



HEMPSTEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MID-YEAR REPORT
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NEW YORK STATE MONITOR
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[Document subtitle]

Mid-Year Monitor's Academic and Fiscal Update for the
Hempstead Public Schools
July 1,2021 through January 31,2022

July 1, 2021 saw the commencement of the second year of the Monitor's work in the Hempstead Union Free School District (HUFSD or "the District"). The work during this reporting period focused on reviewing the implementation of the recommendations from year one (i.e., the 2020–21 school year) and then amending and adding to those that required adjustments. The amended and additional recommendations for year two (i.e., the 2021–22 school year) were then approved by the Board of Education ("the Board"). Distributing these recommendations and commencing their implementation took place in November and December 2021.

The position of Monitor was created by the State Legislature and approved by the Governor because they and many in the Hempstead community viewed the school system as one with serious academic and fiscal problems. The monitor in Hempstead has a dual role of providing oversight, guidance, and technical assistance for both fiscal and academic policies, practices, programs and decisions of the Board and the Superintendent. Although progress has been made during the first year, there remain fiscal and academic challenges that require continuing attention.

Academically, student underperformance continues as a very real problem. The graduation rate has improved, but performance on every measure of language arts and math demonstrate the disproportionate and damaging impact the COVID pandemic has had on the students of the Hempstead schools. On the fiscal side, there has been a significant increase in State aid that has helped mitigate the impact of charter school tuition costs, which have led to reductions in leadership and instructional staff. It is hoped that the amended and additional

recommendations made in the 2021–22 school year update to the Academic and Fiscal Improvement Plans in concert with those made in the year one plan will continue to keep the District on the road of continued improvement.

There are six areas of particular academic and fiscal concern for 2021–22 school year that are reflected in the amended and additional recommendations of the Monitor. These are leadership, student data, student performance in math and language arts, improvement to buildings, transportation, and charter school funding. I am pleased to be able to report that the positions of Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and Assistant Business Manager have been filled. Filling both of these positions have gone a long to improve the overall ability of the District to coordinate and effectuate the work that is critical to the operation of both offices.

In the Curriculum office, the Assistant Superintendent has made the decision to use software that will place on a single platform all of the data needed to track students; report on efficacy at the grade, building and district level; and provide administrators with the tools needed to monitor and manage instruction. A variety of District initiatives are in place to address the instructional needs of students, many of which are currently funded by American Rescue Plan (ARP) and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds.

Elementary and Secondary School repair and renovate all buildings and to provide additional building space at the facilities where portables are still in use. During this period, the District worked with its legislators to facilitate increased transportation opportunities and increase state aid to better cover the costs associated with charter school tuition.

In developing my midyear update, I relied on the same methods employed in last year's report. I continue to review data related to the implementation of the Monitor's plan. In addition, I continue to meet with staff, legislators, the architects and community groups to help gather information needed to ensure that the recommendations in the adopted plan are being addressed.

Specific Findings

This section of the report has two sections. The first is the District response to the continuing recommendations from year one and the second is my summary of activities related to implementing my amended and added recommendations.

The District response to the continuing recommendations of the monitor is in block form and arranged in five columns. The headings for the columns from left to right are Recommendation, Status (reported as a color described on page one of the district responses), District Action(s), Evidence of Action and Other Information. NA when appearing in the status column means not applicable at this time.

The second is my summary of the observed response by the District to the recommendations adopted by the Board of Education. I have two columns. The first lists the recommendation and the second provides a brief summary of the status at this time.

Summary and Conclusions

It is clear from the District response that the recommendations are being addressed and that there is a commitment to make the improvement of student performance priority one. Changes have been, and are continuing to be made to modify the curriculum, increase staffing where needed and improve instruction through staff development and the introduction of numerous during and after school support programs. It is also clear that the District is committed to improving the facilities for its students and also working on ways to improve attendance, not the least of which is the reduction in transportation limits to 1.5 miles.

The budget for the 2021–2022 school year appears to be balanced and will finish the school year with a surplus despite the underbudgeting of charter school

tutions. The budget for the 2022–2023 school year is a work in progress. However, two of the major cost drivers for next year have been updated and included. The tuition costs for charters were based on the estimated information provided by the State Education Department and the costs of teachers included realistic estimates of salaries and benefits connected to ongoing negotiations. The budget still needs the approval of the Board of Education and continue to undergo changes based on those discussions.

While I believe that the efforts of the District to improve the overall performance of students is moving students in the right direction, there is still much work to be done on a variety of fronts. The District administration has recognized the need to make these changes and has provided every indication of their willingness to take on the changes that need to be made.