



election monitoring. All four have been accomplished or, in the case of election monitoring, are in process. In addition, the Board has taken a number of specific steps in support of the overall plan of action:

- < immediately passed a resolution indicating that they supported the Distinguished Educator's recommendations and that they would approve a plan of action by the Commissioner's deadline of February 2
- x approved the Acting Superintendent's proposed plan of action for submission to the



- < The Board hired a retired assistant superintendent for business (recommended by Mr. Dragone), Ed Cullen, to assist on a part-time basis beginning in late February.
- < In recognition of the fact that the District has for years failed to apply for the Medicaid reimbursement to which it was entitled (estimated by one of the District's auditors to be over \$1 million per year), the District employed a service to begin applying for the aid.
- < While the preparation of the 2018-19 proposed budget was way behind schedule (to be discussed later in this section), the Business Office and administration with the assistance of Ed Cullen prepared an accurate and appropriately formatted draft budget between the end of February and April 11. The 2017-18 budget was re-formatted and adjusted to make it reasonably comparable.
- < With the assistance of Mr. Cullen standard operating procedures for all major business functions are being created.
- < Again, with the assistance of Mr. Cullen, the requisition log-jam (to be discussed later) and the log-jam in overdue bills (to be discussed later) have been greatly reduced.
- < The Acting Superintendent is developing plans which will place District operations on a more normal footing as of July 1 – specifically a) the creation of a formal Table of Organization to be recommended to the Board for formal adoption in early July, b) formal procedures for any changes in the Table of Organization after July 1, 2018 only by Board resolution, c) a meeting in May to formalize all grants and all grant positions for 2018-19 and d) mass encumbrances in early July as

- Preparation of the 2018-19 budget which had fallen months behind the timeline and process adopted by the Board in early fall 2017. The draft document left on February 11 by the Assistant Superintendent for Business was incomplete and inadequate
- No follow-up on the Plante Moran preliminary report.

In addition to these issues emerged in the past couple of months that I had been previously unaware of:

- < The District had a significant cash flow problem from late December to late February which was addressed on a de facto basis by not paying BOCES bills - a practice which the District had apparently done previously although to a lesser degree and a practice which might have forced BOCES to borrow in order to pay refunds to other Nassau County districts this year.
- < Inadequate back-up in the Treasurer function which became exposed as a result of an incident with the Treasurer and one of the members of the Board. This incident almost resulted in a missed payroll (The Board member as a single Board member had no authority to "terminate" or even discipline any employee but made statements to that effect.)
- < Inadequate separation of duties between Treasurer and accountant functions



- ◁ The Board approved the "Rhodes" bond project. This will be submitted to the voters on May 15, 2018. This is the first step in a series of steps which must be taken over the next 10-15 years. It includes a) the demolition of a school (Rhodes) which has not been used for 17 years and was condemned a decade ago b) the construction of a new elementary school on the same site and c) the removal of 24 portable classrooms on other sites. The District must now educate the community prior to the vote in May.
- ◁ The District's engineering firm is developing an EPC (Energy Performance Contract) to be submitted to the Board and the community later this spring. As with all EPCs, all work will pay for itself through energy savings. Savings will be guaranteed by the winning contractors. The EPC would have to be approved by the Board and then NYSED. It is currently estimated that \$15-20 million in projects will be eligible including several new boilers.
- ◁ The New York State School Facilities Managers Association conducted an exhaustive review of all of the District's facilities and grounds as well as staffing, maintenance operations, etc. with specific issues to be addressed and specific recommendations for each. This report presents an extraordinarily comprehensive roadmap for the District to move forward. What it does not do is to say who will do what and when. An implementation plan has yet to be developed. This should be developed and submitted to the Board of Education and the Acting Superintendent no later than Friday, May 11.
- ◁ The District hired an experienced Director of Facilities who started at the beginning of April. This position has been vacant throughout the 2017-18
- ◁ The 2018-19 budget proposed by the Acting Superintendent includes a one-time infusion of \$2.9 million from reserves for needed capital projects not addressed through the bond issue, the Smart Schools project or the Energy Performance Contract.
- ◁ The Community School grant-which should have been completed during the summer 2017 or early fall -was finally completed and approved. The grant includes significant facilities projects in both secondary buildings including renovated science labs and a new high school track.

## 5. HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUCTION

Three separate areas of activity are worth noting:

- ◁ High school disenrollment investigation – The investigation is on-going. However, steps have already been taken to ensure that going forward, all questions regarding student enrollment are investigated and resolved following NYSED prescribed steps.
  - In line with this almost 200 visits to homes to verify residence and make direct contact with students and families have taken place.
- ◁ The College and Career Pathways Alternative Program is off the ground. It is located at 100 Main Street.
  - This program is designed to provide students ages 17-21 with an opportunity to obtain a High School Equivalency Diploma and vocational training concurrently. Presently there are 62 students total enrolled in the College and Career Pathways program. Some of these are among the almost 300 students dis-enrolled earlier.

- ◁ Department by department the high school has tried to analyze success rates in the courses that ended with Regents exams in January to determine what adjustments are necessary and provide "intensive" instruction in order to increase success rates (and graduation rates) for June.

## 6. PRE-K Ì 8 INSTRUCTION

In my initial request I noted:

"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



All of these issues are new being addressed in a significant fashion. First, the 2018-19 budget proposal by the Acting Superintendent includes funds for:

- < Teaching Assistants for grades 1 and 2 classes
- <

1. Inclusion – In line with the Corrective Action Plan, the 2018-19 budget proposed by the Acting Superintendent includes continued expansion of inclusion classes. This is significant progress but it is important to note that the District remains well behind where it should be. The District must sustain this progress year after year. Significant training and support will be required for many years.
2. RTI – The District's shortage of sufficient RTI (Response to Intervention) services has caused significant problems for the District's Special Education Program as well as general education. Appropriate RTI services are frequently unavailable or inadequate and thus students with needs end up being presented to a CSE without adequate RTI steps first.

The 2018-19 budget proposed by the Acting Superintendent includes a significant expansion of RTI services across all schools and a RTI coordinator to ensure consistency of implementation across the District and appropriate coordination with the Special Education Department.

3. Resolution of long-standing compliance issues – After review by NYSED, 20 compliance citations from 2005-06 and 2007-08 were accepted as resolved. The District must continue to work to resolve all remaining citations.

## 8. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The department continues to implement the Corrective Action Plan signed with NYSED. The 2018-19 budget proposed by the Acting Superintendent includes continued expansion of the dual language program.

It should be noted that the progress must be sustained over many years.

The 2018-19 budget proposed by the Acting Superintendent includes additional funding for the SIFE Program (Students with Interrupted Formal Education) at Hempstead High School. Many SIFE students arrive with low literacy skills, limited content knowledge, social and psychological needs and a lack of familiarity with school culture. SIFE students in Hempstead are among those most likely to drop out, often after relatively limited time in school.

## 9. NUTRITION PROGRAM

On March 26-27 NYSED conducted an administrative review of the Hempstead's nutrition program. The on-site portion of the review was completed, but the review of various documents which was to be conducted at the time of the on-site assessment could not be completed due to the unavailability of certain items. Consequently, the review is still open and no final determinations were made.

Significant concerns have been raised and are currently unaddressed. My understanding is that these issues were not a problem when NYSED staff visited three years ago.

On January 25, 2018, the Board placed the Director of Hempstead's Nutrition program on administrative leave with pay pending an investigation of certain matter. This investigation has not been completed.

## 10. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The concerns identified in the initial report regarding technology are being addressed as directly and as rapidly as possible. Noteworthy progress is being made in a number of areas:

- ◁ Business Operations – the IT Department led the reinstallation of an electronic requisition system. A previous electronic requisition system had been dismantled and the District returned to a paper system greatly increasing the time involved. The IT Department set up the software and provided training for schools and departments as well as the business office staff.
- ◁ PowerSchool – It has emerged that the District has for the most part taken limited advantage of the features available on PowerSchool. In addition, it emerged that, due to a variety of factors, the District staff had a number of problems with the use of PowerSchool features that have resulted in "ghost" students (students who had moved to other districts but still showed up on PowerSchool runs) and other anomalies. This has apparently been a1 0 612 797

Sincerely,

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Jack Bierwirth

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