Further analysis showed that students had taken various Regents courses and the corresponding exams 3, 4, 5, 6, and even 7 times with falling numbers with each attempt to re-take as some students who had failed simply stopped trying (see Appendix F). A similar analysis of students in grade 11 has begun and should be completed before the end of December and will be followed by analyses of the progress of students in grades 9 and 10.

There is insufficient time for collaborative planning and professional development and a shortage of high-level courses available for high-achieving students.

Staff, parents, and students have been insufficiently engaged in the development and implementation of reform plans intended to improve student outcomes. The high school's current reform plan does not have deep or broad buy-in from the educators and professional staff and is therefore in danger of stalling at the end of the 2017-18 school year.

## **II. HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN**

The need for urgent action must be balanced with the current reality that less than half of Hempstead High School students are graduating with Regents diplomas. While multiple school improvement plans have been submitted to SED, they have not produced successful outcomes. It is time for the District, with the assistance and oversight of the State Education Department, to create and faithfully implement a new comprehensive, long-term improvement plan with the full engagement of staff, students, parents, and outside experts selected by SED. This plan must be based on a rigorous analysis of data and draw on evidence-based practices. The students cannot afford for these efforts to remain stalled when their future is on the line.

It is recommended that steps be taken immediately to intervene in the progress of students in grade 12 who are not ready for graduation – particularly those with too few credits earned – to support them in finding constructive paths to success. The Superintendent and high school administration has prepared substantive proposals for action in support of students that the Board has yet to consider. These or something like them make sense and should be implemented.

1. The District should immediately develop a timeline and process for the development of a fresh, comprehensive school improvement plan. This should be reviewed at the January 18, 2018 meeting of the Board of Education and submitted to NYSED for approval thereafter.
2. The Distinguished Educator will assist in the development of this plan, ensuring full engagement of staff, students, and parents, and will monitor and evaluate its implementation.

## 6. PREK-8 INSTRUCTION

### I. FINDINGS

A recent national study by researchers at Stanford University determined that HUFSD ranked in the bottom one percent of districts in the country in terms of student achievement growth from grade 3 to grade 8, with only 2.2 years of growth over this period. This reinforces the picture painted by State and NWEA/MAP assessment data.

There has been a history of frequent changes in curriculum and instruction due to turnover of superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and outside consultants. This has also led to the expectation that new plans will be superseded every 2-3 years, which is a very understandable, but counterproductive, expectation. To quote one teacher, there is "consistent inconsistency," an assessment which is in line with the sentiments shared by parents and staff members.

I observed the following regarding preK-8 instruction:

- A lack of consistent, long-term instructional plans with clearly defined steps to progress from current status to future goals.
- Poor preK-12 articulation and a lack opportunity for relevant building- or district-wide administrators, educators, and professional staff to fully participate in the formulation, adoption, and continuing implementation of long-term plans.
- Insufficient time and resources for planning and professional development that are aligned with data and have clearly defined goals.
- Budgets are inadequately aligned with long-term instructional plans and needs. There are, for example, no reading teachers in the elementary schools.
- Significant dependence on costly outside resources and professional assistance, which are also insufficiently aligned with District plans and often out of sync with school years.

### II. RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

Elementary teachers and administrators seem ready and willing to fully participate in the development of a comprehensive preK-8 school improvement plan, particularly if there is commitment to seeing it through over the long-term. Such a plan should be grounded in data and best practices, and ownership should be shared by a broad group of stakeholders to ensure that the plan is refined and built upon over time, rather than overhauled when there are leadership transitions.

1. The District should develop a new comprehensive school improvement plan no later than May 1, 2018, so there is ample time for community review and discussion prior to the end of the 2017-18 school year and for implementation in 2018-19.
2. The Distinguished Educator will assist with the development of this plan and will monitor and evaluate timely and satisfactory development and implementation of this plan.



## **7. SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **I. FINDINGS**

The Corrective Action Plan signed by the District and NYSED is extremely rigorous due to a long history of non-compliance and a failure of previous compliance actions to promote systemic changes in the District. The Interim Director of Special Education is leading the effort to faithfully implement the plan.

In addition, the Interim Director is working with the Bilingual/English as a New Language (ENL)/Languages Other than English(LOTE) Coordinator to better serve the needs of students served by both departments.

### **II. RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN**

1. The Business Office and the Special Education department must take immediate steps to ensure that the District is receiving all aid to which it is entitled.
2. The Distinguished Educator will provide technical assistance regarding compliance with the Corrective Action Plan and will monitor and evaluate timely and satisfactory completion of all aspects of the Corrective Action Plan.

## 8. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

### I. FINDINGS

Following a joint site visit in December 2015, which was followed by a site visit report in May 2016, SED's Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages ("OBEWL") negotiated a Corrective Action Plan ("CAP") with the District. The CAP was finalized on September 21, 2017 and the District's first status report under this CAP is due on January 30, 2018. OBEWL gave the District with for its efforts toward compliance in 2016-17 during which period the CAP was negotiated, and therefore the District is currently in year two of its three-year CAP.

The Corrective Action Plan signed by the District with NYSED is rigorous and appropriate given the current status of education for English Language Learners in Hempstead. The Coordinator for Bilingual/ENL/LOTE for the District, working with her staff and building- and District-level administration, has undertaken activities to implement the plan of action in a positive and proactive manner. In addition, the Coordinator has initiated discussions with the Interim Director of Special Education to better serve the needs of Hempstead students served by both departments.

Over the last year or so, SED has received two or three complaints about ELL services for Students with Disabilities in the District, which have since been resolved. However, in December 2017, OBEWL received two independent complaints that anywhere from 300-400 students were dismissed without due process from Hempstead High School this fall. Furthermore, the complaints allege that some students returned to the high school to enroll and were turned away. OBEWL is currently investigating these complaints.

### II. RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

The Distinguished Educator will provide technical assistance regarding compliance with the Corrective Action Plan and will monitor and evaluate timely and satisfactory completion of all aspects of the Corrective Action Plan. It is recommended that the District take steps to:

- Ensure robust professional development for all teachers, including but not limited to English as a New Language and Bilingual Education teachers, about the instructional needs of ELLs.
- Ensure that content area teachers and ENL teachers who co-teach Integrated ENL have adequate common planning time.
- Identify and coordinate a District plan of action to incentivize more teachers to seek dual certification so that they may provide integrated ENL instruction without a need for co-teaching.
- Ensure that all staff are trained on District policies for interpretation and translation, and that such policies are followed.
- Ensure that all ELLs with IEPs are provided ENL instruction and take the NYSESLAT annually.

## **9. NUTRITION AND FOOD SERVICES**

### **I. AREAS OF CONCERN**

Due to other pressing areas of concern, nutrition and food services have not yet been addressed by the Distinguished Educator.

The 2004 NYSED report indicated that there was a lack of management of the Food Service Program and it was recommended that the Food Service Director be replaced, which ultimately occurred in 2008. Also in 2004, health and safety issues were being disregarded (e.g., food was not always maintained at safe temperatures prior to serving) and problems that had been noted in prior Department of Health reports regarding faulty equipment/facilities were not being addressed. Recent Department of Health reports and SED reviews have not cited the District for any critical health and safety violations.

While the 2004 SED report indicated that meals did not meet nutritional requirements, an administrative review ("AR") conducted by SED in 2014 found the district to be in full compliance with meal pattern requirements. Additionally, prior issues with the District over-claiming meals for reimbursement have been rectified; SED recouped a total of \$226,000 to address this specific 2004 finding. The District demonstrated in 2014 that it had an accurate meal counting system that yielded correct claims.

Although progress in this area appears to have been made, I will be engaged with the District and SED when SED conducts its 2018 administrative review of the District to ensure that the program is being appropriately managed. In addition, the AR will give SED the opportunity to monitor the status of food preparation and serving facilities and equipment as well as the quality and consistency of the operations and administration of Hempstead's nutrition program.

### **II. RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN**

This Distinguished Educator will provide and/or connect the District with technical assistance and/or guidance regarding the Child Nutrition Program.

## 10. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

### I. FINDINGS

The District relies on its IT system for accessing the Internet, communicating by email, storing data, and recording financial information. Therefore, the District's IT system and the data it holds are valuable resources. If the IT system fails, the results could range from inconvenient to severe. Even small disruptions in IT systems can require extensive effort to evaluate and repair.

It was noted in the Comptroller's 2014 report that District officials had not taken responsibility for developing written policies and procedures to effectively safeguard IT resources. The Office of the State Comptroller found improper assignment of administrative privileges and excessive access rights in the District's Student Information System (SIS). The District also failed to adopt IT change management policies and procedures. As a result of these weaknesses, the District's IT system and its data were found to be subject to an increased risk of corruption, loss or misuse.

Currently, the District's technology infrastructure (instructional, security, and administrative) continues to suffer from a lack of focus, inadequate planning, and high risk to due poor security for both digital and tangible IT assets. Furthermore, the District has not yet applied for over \$9 million in Smart Schools Bond Act funds allocated to Hempstead which could have been used for the benefit of Hempstead students.

The District in the past had failed to take full advantage of the services of the technology team at Nassau BOCES (as virtually all other Nassau County districts have) due to lack of leadership and follow-through. Happily, the District's new Director of Technology is in close cooperation with the technology team from Nassau BOCES along with members of a District-wide advisory group. The Hempstead Director of Technology and the Nassau BOCES technology team have done an initial assessment of the District's technology (a copy of the BOCES assessment is attached in Appendix G). They are in the process of developing a comprehensive multi-year plan.

### II. RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

1. Continue to assist Hempstead Director of Technology and Nassau BOCES Technology team with implementation. Monitor closely, to ensure Hempstead follow-through on all commitments.
2. The Distinguished Educator will monitor and evaluate timely and satisfactory completion to ensure Hempstead follow-through on all commitments made.
3. The District should submit its application for Smart Schools Bond Act funding as soon as feasible.

## CONCLUSION

I would like to reiterate my appreciation for the candid feedback I received from members of the Hempstead community throughout my engagement to date, and I look forward to working with the District to ensure that the recommendations included in this report are implemented as quickly as possible.

It is clear from the review of past reports by the State Education Department and the Office of the State Comptroller that many of the prevailing concerns are not new, but in fact have plagued HUFSD for a decade or longer. Too many cohorts of students have cycled through a District that is not meeting their basic needs for a safe and healthy environment, let alone providing them with educational opportunities that inspire them to reach their fullest potential. Any time lost in implementing the recommendations herein is a detriment to current and future Hempstead students – we do not have a moment to waste.

I am requesting that by February 2, 2018, the HUFSD Board of Education provide me either written evidence of how these recommendations have been incorporated into existing plans or the District has received a determination from the Commissioner that the District's written explanation for not adopting such recommendations has compelling

## APPENDICES

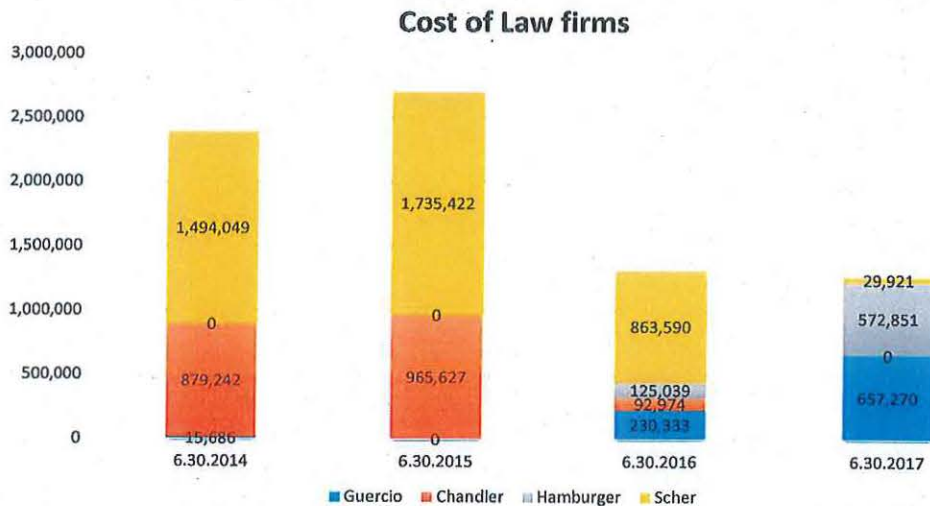
- A. Cost of Law Firms to HUFSD
- B. Risk Registers as of April 12, 2016
- C. School Safety & Security / School Climate Findings from NYSED December 2004 School Visit
- D. School Facilities Findings and Observations from NYSED December 2004 School Visit
- E. Curriculum and Instruction Findings from NYSED December 2004 School Visit
- F. Regents Exam Results (data compiled November 2017)
- G. Technology Infrastructure Overview provided by Nassau BOCES, November 21, 2017

## Appendix A. – Cost of Law Firms to HUFSD

As General Counsel, Guercio has charged the District a total of \$903,289 in four years of service, while Chandler charged \$1,937,843. As Labor Counsel, Hamburger has charged \$697,890, while Scher has charged \$4,122,982. In the 2014 and 2015 school years, Chandler and Scher have charged more than double the amount of Guercio and Hamburger combined.

The external Audit Evaluation and Warrant Consideration Report, dated October 14, 2015, found excessive legal fees incurred by the Chandler and Scher Law firms.

	6.30.2014	6.30.2015	6.30.2016	6.30.2017	Total
Guercio	15,686	0	230,333	657,270	903,289
Chandler	879,242	965,627	92,974	0	1,937,843
Hamburger	0	0	125,039	572,851	697,890
Scher	1,494,049	1,735,422	863,590	29,921	4,122,982



# Appendix B. – Risk Registers as of April 12, 2016

Hempstead Union Free School District

RISK REGISTER AS OF April 12, 2016														
Business Unit	Process	Risk Assessment								Follow Up/Performed				
		Interest Risk				Compliance Risk								
		Severe	High	Mod	Low	Severe	High	Mod	Low	2016	2017	2018	2019	Reference
Governance	General Policy and Procedures	✓						✓						Pages 9 - 11
	Monitoring	✓				✓								Page 13
	Organizational Structure	✓						✓						
	Risk Management	✓						✓						
Information Technology (IT)	Network Security		✓					✓						
	Financial Application Security		✓					✓						Page 14
	Miscellaneous Application Security		✓					✓						
	Disaster Recovery		✓					✓						Page 15
Budget	Development	✓				✓								Page 12
	Presentation/Compliance	✓						✓						
	Monitoring	✓				✓								Page 13
	Amendments			✓				✓						
Financial Reporting	Monthly Reporting	✓						✓						
	General Accounting		✓					✓						
	Annual Reporting		✓					✓						
	Financial Oversight		✓					✓						
	Fund Balance Management		✓					✓						

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RISK REGISTER AS OF April 12, 2016														
Business Unit	Process	Risk Assessment								Follow Up/Performed				
		Interest Risk				Compliance Risk								
		Severe	High	Mod	Low	Severe	High	Mod	Low	2016	2017	2018	2019	Reference
Payroll/HR	Payments to Employees	✓						✓						
	Allocation of Expenditures	✓						✓						Page 22
	General Employee Administration		✓					✓						Pages 16 - 21
	Employee Benefit Administration	✓						✓						
	Employee Attendance	✓						✓						
	Hiring/Termination of Employees		✓					✓						
Purchasing/AP	P.O. System		✓					✓			✓			Page 25
	Payments Outside P.O. System	✓						✓			✓			Page 25
	Procurement Process	✓						✓			✓			Page 22, 25
	Private Purpose Trust Expenditures			✓					✓					
	Reporting Requirements		✓					✓			✓			Page 23
	Allocation of Expenditures	✓						✓			✓			Page 25
	Payment Processing	✓						✓			✓			Page 23 - 25
	petty Cash Administration			✓					✓					
State Aid	General Processing/Monitoring		✓					✓						
	Basic Aid		✓					✓						
	Transportation Aid			✓					✓					
	Building Aid/Capital		✓					✓						
	Excess Cost Aid			✓					✓					
	BOCES			✓					✓					

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Appendix B. Continued – Risk Registers as of April 12, 2016

Hempstead Union Free School District

RISK REGISTER AS OF April 12, 2016												
Business Unit	Process	Risk Assessment								Tests Performed		
		Inherent Risk				Residual Risk						
		Severe	High	Mod	Low	Severe	High	Mod	Low	2016	2017-2018-2019	Reference
Attendance	Tracking Student Attendance		✓					✓				
	Student Performance Data			✓					✓			
Capital Projects	Planning		✓					✓				
	Monitoring		✓					✓				
	Completion		✓					✓				
Special Aid	Grant Application		✓					✓				
	Allowable Costs		✓					✓				
	Cash Management		✓					✓				
	Reporting and Monitoring		✓					✓				Page 22
	Compliance		✓					✓				
School Lunch	Federal & State Reimbursement		✓					✓				
	Sales Cycle and System		✓					✓				
	Inventory and Purchases		✓					✓				
	Eligibility Verification			✓					✓			
Fixed Assets	Acquisition and Disposal		✓					✓				
	Compliance			✓					✓			
	Inventory		✓					✓				

RISK REGISTER AS OF April 12, 2016												
Business Unit	Process	Risk Assessment								Tests Performed		
		Inherent Risk				Residual Risk						
		Severe	High	Mod	Low	Severe	High	Mod	Low	2016	2017-2018-2019	Reference
Transportation	Fleet Maintenance			✓					✓			
	Risk Management		✓					✓				
	Personnel Compliance			✓					✓			
	Facilities Maintenance and Security		✓					✓				
Cash Receipts/ Billing	Real Property Tax	✓						✓				
	Medicaid		✓					✓				
	Out of District Tuition			✓					✓			
	Use of Facilities			✓				✓				
	Admissions and Concessions		✓					✓				
	Donations			✓					✓			
	Collection/Posting of Receipts		✓					✓				
Extraclassroom	General		✓					✓				
	Cash and Cash Receipts		✓					✓				
	Expenditures and Purchasing			✓					✓			
	Inventories			✓					✓			

## Appendix C. School Safety & Security / School Climate Findings from NYSED December 2004 School Visit

State Education Department Team Visit  
Hempstead Union Free School District  
December 2004

### School Safety and Security/School Climate

#### District Office

##### Findings/Observations

- Data systems identify data discrepancies and potentially serious problems with attendance, discipline, school safety and school completion.
- Policy documents (District School Safety Plan, Code of Conduct, Attendance Policy Handbook) are well written but not well implemented.

##### Recommendations

- Conduct audit of attendance, discipline, school safety and school completion data and data systems.
- Train staff to be able to use attendance, discipline, school safety and school completion data systems to identify problems and implement improvement strategies.
- Conduct audit of personnel qualifications for those staff working in attendance, discipline, school safety and pupil personnel services areas, especially guidance.

#### Pre-K and Elementary

##### Findings/Observations

- Procedures for visitor sign-in and emergency evacuation are inconsistently enforced or unknown.
- Discrepancies existed between buildings and resources for students – some buildings had an abundance of computers and supplies, and others lacked basic resources.
- Safety concerns were noted in the playground areas, including fencing that needed repair.
- Some buildings were observed to have garbage and dirt in the hallways.
- Student attendance was reported to be high.
- Teacher absence was reported to be high (not substantiated by data).
- Buildings that reported giving attention to school climate and classroom management issues were observed as being more orderly and quiet.

##### Recommendations

- Review implementation of safety and security procedures.
- Review the needs of changing school demographics, e.g., the growing Hispanic population.

## Appendix C. Continued – School Safety & Security / School Climate Findings from NYSED December 2004 School Visit

- Continue examination of safety plan implementation in buildings, with training and practice recommendations for full plan implementation.
- Further observe and document effective school climate strategies, with development of a plan for replication in other elementary buildings.
- Review and plan the equitable distribution of resources among all students in all elementary school buildings.

### Secondary

#### Findings/Observations

- Physical plants were deteriorating and in need of maintenance.
- Entry to the middle school is through an active parking lot on a major street. Security staff was not evident outside the school during student arrival.
- Concerns were voiced about supervision and effective use of security at the high school.
- Visible evidence of gang activity was noted.
- After school programs need additional supports such as transportation and coordination with community resources.
- The majority of the district's student population is now Hispanic, rather than African American; however, programming in the middle school was observed to be Afro-centric in nature.

#### Recommendations

- Review methods of data collection, reporting and analysis for areas such as attendance and discipline to ensure that information is accurate and useful for planning.
- Review and plan the equitable distribution of resources among all students in all buildings.
- Provide support for regular meeting of the building safety team to address some of the areas mentioned above (minimum: monthly meetings).
- Review the process for hiring, training and supervising security personnel with administration, and jointly develop a plan to more effectively utilize security resources for identified needs, such as during student arrival, and to respond to the noted gang activity, to be developed this school year and implemented prior to the opening of the 2005-06 school year.
- Review strategies to coordinate and integrate community resources with programming, such as after-school (ESD/SVP and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center), to support student needs with regard to gang activity and the growing Hispanic population.

## Appendix D. – School Facilities Findings and Observations from NYSED December 2004 School Visit

- All flat roof areas need to be removed and replaced. There are tears and blisters in the existing roof membrane. Welded seams have separated in many areas. The roof deck below the membrane has protrusions that have punctured the membrane. These must be removed before a new membrane can be reapplied.
- The leaders are too small to discharge rainwater from the roof in a timely fashion. For short-term occupancy, the leaders must have cages added to prevent them from clogging. The gutters need to be cleaned on a regular basis. During inspection, there was standing water on the roof as a result of leaves and tennis balls clogging the downspouts. This allows water to penetrate into the structure causing further deterioration of other elements such as paint, plaster, suspended ceilings, and lighting fixtures.
- The boiler and heating system are in reasonable condition with the following minor changes.
  - The fire rated boiler room door must be kept closed at all times. This will prevent the smell of heating oil and fumes from the boiler operation from penetrating the remainder of the building. The door in an open position is also a dangerous fire and life-safety violation.
  - Remove the plywood that covers the fresh air louver in the boiler room. The louver is a code required building feature, which provides outside air to the boiler so it can function properly. The boiler room will stay much cooler and the fresh air will help eliminate the smell of oil. The current operation draws air from inside the facility and may allow the products of combustion to enter the facility.
- Inspect the roof and floor structure at locations where there have been roof leaks. The leaks are evident from the stains on the ceilings and floors or water in the light fixtures. Visual inspections of the roof structure at these locations are easily made from the attic. Visual inspections of the floors where there are water stains must be made by removing ceilings within the first floor rooms below. Specifically, the floor of CR-21 must be viewed from the ceiling in room CR-13. There appears to be a sagging floor structure in this classroom. If structural deterioration is found in any location, the repairs must be completed prior to occupancy. Minimally, the floor in room CR-21 will need to be removed and the sub-floor repaired. The sub-floor has buckled from water damage.
- Repair the bricks in the chimneys. From the ground it is obvious that bricks are missing and loose. The chimneys must be thoroughly inspected to develop a complete scope of work. Some chimneys may be able to be eliminated based on operation of the building. Necessary repairs must be completed based on the scope of work. Some have deteriorated to the point that they may require removal and replacement.
- Several areas of the brick façade require re-pointing. A close visual inspection of the exterior of the building brick faces should be completed to determine the extent of re-pointing and how long the building would last without the brick joints failing. Failure of the joints will allow water penetration into the building and could cause bricks to fall off the building causing a safety concern. These conditions will add to quicker deterioration of the wall and, ultimately, a structural failure of the wall.
- The fascias of the roof need to be repaired. There is one hole large enough for pigeons to enter in the rear of the building. Other fascia locations should be investigated for rotted wood. Once the repairs are completed the entire fascia needs to be painted to prevent further deterioration.

## Appendix D. Continued – School Facilities Findings and Observations from NYSED December 2004 School Visit

- The two front rain leaders from the roof need to be repaired or replaced. The moss needs to be removed or cleaned from the front of the building in the location where the two roof leaders are located. The moss is the entire height of the building from the ground to the roof and is the result of a failed roof leader system. This area has caused water penetration into the building and mold growth inside the facility at these locations. After the moss is removed, the brick joints in the wall at these same two locations must be re-pointed.
- Replace all of the emergency lights in the entire building.
- Check the condition of every exit light. They must be internally or externally lit with the normal lighting fixtures off. Replace any that are not in proper locations, missing or broken. Place the entire exit lighting system on a dedicated emergency outlet to prevent them from being turned off.
- Replace broken window balances. There are numerous windows that don't operate properly. They catch when opening, won't open, or slam down once they are open.
- Clean the bird droppings out of the attic. This is a hazardous material and maintenance staff should not complete work unless they have the proper protective equipment and have been properly trained to handle this material. This is an example of a deteriorated building condition causing a greater expense over time. Preventing avian entry to the building would have prevented the expense of a hazardous substance cleanup.
- Asbestos investigation was beginning while SED staff was in the building. In addition to asbestos, the painted surfaces within the building must be tested for lead-based paint. These tests will be necessary to prior to the removal and replacement of deteriorated plaster ceilings and walls.
- Clean any interior surfaces where mold is found with appropriate anti-fungal cleaner. If the wall or ceiling surfaces appear to be damaged by water, remove them entirely and replace the material.
- Scrape all painted surfaces throughout the building where paint is flaking. If the locations where flaking paint are caused by water damage, investigate the water source and complete the appropriate repairs or the problem and damage will re-appear.
- Paint all the locations above. Paint the remaining rooms within the building if desired.

The following observations were made in the building and will require correction prior to long-term use of the building:

- The cafeteria space is not adequate. The present location may not be occupied by more than 49 people at any time. Occupancy by 50 persons or more is a public assembly that requires additional exiting capacity. This capacity does not exist in this location. This would effectively prevent any cafeteria period from seating more than 49 students. Students will have to eat in their classrooms. A greater number of occupants is a violation of the fire code and dangerous to the room occupants.
- The kitchen equipment serving the present cafeteria may need to be replaced. The present kitchen space cannot be used for cooking equipment or be converted to install cooking equipment. It can only be used for cold food preparation or warming food prepared at another location. For long-term use an adequate space is needed.
- The gym exits are not remote. This room is also not allowed to be occupied by more than 49 people at any time. Since fewer teachers are necessary for a phys-ed class, there may

## Appendix D. Continued – School Facilities Findings and Observations from NYSED December 2004 School Visit

- be no more than 45 to 48 students in the gym at any time. For long-term use, the exiting problem needs to be corrected with an additional exit to the exterior.
- The lighting levels in many classrooms need to be investigated. The light fixtures may also contain PCB ballasts. Whereas the ballasts present no danger if undamaged and left in place, the maintenance staff should be trained in the proper disposal of PCB ballasts. If the lighting levels are below proper levels and/or the fixtures have PCBs, the fixtures should be removed and replaced. Occupancy sensors should be added to the new lighting in each room to turn them off automatically.
  - There are no student toilets located on the first floor of this building. This must be corrected for long-term use of the facility.
  - The building is not accessible to the physically disabled. While we are not requiring the district to correct this problem immediately, it is a retroactive violation of the federal statute Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The district is open to a federal lawsuit and Department of Justice intervention without the necessary alterations to bring the building into minimal compliance with ADA standards.

### Observations at Other Buildings

#### **Middle School**

SED had previously visited the middle school in April 2004. At that time a variety of fire safety violations were discovered. The Director of Facilities and the maintenance staff have corrected all these violations.

During the previous visit, SED noted severe structural deterioration of the floors below the kitchen and problematic ventilation in the "Pod" addition, which has caused health-related problems. SED instructed the district to correct these problems. The voters authorized a \$5 million appropriation and a capital construction project has been designed and waiting for submission to SED since mid-November. SED was informed that the school board president would not sign the proper forms for submission to Facilities Planning. Without the signature of the board president, Facilities Planning cannot approve the project and corrections. The Director of Facilities has been advised to send the submission to Facilities Planning so that it can be reviewed and a building permit issued upon receipt of the Board Presidents signature. This situation represents an ongoing structural concern that should already be under contract to effect repairs. The danger of losing the operation of the middle school kitchen is real. Without it, the district cannot prepare food for the middle school students or many elementary school students, which receive meals from the middle school on a daily basis.

#### **Jackson Street School**

- The building is in good condition and repairs on the exterior and in the interior have been made. There were a few fire safety violations noted.

## Appendix D. Continued – School Facilities Findings and Observations from NYSED December 2004 School Visit

- Some classroom doors and the gym-atorium doors are being held open by wood or rubber wedges. This is an intentional violation of a life safety code. These doors have automatic closers to protect building occupants in the event of a fire.
- The gym-atorium was being prepared for an evening function. With the chairs set up inside the gym-atorium, all of the lunch tables were relocated to, and blocking, the corridors. This would have been a very dangerous exiting problem for the gym-atorium occupants if emergency exiting had become necessary. The tables are also combustible and are not allowed to be stored in the corridors. Combustible materials in corridors aid in the quick spread of fire. This is a severe problem for all building occupants when they are attempting to exit the building in an emergency.
- There are refrigerators stored in the corridors in the gym-atorium exit that block the corridor widths. This is a very dangerous exiting problem for the facility occupants if emergency exiting becomes necessary.
- Trash and empty boxes were stored in the corridors in the gym-atorium exit. Trash should never be stored loose inside the building. This condition is also a severe fire-safety problem and contributes to the speed at which a fire will spread.
- A large carpet with a map of the United States woven into the surface was mounted on the wall in the corridor. Carpet is not an approved wall covering or hanging because of its inherent ability to spread fire. SED provided the School Principal and Head Custodian with directions to contact the manufacturer to obtain the proper fireproofing qualification for the carpet or apply an aftermarket fireproofing to the carpet. Without fireproofing, the carpet is a fire-safety violation and would be required to be removed.

### Jackson Annex School

This building consists of a small building for administration with six classrooms. The main portions of the student spaces are temporary modular buildings. Some of the modular building are relatively new having been installed within the last four years. Others are older and were installed over 20 years ago. The following conditions were observed.

- The main building serving six classrooms does not have enough toilets for the students. Two rooms are provided; each room has a single toilet. Two toilet fixtures are not adequate for 120 to 180 students.
- A single room serves as the cafeteria, art room, auditorium, gymnasium, and cold storage for 595 students. This space is not large enough for an auditorium or gymnasium and is not adequate for these functions.
- The nurse's office is extremely small. There are no counters to provide student services. The nearest toilet is the faculty toilet, which must be accessed through the adjacent faculty lounge. The nurse's suite should be self-contained for privacy concerns.
- Two storage room doors in the corridor are blocked from being closed. The rooms are overly stuffed with materials preventing the doors from closing. To access the rear of the room, the room contents would need to be moved into the corridor. Many materials are combustible within this room. It was not possible to see into these rooms and examine materials in the rear. The combustible materials aid in the quick spread of fire and will cause a severe problem for all building occupants when they are attempting to exit the building in an emergency.

## Appendix D. Continued – School Facilities Findings and Observations from NYSED December 2004 School Visit

- Some classroom doors are being held open by wood or rubber wedges. The doors are required to be maintained closed to prevent fire and smoke from entering the corridor if there is a fire.
- There are couches, chairs, a copier, small tables, and magazine racks in the corridor. These are all fire/safety violations that must be corrected. With the exception of student artwork, combustible materials are not allowed in the corridor. The furniture is combustible and is a tripping hazard during an emergency.
- The staff was hanging holiday lights in the corridor with paper clips and scotch tape. They are not allowed to be installed in corridors. The Director of Facilities indicated that he would take care of this immediately.
- The boiler room fire door is open. This is a severe hazard to building occupants if there is a fire in the boiler room. The door must be maintained closed.

### Franklin Street School

- The building was extremely hot inside. The heating system and controls need to be investigated and serviced. Teachers are holding the corridor doors open and opening windows to the exterior to cool the rooms down.
- The lights did not turn on in the boiler room. It is extremely dangerous to be working with mechanical and electrical equipment without sufficient light, and, subsequently, staff simply does not adequately maintain the equipment. SED was told the light bulbs burn out from staff leaving the boiler room lights turned on after leaving the room. A pilot light on the switch or an occupancy sensor on the lights should be installed to help staff to remember to turn the switches off.
- Some classroom doors are being held open by chairs and wood or rubber wedges. The doors are required to be maintained closed to prevent fire and smoke from entering the corridor if there is a fire.
- New door closers have been installed on the gymnasium doors and a couple classrooms. These door closers have hold-open devices built into them. This type of device is not allowed unless it is magnetically operated and released by fire alarm system activation. This is a similar violation to the wood or rubber wedges. In addition, when the doors are held open, they reduce the required emergency exit width of the corridor. The doors are required to be maintained closed to prevent fire and smoke from entering the corridor if there is a fire. If correctly held open on magnetic devices connected to the fire alarm system, they must swing open 180 degrees in order to prevent blocking the corridor.
- Two bookcases and storage cabinets were located in exit corridors. Similar to tables and other furniture, these are combustible and are not allowed to be stored in the corridors. Combustible materials in corridors aid in the quick spread of fire.

### Recommendations

- Immediately correct the fire safety violations that have been noted.
- Immediately implement the \$5 million capital construction project at the middle school.
- The re-opening of the Prospect School will temporarily reduce the need for space for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. A long-term solution must be found and funded within the next two years. In SED's judgment, the facility cannot be economically expanded and utilized for permanent,



## Appendix D. Continued – School Facilities Findings and Observations from NYSED December 2004 School Visit

long-term space. The significant shortcomings that exist such as inadequate cafeteria, gymnasium, ADA compliance, and inadequate bathroom facilities, support the need for a replacement facility on the same site.

- Immediately seek voter authorization for the demolition and replacement of the Rhodes Elementary School on the Rhodes school site. The condition of the Rhodes school is significantly worse than that of Prospect and it should not be reopened under any circumstances. In addition, it is completely inadequate from an educational perspective. It is not handicapped accessible, and there are no bathrooms other than in the basement, and it had serious structural flaws. SED recommends that it be abandoned and fenced off until demolition.
- Immediately develop a long-term facility plan to reduce the overcrowded conditions of all of the elementary schools. A comprehensive plan will guide the district through this process. The Superintendent of Schools expressed a desire to move forward with the demolition of the Rhodes school and building its replacement. This is an excellent first step in the process. The fact that the district has vacant buildings lends itself to the revitalization of the district without further disruption to the educational process. In addition, it is less costly and quicker to perform capital work in un-occupied facilities. A complete study of student enrollment must be made to determine the size of the replacement buildings or additions. An appropriate long-term goal would be to remove all modular classrooms in the district and replace them with permanent construction.

In April 2004, SED suggested the district investigate an Energy Performance Contract to help modernize building systems in an effort to save energy and as a cost-effective way to upgrade systems. The net result is for the work provided to save enough money on a yearly basis that the upgrades pay for themselves through the energy savings received. SED staff understands this option has been investigated, but the school board has not moved forward with a capital project.

In summary, there are many facility challenges currently facing the district. However, there are knowledgeable and competent people managing the facilities operations for the district who have made significant progress in many areas since SED's last visit. The most critical day-to-day task is maintaining the fire safety of the various facilities. This has become extremely difficult due to severe overcrowding as a result of the two school closings. Every possible space has been converted to a use for which it may not have been intended. This invariably leads to a compounding effect for fire and life safety concerns.

## Appendix E. – Curriculum and Instruction Findings from NYSED December 2004 School Visit

State Education Department Team Visit  
Hempstead Union Free School District  
December 2004

### Secondary Curriculum and Instruction

The instructional review focused on English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics instruction for all students in Hempstead High School and Alverta B. Gray Schultz Middle School. The State Education Department (SED) teams for both the middle and high schools included individuals with expertise in ELA, mathematics, special education and bilingual education. The teams had the opportunity to observe most classes related to ELA and mathematics for all students and to meet with groups of building administrators, subject matter specialists, coaches and teaching staff.

The following represents a summary of general findings and recommendations for improvement. It should be noted, that unless otherwise specified, findings and recommendations refer to all instructional program areas and student populations including general education, bilingual education/English as a second language (ESL) and special education.

#### *Findings/Observations*

##### Curriculum

- Middle school and high school curriculum documents for ELA and mathematics were developed in isolation with a lack of articulation between buildings and with little input from representatives of bilingual/ESL and special education faculty. The middle school curriculum does not reflect continuous growth and development from grade-to-grade/classroom-to-classroom.
- High school staff developed a grades 9–12 English Language Arts curriculum. Each grade level is organized by theme and includes readings/texts, performance indicators, projects, and assessments. There is no evidence that the grade level theme contained in the curriculum is used to focus instruction, classroom discussion or assessment. While there is an emphasis in the curriculum on teaching vocabulary, the vocabulary appeared to be most often taught out of context.
- Teacher-developed ELA curriculum, especially at the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels, does not provide sufficient opportunities for writing, nor does it include sufficient exposure to informational text. Middle school staff expressed intent to modify the mathematics curriculum in order to better emphasize content most important to each grade level and ensure sufficient time for each topic.
- Inadequate coordination and collaboration among general education, special education, and ESL administrators, teachers and staff result in a lack of cohesive planning and curriculum proficiency in ELA and mathematics for students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency (LEP).

## Appendix E. Continued – Curriculum and Instruction Findings from NYSED December 2004 School Visit

### Instruction

- Policies, procedures and practices to establish student instructional groups adversely impact instruction. For example, students in the middle school are grouped homogeneously for all content areas including mathematics based solely upon the TONYSS English Language Arts scores.
- In the high school, absenteeism, tardiness, and the extent to which the “open campus” policy negatively affects instructional time are concerns. Students arrive late to class and there appear to be no sanctions for tardiness. Late arrivals have a negative impact on instruction for all students.
- Academic Intervention Services (AIS) do not meet instructional needs of all students due to scheduling conflicts, instructional grouping based on ELA performance (in the middle school), space availability, and lack of coordination among AIS, special education, ESL/bilingual and general education programs.
- Instructional resources for ELA and mathematics are not sufficient to provide all students and faculty equal access to appropriate texts and other materials necessary to support the educational program.
- The instruction in many classrooms was teacher-directed and whole group. Needs of students with different learning styles did not appear to be addressed. There was little evidence of students participating in collaborative learning.
- Teaching assistants are pulled from duties in special education, general education and LEP classes to substitute teach. In a few instances, teaching assistants are filling in for long-term vacancies and are inappropriately providing primary instruction.
- The middle school and high school lack a full continuum of class options and services for students with disabilities and LEP students.

### Assessment

- The use of State, district and classroom student performance data to make instructional decisions at the district and building levels is not formalized nor is it a part of common practice.
- A district-wide focus on the use of classroom-embedded assessment aligned with the NYS standards, competencies and assessments is not evidenced on a consistent basis (particularly in the high school). The use of data-driven decision-making based on these assessments is not formalized.
- Progress monitoring and diagnostic tools are not in place for the purposes of targeting/modifying instruction for all students on a regular basis, and for the provision and monitoring of Academic Intervention Services.
- Mock NYS assessments were administered in the high school and middle school. If the administration of such assessments is to be effective, teachers must be able to analyze results and use information to inform instruction as appropriate.

### Leadership

- Building level leadership appears to be motivated to maintain a climate conducive to learning. Administrative staff and security personnel were a visible presence in the

## Appendix E. Continued – Curriculum and Instruction Findings from NYSED December 2004 School Visit

hallways between classes and encouraged students to move quickly to their next class. Despite this effort, high school students were observed as consistently tardy to class, given permission to leave the room without a pass, and were not held accountable for their lateness.

- There is a lack of clarity of instructional leadership roles, responsibilities and relationships. This lack of clarity includes district subject coordinators, ESL/bilingual leadership, special education leadership and building-based subject matter specialists and coaches.

### Professional Development

- Subject matter specialists are scheduled to meet with classroom teachers once a week. As reported, these sessions do not provide adequate time nor do they consistently focus on instructional practice and analysis of student work.
- Superintendent's conference days are the primary vehicle for professional development. It is not clear how the topics for professional development are selected nor to what extent they address the needs of teachers to support all students.
- There was no evidence of ongoing professional development and planning across disciplines, within and across grade levels, and among special education, ESL/bilingual, and general education teachers.
- There was no evidence of professional development for all staff (administrators, teachers, security and other support personnel) that focuses on the demographic shift in population (e.g., increasing numbers of Hispanic students with limited language proficiency).
- Professional development planning does not appear to be based on student performance data, nor does it focus on, or support, the needs of teachers to address the NYS learning standards and meet the needs of diverse learners.

### Recommendations

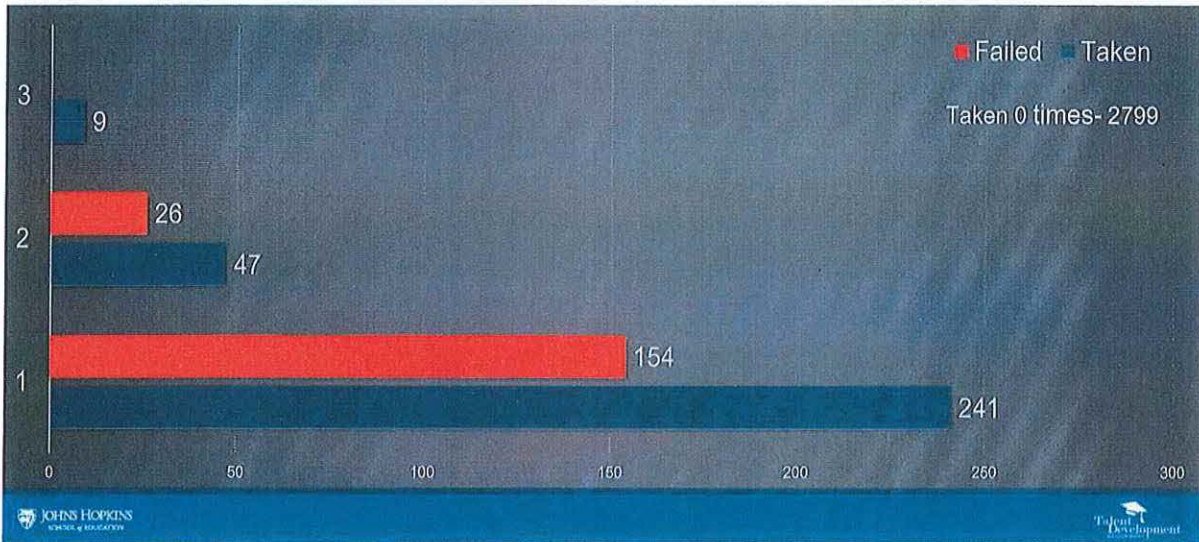
1. District-wide English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics curriculum development should become a priority. This work should be based, as appropriate, on the New York State ELA, ESL, Native Language Arts (NLA) and the revised mathematics standards; resource guides with core curricula; and scientifically-based research. Such curricula should provide enough specificity to guide planning, teaching and learning within and across the grades and content areas, kindergarten through grade 12. The development of curricula should include the input of all staff responsible for ELA and mathematics instruction, including ELA, reading, mathematics, special education, ESL and bilingual teachers, as well as district/building instructional leadership.
2. The district should conduct a class-by-class audit to determine the status of ELA and mathematics instructional materials currently available to fully address the curriculum and the instructional needs of all students. These materials include mathematics manipulatives, calculators, computer simulations and sufficient reading materials that reflect student instructional levels, culture, languages and background knowledge. Procure the instructional materials.

## Appendix E. Continued – Curriculum and Instruction Findings from NYSED December 2004 School Visit

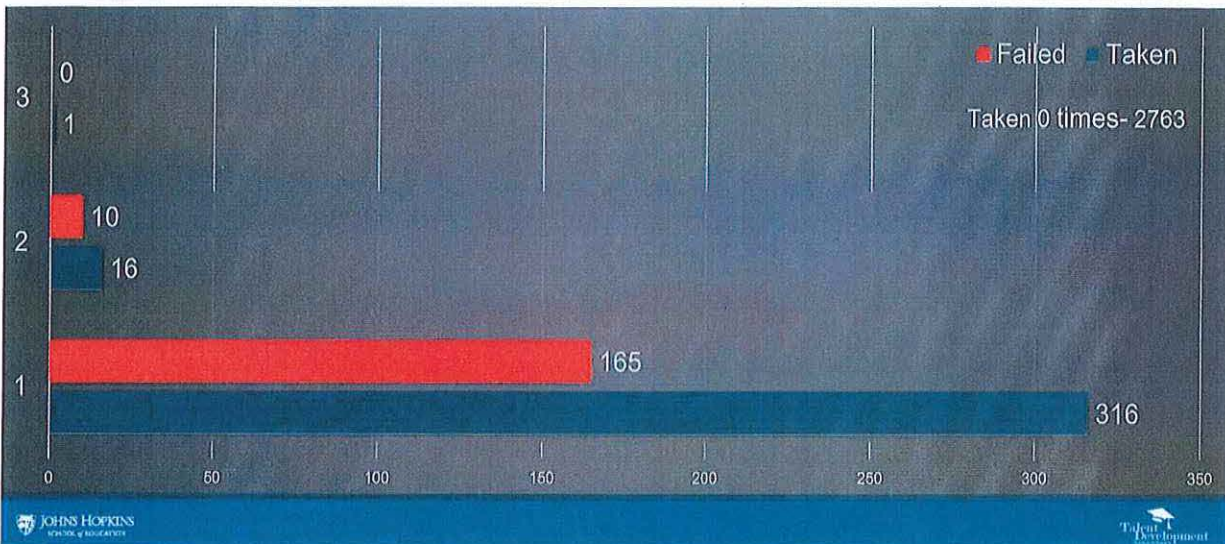
3. The district should review and revise scheduling practices to meet student needs for instruction in ELA and mathematics and to provide a balance to the class rosters. The district should investigate best strategies for instructional grouping (heterogeneous/homogenous) and not repeat the same coursework for different grade levels.
4. The district should identify and implement strategies and procedures for increasing inclusion classes and consultant-teacher services and the professional development necessary for the success of these programs.
5. The district should analyze student attendance and tardiness data to determine the impact on instructional time and learning, and analyze the impact of an "open campus" at the high school on instructional time. The district should develop and implement policies as appropriate to maximize the instructional time.
6. The district policy and procedures for student retention based on one measurement (e.g., TONYSS at the middle level) should be examined against the benefits and risks for student success using research on retention. District retention policies and procedures should be revised accordingly.
7. The district should review, revise, and consistently implement all policies and practices concerning timely referral and placements of students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency. The district should complete annual program reviews in a timely manner and prior to the development of class schedules.
8. The district should review and revise its Professional Development Plan and the delivery of professional development. The revisions should be based upon student performance data, areas identified by the NYS accountability system and the needs of all teachers to address the NYS learning standards and meet the needs of diverse learners.
9. The district should develop and disseminate a description of coordinated roles and responsibilities for all personnel in instructional leadership positions at the district, high school and middle school levels. The Superintendent should regularly evaluate the effectiveness of this coordination.
10. The district should initiate a comprehensive district-wide causal analysis process to ensure appropriate identification of strategic priorities and allocation of resources and personnel to support coordinated school improvement. The Long Island Regional School Support Center (LIRSSC) is available for technical assistance in this regard.
11. In that the majority of recommendations involve analysis of data at the school and district levels, relevant local data systems and procedures should be reviewed and revised, as appropriate, to ensure the availability of timely and accurate data.

Appendix F. – Regents Exam Results (data compiled November 2017)

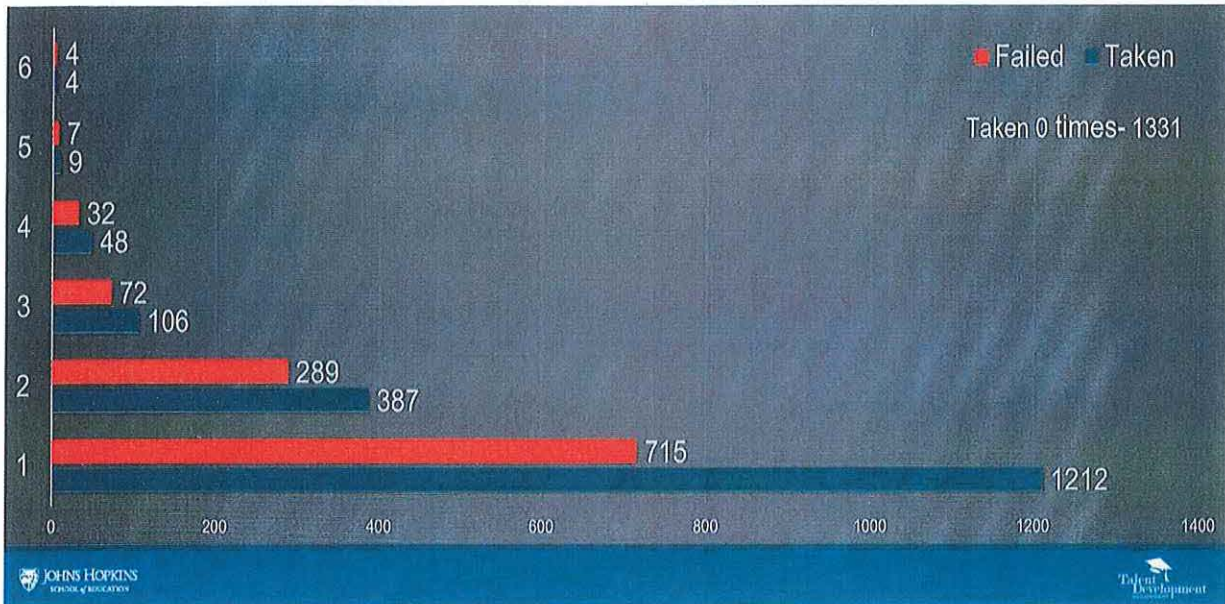
## Trigonometry



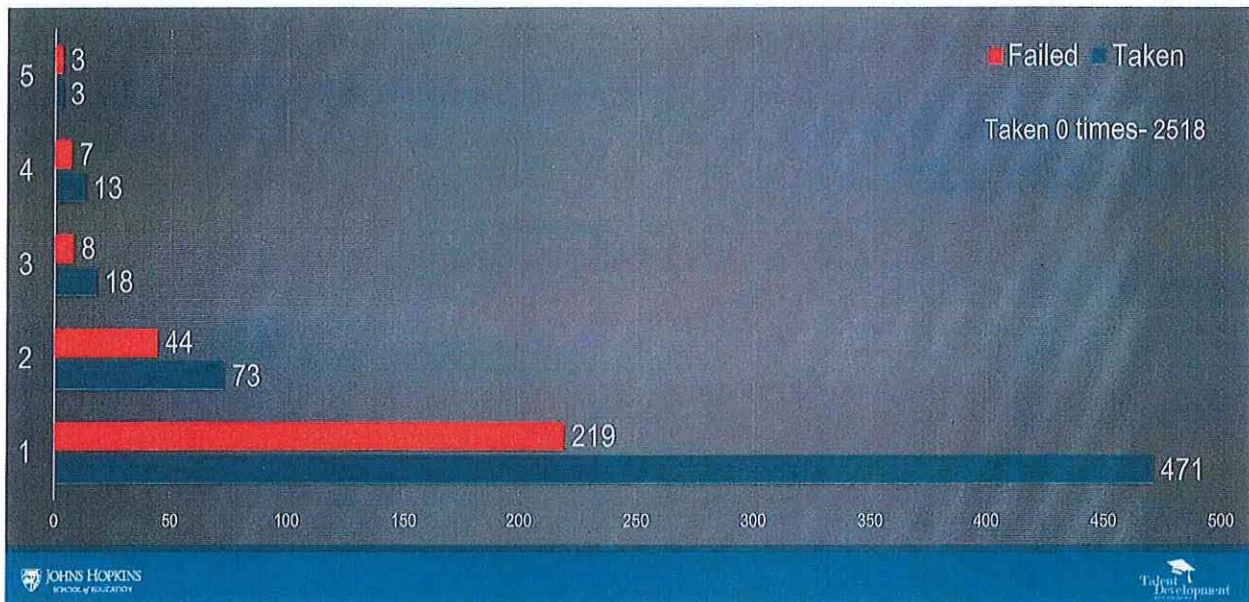
## Algebra 2 Common Core



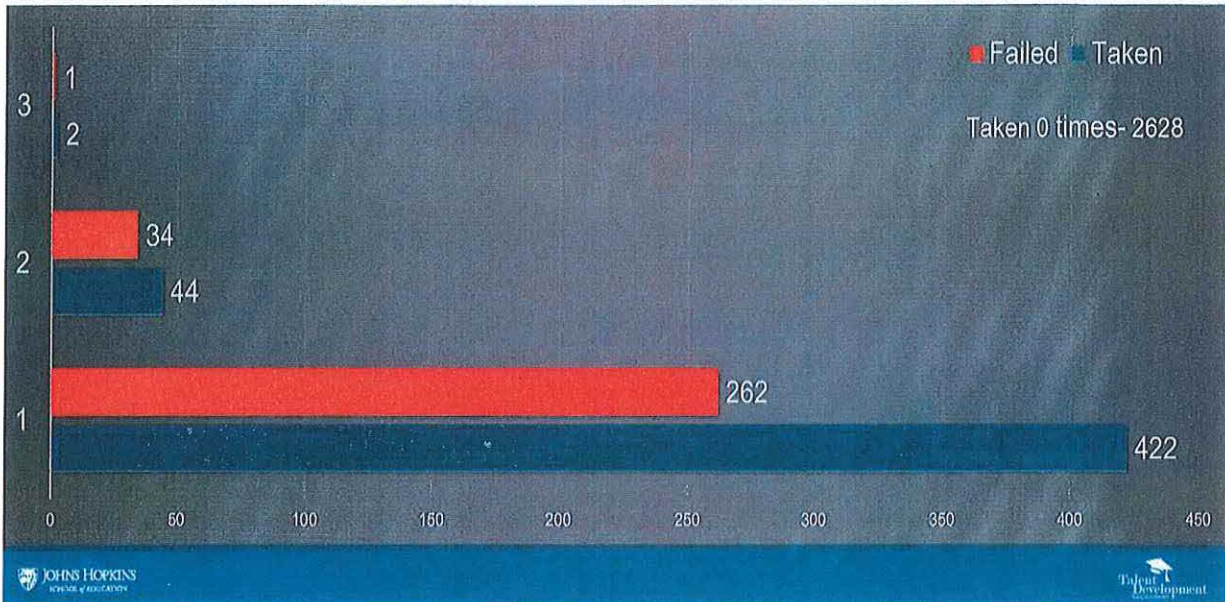
## Algebra Common Core



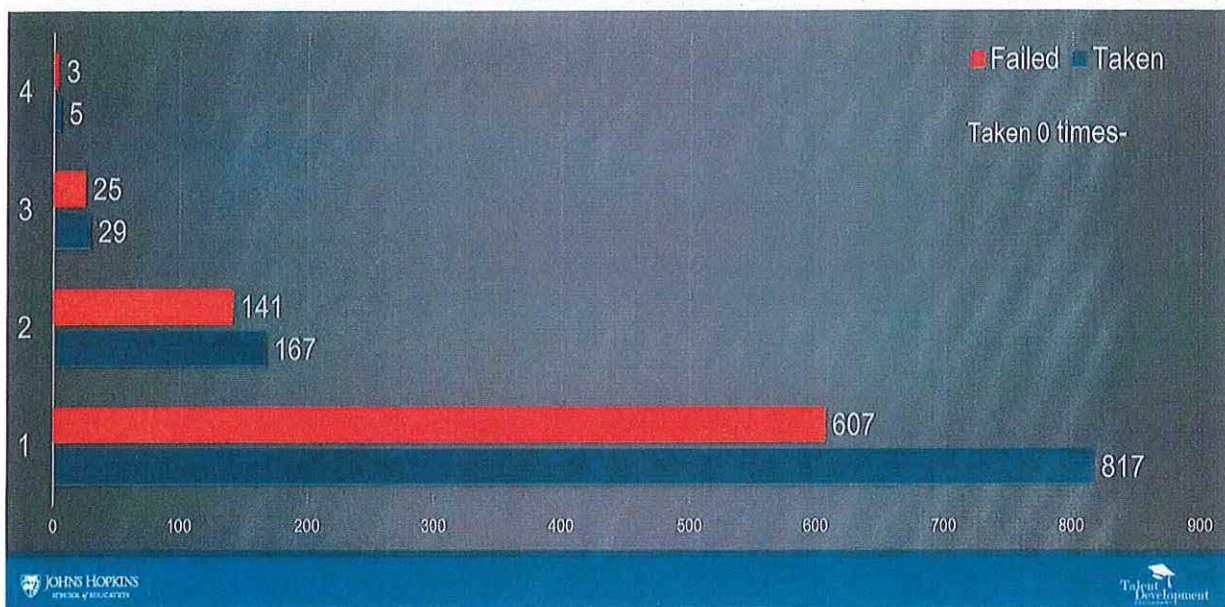
## Integrated Algebra



## Geometry Regents



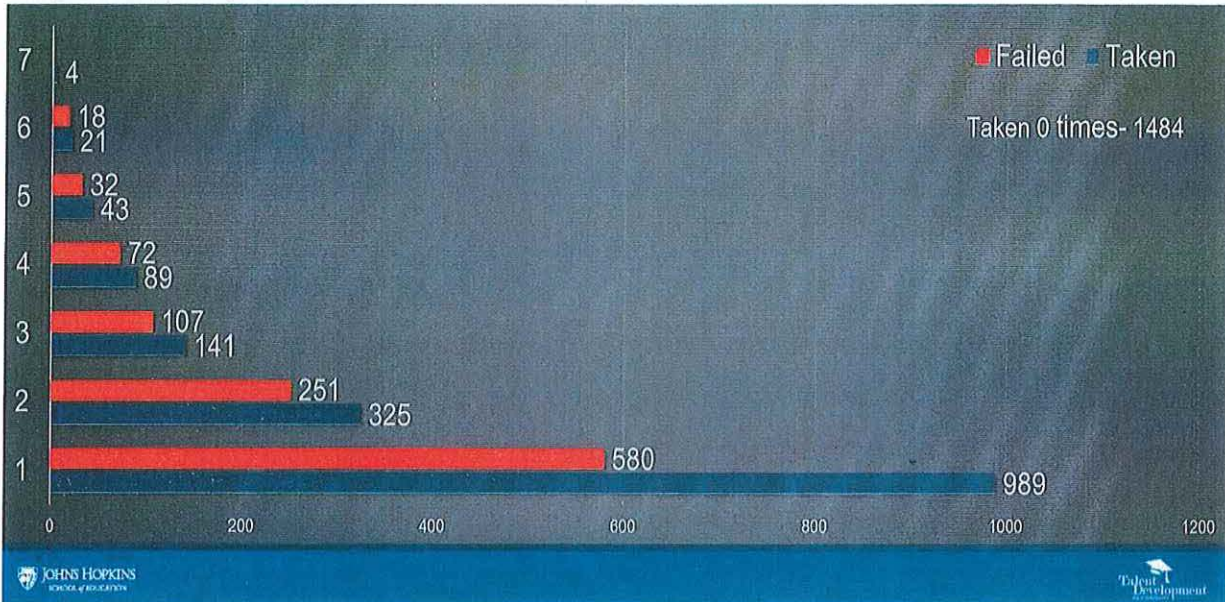
## Geometry Common Core



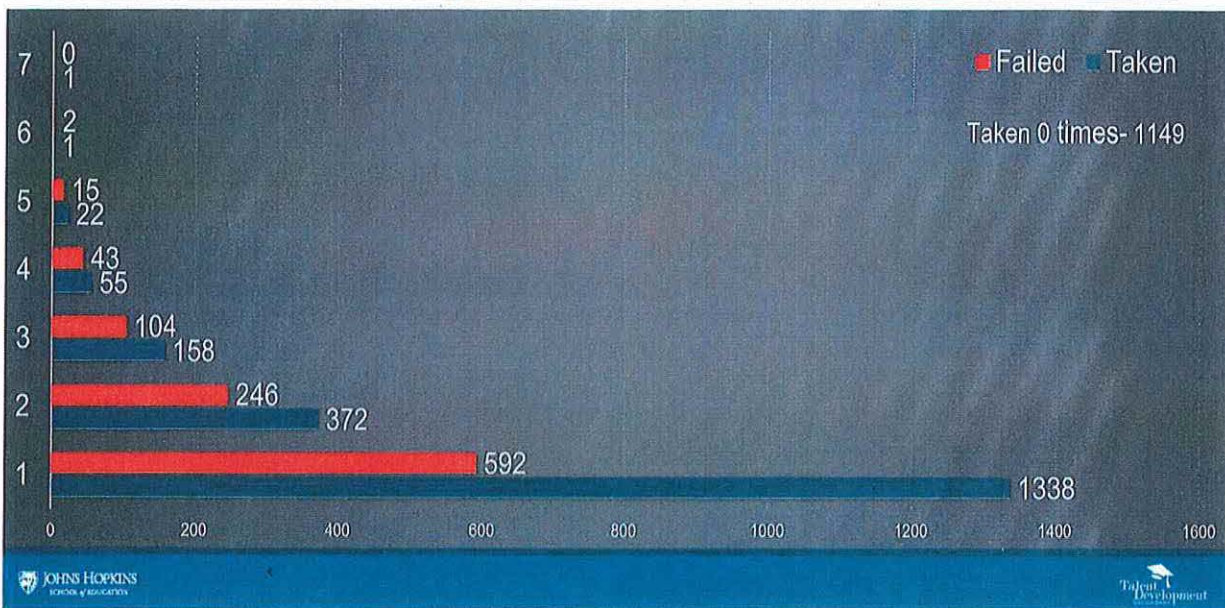


Appendix F. Continued – Regents Exam Results (data compiled November 2017)

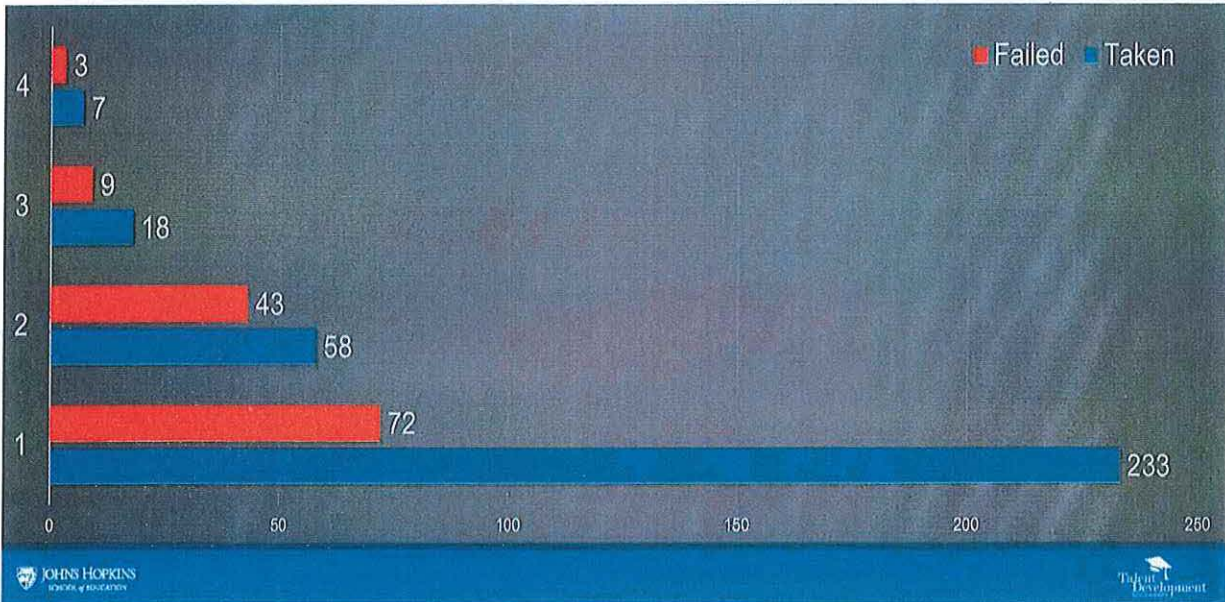
## Global Regents



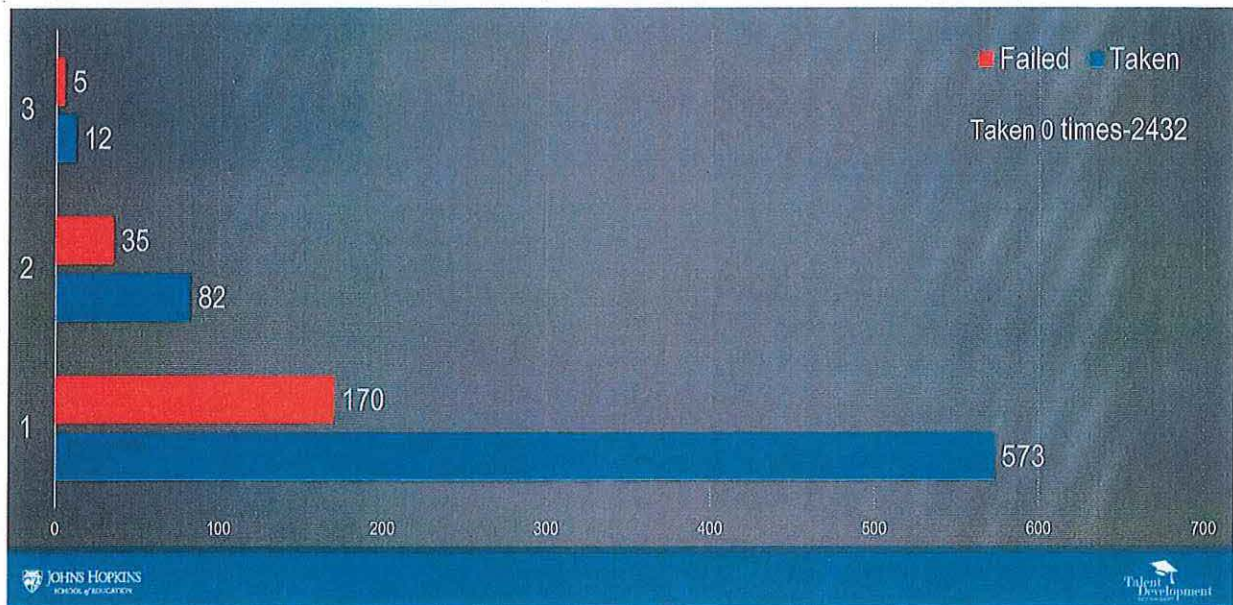
## US History Regents



## English CC Regents

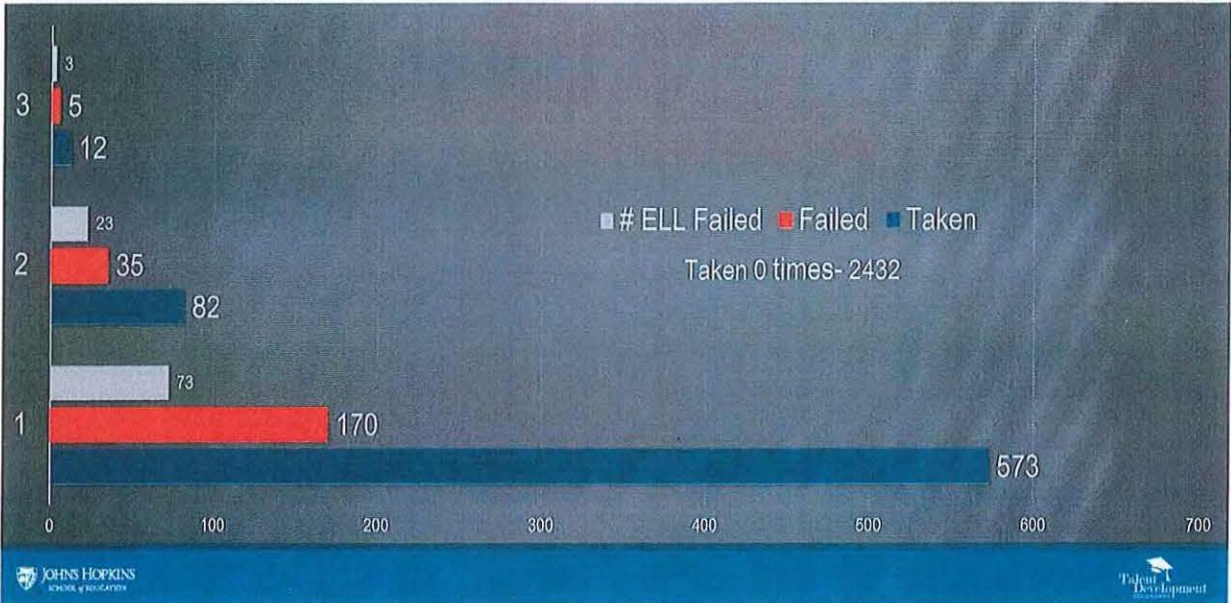


## Integrated English Regents

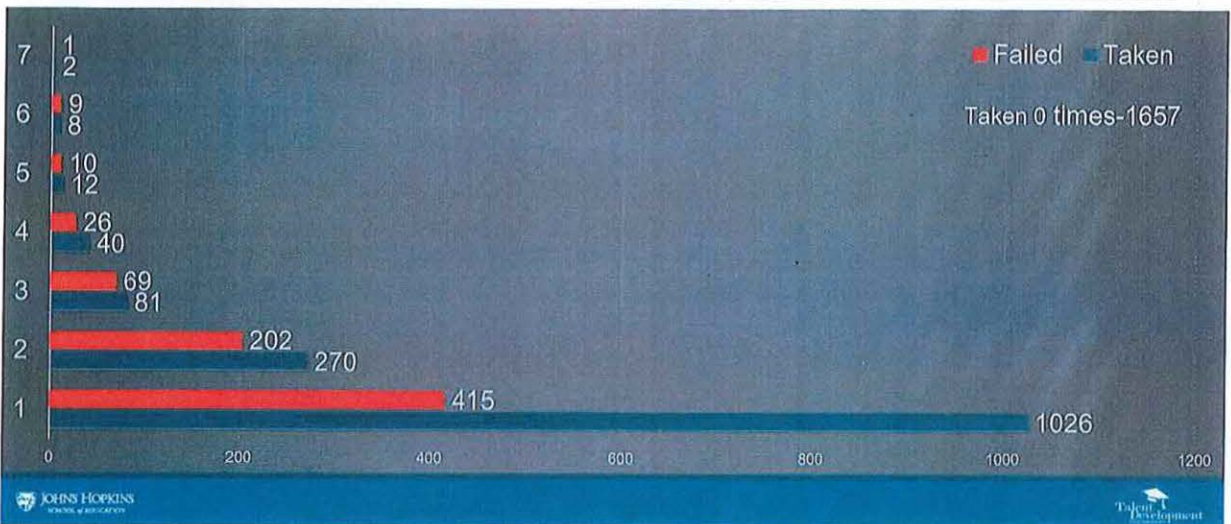


## English Common Core Regents depts

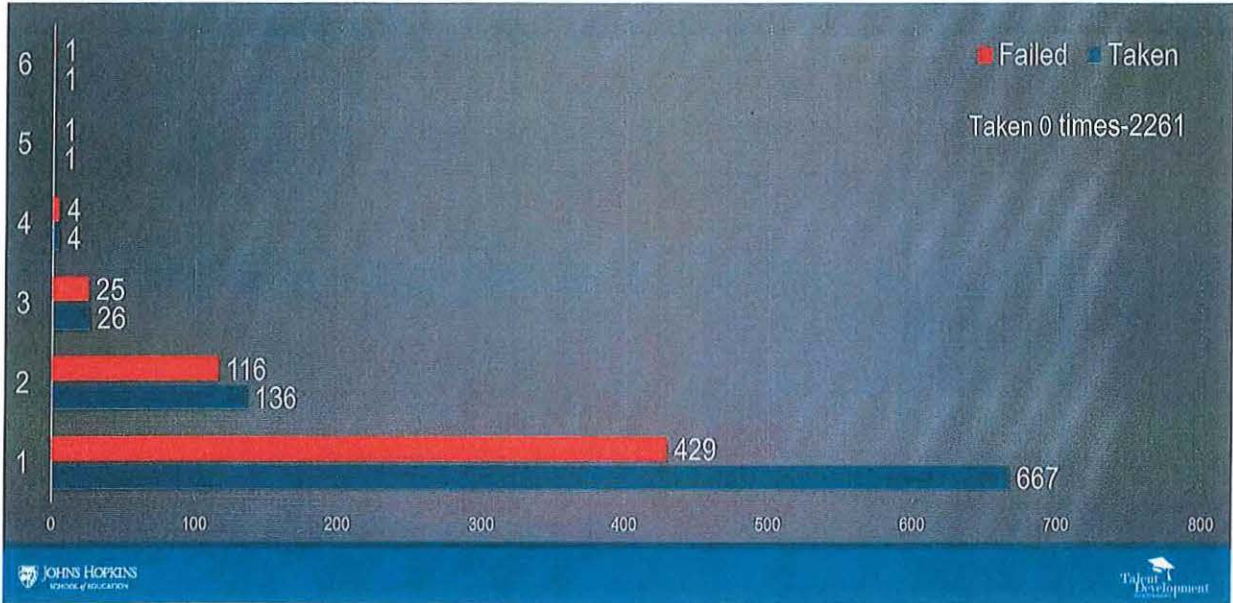
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## Living Environment Regents



# Earth Science Regents



Appendix G. – Technology Infrastructure Overview provided by Nassau BOCES,  
November 21, 2017



**MEMO**

**DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION  
AND TECHNOLOGY**

**To:** Dr. Robert Dillon, District Superintendent  
**From:** Anthony Carfora, Executive Director, Curriculum, Instruction and Technology  
**Date:** November 21, 2017  
**Re:** Hempstead Schools Overview

**Introduction:**

Nassau BOCES has been engaged in the support and maintenance of the Hempstead School District's technical infrastructure and applications for approximately 15 years. Throughout our tenure, we have managed and provided the district with a highly diverse set of services which include the following:

- Fiber Optic wide area network
- Telecommunications/Dial Tone Services
- Internet access
- Student Information System
- Financial systems
- Desktop and mobile devices
- Security/Video Surveillance
- Network support
- Managed Technical Services
- Advanced Engineering Services

This document will serve as a general overview with references to previous email communications, proposals and initiatives to the extent that Nassau BOCES has been engaged with the Hempstead School District.

**Summary of Challenges:**

Nassau BOCES has been engaged in the support and maintenance of the Hempstead schools' technical infrastructure and applications for approximately 15 years. We have, in this time, experienced substantial and significant issues related to operational process, district-wide accountability, grievous issues related to facilities and instructional space and a lack of coherent procurement policies. These issues have spanned multiple administrations going back over ten years. This has led to delays in project implementation, critical maintenance tasks and other associated exercises that occur routinely in K-12 districts in Nassau County. In the process of assessing the technology district-wide, we have had the opportunity to inspect all the schools in the district on multiple occasions. We continue to observe substandard technical infrastructure at all sites and a lack of consolidated administrative activity, designed to remediate existing conditions and create effective process for ongoing improvements. Dr. Akoma's arrival has focused much-needed attention on these deficiencies and the need for a comprehensive approach to analysis, planning and implementation of policies designed to move the district forward. We have prepared an analysis and recommendations based on our experience in the district, and more importantly, our experience servicing the districts of Nassau County. We have tried to focus on the



Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology  
71 Clinton Road, P.O. Box 9195, Garden City, NY 11530-9195 • (516) 396-2257 • Fax: (516) 334-6707 • [www.nassauboces.org/cit](http://www.nassauboces.org/cit)

Appendix G. Continued – Technology Infrastructure Overview provided by Nassau BOCES, November 21, 2017



MEMO

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND TECHNOLOGY

fundamentals that allow high-functioning districts to adapt to changing technology and provide a high degree of reliability, and most importantly, instructional relevance.

Facilities and Infrastructure:

Most of the buildings in the district are aging and provide unsuitable facilities for data and network distribution. There have been ongoing and chronic issues with electric service, climate controls and the modular or “portable” units. The portable units installed at all sites, except the high school and the Prospect School, are not designed to accept appropriate cabling, electric and general technology installations. These units have steadily deteriorated over time to the extent that there were visible holes in the ceilings during installations of desktops in 2015, allowing the weather to enter. In addition, these modular spaces have inadequate electrical service and data locations that are unsuitable for the deployment of technology. We recently received approval for a substantial cabling project in the district to add wireless and switching capacity district-wide. Reading the associated asbestos abatement guidance (AHERA) documentation at each site, we are concerned by both the extent of the issues and the vagueness of the associated documents. Dr. Akoma, the current Director of Technology for the district, noted to the Hempstead Director of Facilities:

*“As per a preplanning meeting with BOCES on Wednesday, 11/1/2017, the following is the status of the buildings regarding asbestos abatement based on the asbestos abatement done in 2014 and 2016. The first set of buildings are considered “Hot” and will not be worked on until we get further information and an ok from you. However, the buildings that are considered as “good” are the ones that BOCES and the cabling vendor will proceed to start cabling for the Wi-Fi upgrade and quad-drop installations. While they are working in the “good” buildings, we need your help to do further testing and/or arrange for abatement, where needed, so that by the time the “good” buildings are done, the “hot” and “need testing” ones will be ready to go.*

Hot Requires Abatement

Jackson Annex Main Building

WALLS Marshall Main Building - WALLS Marshall Portables - CEILING TILES

MS Room 207A - FLOOR TILES FOR RISER

MS Gym - FLOOR FILES FOR RISER

Assume Need Testing

Front St - WALLS, CEILING TILES, FLOOR TILES, CERAMIC TILES

David Paterson/Fulton - CEILING TILES, FLOOR TILES”

*Note that all these locations require abatement prior to commencement of work, and it is unclear, at this time, if there is a qualified vendor to perform the abatement work in a timely fashion.”*

Technology Office:

Since the arrival of Dr. Akoma, we have made significant progress with projects that have languished in the business and technology offices for some time. The lack of both personnel consistency and associated budgetary guidance have caused significant delays in progress with critical infrastructure projects. These expenses have since been approved, and we have begun the process based on priorities established with Dr. Akoma and Nassau BOCES technology staff. Note that the district, through the Office of the Superintendent, has



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established the implementation of a district-wide video surveillance upgrade as their first goal. We have upgraded the existing proposals received prior to Dr. Akoma's arrival through A+ Technology and are awaiting board approval on the proposed expense of just under \$1 million. This is a budgeted general fund project. This will provide a single integrated video surveillance platform for the district with camera upgrades in key locations in phase one. There have been discussions with both Nassau BOCES and A+ to propose completion of the security project with Smart Bond financing. This is addressed in a separate section of this document. There is a comprehensive review under way focusing on the establishment of baseline policies and procedures governing the daily use of technology and technology assets. The district has also approved a district-wide cabling and switching project designed to extend appropriate wireless capacity at all locations. This proposal was two years old at the time of approval. Dr. Akoma is systematically assessing the existing policies and procedures in the district that pertain to technology, data handling and procurement. We have had a very positive experience to this point with the new office of technology.

**Inventory:**

Hempstead was awarded over \$1 million in Race-to-the-Top grants under the "Persistently Struggling Schools" grant in 2015. The district requested Nassau BOCES assistance in the purchase, system preparation and delivery of 921 laptops and mobile devices to Hempstead High School in the fall of 2015. This also included wireless service in Hempstead High School. We are unsure as to the custody of those devices, particularly after the departure of the building principal, to whom they were delivered. We have now undertaken an inventory analysis of this equipment. Dr. Akoma also has discussed the prevalence of other grant-funded devices in the district that were done outside of the technology office. These devices are difficult to implement given the following:

- There has been no capacity planning for the devices on the wireless network.
- There have been no reviewed and approved applications relevant to instruction for the devices.
- There is no known plan for the distribution and inventory of the devices.
- There is no known Acceptable Use Policy for the devices or the network in general.

There are additional devices at the Prospect School (iPads) that were distributed outside of the management of the technology office and whose use, inventory and origin are unknown at this point. This points to a larger systemic and persistent lack of policy and process that has been prevalent in the district for years. It is important to note that Dr. Akoma understands these deficiencies and is aggressively trying to change the culture to one that contains order and accountability. However, there are hundreds of devices in the district that have not been subject to proper inventory control or distribution/return protocol. As a result, grant awards, which carry the expectation of effective use of technology and instruction, are, in some cases, unused and not accounted for.

**NYS Smart Bond Proposal:**

Nassau BOCES staff had inquired about the district's submission required for the use of Smart Bond technology funding. The initial response received stated that all funding was being used for Pre-K construction purposes, as is permitted under NYS guidance. Additional research on the submission confirms that no formal expense plan was submitted by the district to NYSED as of 11/1/2017. The published amount of the grant is just over \$9.7 million. We are awaiting additional guidance from the district regarding the proposed use of the funding. There



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continued to be mixed signals regarding the application of the funds, particularly their use in the renovation of the Rhodes School, which has been closed for many years. Review of the relevant guidance states that these funds cannot be applied to general reconstruction or site improvement. The district did submit the required technology plan to NYSED in July of 2016. We believe that much of this document needs review and revision based on plans discussed with the district and its content. Dr. Akoma is quite clear in her expectation that the Smart Bond monies will be used to enhance technology and infrastructure, specifically:

- Complete the installation of all additional cameras and security device supplements required to meet the request from the Superintendent.
- Complete enhancements and upgrades to data facilities district-wide. Currently most buildings have inadequate electrical and climate control systems.
- Explore mobile device initiatives for students.
- Enhance classroom instruction with updated SMART Boards/displays.

#### Staffing:

General technology support staffing is adequate. We are making adjustments in consultation with Dr. Akoma based on needs she has established and performance-based observations. Nassau BOCES continues to supplement in-district support staff with escalation for design and high-level technical troubleshooting. Nassau BOCES also provides the district with project management and technical procurement services. As noted, we faced a series of substantial and potentially damaging delays with infrastructure projects and an inability to have these approved in a timely fashion. Although these delays have improved significantly since Dr. Akoma's arrival, we remain behind in the implementation of critical data storage and business continuity systems. We have also repeatedly been faced with inadequate staffing and capacity pertaining to student data, data accuracy, readiness and accountability. Specifically:

- Segregation of duties pertaining to management of student data and data systems has been a persistent problem.
- Nassau BOCES has been engaged repeatedly to investigate, remediate and intervene in irregularities in student data and test-scoring processing.

When analyzing the personnel and resources in Hempstead, administrative staffing structures that are common in most districts are poorly defined, and in some cases, nonexistent. Staffing of student data systems and record handling, in particular, suffer from a poorly defined hierarchy and distribution of tasks. We met several years ago at the district in an attempt to define roles that were analogous to districts of similar sizes with like systems. Specifically, site-based responsibility for valid data and oversight of these tasks does not fall within structures typical in the county. The district needs to assess its staffing relative to data and data readiness and consider hiring personnel with appropriate experience and certifications.

#### Multi-Year Strategic Planning:

The district submitted an annual technology plan to the state in July of 2016. This plan contains standard lists of bandwidths, internet capacity and instructional applications. It does not specify the policies and process required to implement effective instructional technology with relevant curriculum integration and teacher-driven input.



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This plan may require re-submission based on the non-submission of the district's Smart Schools Improvement Plan (SSIP). In discussions with Nassau BOCES staff and observation of effective district planning, we are recommending a sequence of tasks based on these successful models, with emphasis on the following sequence of events:

**New York State Smart Bond:** As noted, there is no plan on file with SED for the acquisition of Hempstead's portion of the smart bond allocation. A \$9.7-million investment in infrastructure, coupled with general fund projects currently approved, can have a substantial and permanent effect on capacity and high-quality service delivery. However, the award of the funds is contingent on the district meeting criteria defined in the award, namely, the submission of a board-approved Smart Schools Improvement Plan, which includes community input and the solicitation of appropriate quotes required for budget preparation. It is important to note that Hempstead is the only school district, we are aware of, that has not taken these steps already and is in effect almost two years behind in this process. The district must also conclude, based on guidance from SED, that these funds are not applicable to general renovations and construction planned for the Rhodes School. This alleviates pressure on the general fund for a substantial expense and permits a highly-focused emphasis on technology. The planning and input phase of this project is critical. Smart Bond expenses are not eligible for BOCES aid. We will, of course, assist in the preparation of the relevant proposals, if requested.

**Infrastructure:** The district's technology infrastructure requires a defined process of continuous re-assessment and investment to satisfy the demands of the user community and associated data systems. The current and historic reactive approach and borderline crisis management is both ineffective and highly wasteful. In order to create the appropriate systems and platforms to deliver data and applications and a highly-reliable and properly-planned network, there must be some fluency between the Office of Technology and the Business Office. This has been absent since the departure of the business official in 2015. The district has three separate, non-integrated surveillance platforms that provide video and playback functions to security staff. This disparate collection of systems is an outgrowth of the lack of continuity and oversight by administration. There must be a collaborative effort between district administrative staff and third-party resources who have not worked collaboratively on these projects in years. The district must provide consistent access to facilities, personnel, technology and procurement resources to mitigate issues already noted, such as persistent asbestos hazards, inadequate electric and general building issues. The condition of the modular units continues to be a source of great concern, as these spaces are in very poor condition and do not support the installation of adequate electric, data services and other instructional resources.

**Committees:** The use of committees to establish standards for curriculum integration and technology provides the best opportunity for effective use of these resources. As noted, we have seen the effects of a decentralized distribution of grant-funded mobile devices at several locations, where there was no discussion of relevant instructional applications or plan for device integration. Committees are sometimes seen as impediments to progress in large organizations. We believe that effective policy begins with inclusive dialogue among the stakeholders in the district. The alternative, as noted, is a wasteful exercise in which users are highly frustrated by the lack of device integration and resources, and the hardware is, in many cases, left unused. We recommend the district pursue the creation of committees to discuss the following:



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- Adoption of relevant electronic curriculum resources and instructional applications.
- Adoption of a mobile device platform district-wide.
- Adoption of a cloud-based storage and collaboration platform.
- Consideration of electronic textbooks and an Instructional Learning System.

We believe that these exercises represent the best strategy to create a sustainable model with input from multiple sources. This will provide the potential for long-term, institutional change, rather than the haphazard approach that has dominated the district for many years.

**Professional Development:** The establishment of an effective and continuous professional development cycle is essential to the success of all technology implementations. Nassau BOCES has offered professional development to staff on numerous occasions with mixed results.

**Administrative Capacity:** One of the greatest challenges we have faced in maintaining systems and services in the district is the lack of personnel consistency in the administrative offices. We have seen multiple business officials, superintendents, vacancies in key areas and individuals lacking appropriate experience fill key roles repeatedly. This absence of consistency creates an environment without institutional memory or appropriate process causing multi-year delays in routine business practice and projects. We remain concerned that these factors and the absence of policy and policy enforcement across areas like inventory management, grant submission and general technology practice exposes the district to risk routinely. We have attempted to influence and move these projects in the past without consistency. We are hopeful that we will have success with the new administration.

**Technology Overview:** Hempstead's current deployment consists of the following technologies:

- 1) VMware virtual infrastructure- Servers and Desktops
- 2) Dell Storage
- 3) Dell servers
- 4) Cisco network components
- 5) Cisco Phone System
- 6) A+, IntraLogic Systems and video surveillance systems.

**Historical Deployment and Current Priorities:** The district invested in VMWare View in approximately 2012. Similar to other districts, most of the physical hardware was in the process of moving toward virtual machines. At the time, the district was one of the first in the county to use VMWare View in a production environment for the streaming of virtual desktops. Nassau BOCES staff is in the process of upgrading the storage and core-switching equipment at the primary data center in the middle school. As mentioned, we have had some success in the last two months, moving stalled proposals forward in an effort to stabilize and modernize the server and storage infrastructure. There are some systems in the district that require accelerated attention. Please note the following:



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- The Cisco phone system is aging and in need of a comprehensive upgrade. This is not currently budgeted. We recommend some of the expense be considered in the district's Smart Schools Investment Plan (SSIP).
- Video Surveillance-Phase one of the current general fund security project includes the installation of a single unified platform for video capture. Phase two should include all additional cameras, licensing and storage required for comprehensive coverage.
- The district should consider a single secure command center for security monitoring.
- All data closets should be surveyed for appropriate electric, and proposals should be provided for power protection. The facilities department must participate in these surveys.
- The primary server room at the middle school needs to have the electrical service redone with better power protection.
- Current workstation inventory must be reviewed with the Director of Technology, with the intent of developing a rational replacement cycle for workstations.

AC/ts



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