MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Board of Education

FROM: Eric J. Becoats, Ed.D.
Sharon Ozment

DATE: April 18, 2008

RE: Academic Improvement Strategies Update

NOTE: Updates since the March monthly report are highlighted in red.

STRATEGIES: Three stages of academic improvement strategies have been implemented to differentiate district support to schools:

1. Improvement strategies for all schools
2. 1st semester: "Above and Beyond" services for priority (high needs) schools. Some are included in "bubble" schools below, others continue to receive support
3. 2nd semester: "Bubble" schools with best potential to make AYP with targeted assistance

1. Improvement Strategies for All Schools: these items have previously been reported to the board or separately updated by Curriculum and Organizational Development division. They are not repeated in this report.

2. "Above and Beyond" services for priority (high needs) schools (1st semester)

- 18 schools identified as most in need of district support
- Cabinet agreed to avoid meetings involving IIOs Tuesday-Thursday to concentrate their time in these schools
- Bi-monthly updates to cross-departmental cabinet to ensure progress, rapid response to needs

Completed first semester except as some of these schools now included as "bubble schools" below. See previous monthly report for details.

ELEM: "Above and Beyond" schools who are receiving services at this point in the year are those schools that are now "Bubble Schools". (*Bessemer, Parkview, Triangle Lake, Union Hill, Washington) The interventions that were implemented first semester are still being utilized at those schools which indicate that their capacity to carry on this work is strong.

Status 4/11/08 - Former "Above and Beyond" schools Bessemer, Parkview, Triangle Lake, Union Hill and Washington have made sufficient progress to continue to receive services as "Bubble Schools:" schools that now have to possibility of making AYP with continued support. Progress with bubble schools is reported under the next section 3.

Strategy	***Status 04/11/2008***
Organize cross-departmental teams from curriculum, formative assessment, AL, EC, ESOL to target assistance to teachers in these schools 2-3 days/week	Organized and continuing to function at a reduced level to priority to provided increased support to Bubble Schools. Rankin continues to receive support from FA. Kirkman Park continues to receive some support from Literacy Specialist. *4/11/08 - Vandalia and Kirkman Park continue to receive support from CDT (Cross Department Team) members as needed.
SRA utilized as Reading Intervention Program	Kirkman Park, Rankin, Union Hill, Gillespie, and Hampton are continuing to utilize SRA as an intervention program. Consultants are providing follow-up, feedback, and training for these schools. Materials have all been ordered for the remainder of this year and have arrived. * 4/11/08 - Schools continue to utilize SRA as a reading intervention.
Train trainers to implement guided reading grades 2-3	C & I provided Guided Reading training at sites in High Point and Greensboro which are ongoing. Two have been completed to date. There is another Guided Reading session scheduled for April 2nd and 3rd. Training is completed.
Pilot K-2 literacy assessments	Intervention Prevention Pilot is implemented in 13 schools of the Phase I Literacy Framework Schools. The screeners being piloted include DIBELS, AimsWeb, and TPRI. Students in the pilot schools will be assessed with the screeners again in April. Final selection of a Universal Screener for the whole district will be held in May. * 4/11/08 - In May teacher leaders will be involved in selecting the Universal Screener for the entire system for 2008-09.

3. "Bubble" schools with best potential to make AYP with targeted assistance (2nd semester)

- 43 schools initially identified that will need additional support for targeted subgroups if they are to make AYP
- Schools may change depending on subsequent results of benchmark tests
- Some priority schools included
- Greater involvement of principals and leadership teams in developing and implementing targeted assistance
- District prioritization of goals, services to schools with ESOL populations
- EC provided training to classroom and EC teachers in inclusion practices, monitoring of new EC teacher attendance at training sessions
- Bi-monthly updates to cross-departmental cabinet to ensure progress, rapid response to needs

All

Strategy	***Status 03/18/08***
Fund additional tutoring services for targeted students/subgroups.	***Completed 2/7/08*** almost $300,000 from state funds for Level I, II students. Plan developed with principal and IIO based on each school's needs assessment. *Principals will identify and report benchmarks gains for students involved in this additional tutoring to Instructional Improvement Officers.

Elementary

Strategy	***Status 03/18/08***
Redeployment of cross-departmental teams to provide focused intervention assistance Cross departmental teams will provide modeling lessons, coaching, team teaching, on-site training, assistance with grade level planning, analyzing student data to drive instruction as determined by IIO and principal	Ongoing * 4/11/08 - Ongoing
The IIOs met with and assisted principals at the 28 "Bubble" schools in their use of Dr. Zhang's latest data correlating the EOGs with the 1st quarter benchmarks to identify and address subgroups. This data includes both individual student data and subgroup predication data.	Completed on Dec. 18th
The Location Controller at each school for Achievement Series has created a Focus Group that contains the targeted students per subgroup as identified in Dr. Zhang's data.	Completed for first quarter and updated for 2nd quarter benchmark based on Dr. Zhang's latest projections.
Teachers, principals and CFs will identify benchmark standards each quarter that have not been mastered by the targeted students in the Focus Groups.	Completed for 1st and 2nd quarter benchmarks. During Mid-Year conferences IIOs are discussing with principals the expansion of assessment to drive instruction. Teachers are using flexible grouping and re-teaching. Teachers are using data folders to track student progress. Teachers are utilizing peer observations to share instructional strategies. Differentiated instruction in reading and math is utilized at a greater extent in some schools. There is an increased focus on vocabulary strategies. * 4/11/08 - The strategies listed above are continuing.

Principals, through meeting with grade levels and CFs, have analyzed this data provided by Dr. Zhang and developed a targeted plan that includes diagnostic interventions to address student needs. These plans have been submitted to their IIO and will be revised as needed according to new benchmark data.	Plans submitted and reviewed by the IIO. These plans are working documents subject to refinement and revision based on CDT feedback and services provided.
Individual school conferences are being scheduled with the IIO to review/discuss strategies, assign responsibilities, and establish timelines.	Each IIO has met with the principal on site to discuss the targeted plan. Conferences are ongoing as needed and are based on services provided by CDT members. CDT members continue to provide training and support either as a team or by individual team members based on the needs of the grade level, teachers, or whole school. * 4/11/08 - Continuing
FIT members from Formative Assessment will meet with schools after the 2nd and 3rd benchmarks to assist with data analysis to drive instruction. In addition, select FIT members from C&I, ESL, AL, etc will provide support for instructional practices aimed at identified subgroups.	FIT members have provided services to schools as requested by IIO and/or principal. Demystifying Data and Creating Assessment workshops were conducted at sites with either grade levels or specific teachers. * 4/11/08 - Completed at multiple sites
Schools with SWD Subgroups (Stokesdale, General Greene, Shadybrook, Pleasant Garden, Pilot, Sumner, Alderman, Jamestown, Irving Park, Monticello Brown Summit, Triangle Lake, Hunter, Alamance). Inclusion training is scheduled with an emphasis on co-teaching to enhance student achievement in this subgroup. Principals at these schools that are currently implementing Inclusion will be required to attend the training with their identified teachers in order to refine their co-teaching practices. For schools who have not yet implemented Inclusion, this training will provide an awareness of best practices in co-teaching with the ultimate goal of implementing Inclusion in the 2008-09 school year.	Principals were advised of this training by the IIO. The IIO and principal discussed whether the school needed this training as a focus based on the current status of Inclusion at the school. In some cases the major concern was not Inclusion but rather the self-contained classes and their programming. EC FIT members are working with these schools as needed to identify strategies and are helping to identify areas of need with regards to staffing and programming. Peeler and Shadybrook are currently dialoguing about moving to more of an Inclusion model for next year. They are looking at developing Co-teaching teams. *4/11/08 - Continued focus for these schools.
Schools will utilize the Marilyn Friend video, "The Power of Two" to inform best practices in Inclusion. Teachers will utilize this as a benchmark to measure the effective of their service delivery model.	Additional copies were purchased by EC department. Principals were advised to secure a copy and utilize based on the need at their school. Some schools have already secured this video. Schools are scheduling a time to show this video to assist with preparation to strengthen Inclusion program. *4/11/08 - Completed
Principals and staff with an EC subgroup that need assistance with establishing and effective Inclusion model will utilize the STARS visitation model to visit schools with exemplar Inclusion programs. Those schools are: Pleasant Garden (LD), MBS (hearing impaired, Lindley (strong Pre-K Inclusion), Jefferson (general Inclusion model), Murphey (strong scheduling model utilizing IE block to facilitate Inclusion), Brooks (AU), Claxton (TMD fully included model).	IIOs need to follow up with principals to see if any have utilized this strategy. Shadybrook has visited Claxton.

Rona Jacobs and Adina Mandikos are compiling a list of the teachers that have been trained in Foundations of Reading. This training will end on 1/19/08. IIOs will identify teachers from this list that are assigned to Bubble Schools. These teachers may serve as mentors, model site teachers, or providers of training for other teachers.	IIOs have shared this information with principals so that they are aware if they have this resource in their building. Dates for upcoming trainings have been shared.
Betty Anne is going to plan a Professional Development session for reading tutors that will be provided next semester, next summer, and next school year.	This training was not scheduled for this semester but will be offered in the summer and next school year.
Schools with ESL & Hispanic Subgroups: Foust, Hunter, Sumner, Archer, After the 2nd and 3rd benchmarks, the ESL teachers will meet with grade levels to provide ideas and strategies for working with ESL students. Principals will ensure that this occurs either during grade level planning time or after school.	Principals advised whether they felt their ESL staff was qualified to provide this training. If they did not have a person to facilitate this process, the ESL FIT member was contacted for assistance. At all schools K-1 has been placed on a consultative services so that services can be expanded to 2-5. Hunter is extending the vocabulary by extending to 5 words a day for the ESL students. Bessemer and Hunter received additional ESL teaching support. * 4/11/08 - Continuing
PA's in the EC department have identified EC teachers in need of support and additional skill sets. This list has been provided to IIOs. IIOs will confer with principals regarding identified teachers and ensure that training relevant to their areas of need is provided. IIO will also require frequent instructional monitoring by the principal for those teachers. EC member of the FIT and the PA for that school will provide monitoring and coaching for those identified teachers.	Information has been shared with principals along with suggestions for support and monitoring. FIT members are continuing to provide support to teachers in these schools. Follow-up dialogue was held at Mid-Year conferences as needed. *4/11/08 - Completed
Select "Bubble Schools" will receive support from members of the FIT as reflected in the plans that the principals submit to their IIO on January 4th. The FIT members will serve schools on as determined by the IIO. During a review of the intervention strategies with the principal, the IIO and principal will determine the level of assistance and support needed. The IIO will monitor the deployment of services provided by the FIT members.	Dr. Zhang's latest data shows that the number of students needed to be targeted for assistance at these schools has decreased. CDT members continue to provide training and support either as a team or by individual team members based on the needs of the grade level, teachers, or whole school. Pilot is having training on Questioning Techniques. Bessemer and Jamestown have had training on Math Station implementation. Shadybrook had an EC program review. Peck had support for specific teachers in reading and math. Archer had a session in collaboration with FA and their AL teacher on moving level 4 students. Irving Park, Claxton, and Vandalia had a program review of math and guided reading practices. * 4/11/08 - Continuing
Conduct quarterly meetings with 'bubble school' principals and their curriculum facilitators to examine subgroup data, monitor student progress and share best practices.	March 12th is the scheduled date for the principals and CFs at these schools to come together to share progress and practices. * 4/11/08 - Completed

IIOs will provide schools with a rubric for assessing school capacity for increased student achievement.	Principals are providing this feedback from the rubric to the IIOs. We have surveyed schools and given feedback to C & I to help build school capacity for next year.

Middle

Strategy	***Status 04/24/08***
Bi-weekly meetings among IIOs, math/ELA coaches, principals, CFs to examine subgroup data and profess, identify best practices	Four bi-monthly meetings have occurred to date with IIOs, math/ELA coaches, principals, and CF's to share best practices and analyze AYP data. Site visits are being conducted by coaches and IIO's to monitor content meetings and observe instruction.
Monitor diagnostic and formative assessments to gather real-time information on student master to inform instruction	During site visits, formative assessments and response plans to assessment data are reviewed and discussed with teachers and principal. Instructional audits have been scheduled by the Exceptional Children's department to diagnose Exceptional Children instructional needs and provide recommendations for improvement. All schools have completed the program review and met with the principal and IIO to discuss findings. All schools will administer a mock EOG in Math midway through the 4th quarter to inform cumulative remediation and review efforts. All schools will submit a re-teaching/review plan for the final three weeks of school prior to the administration of EOGs aligned to the results from the 3rd quarter benchmark, common formative assessments and the Math Mock EOG.
Redeploy coaches beginning 2nd semester	Site visits are being conducted on a bi-monthly basis by coaches and IIO's at both Bubble and Above and Beyond schools (except Hairston Middle) to monitor content meetings and observe instruction. Most ELA and math teachers are now constructing their own shared formative assessments and collaboratively planning based on analysis of student learning.

High

Strategy	***Status 04/11/08***
Organize cross-departmental teams to provide concentrated support to math and English teachers within targeted schools	Meetings occurred week of 1-14-08, and 1-22-08. Services ongoing. Meeting tentative for April 3 (completed). Teachers continuing to be trained on-site and at county staff development regarding EC inclusion.
Weekly debriefing sessions with teams	Meeting occurred on 2-6-08. Services are ongoing. Meeting tentative for April 3 (completed).
Train teachers of repeating 9th graders in math/English to unpack standards	Completed week of 2-8-08. Services ongoing. Meeting tentative for April 3 (ongoing as needed).
Utilize goal summary results to inform instructional	Completed 2-7-08 at principal meeting. Completed

practice	2-12/2-13-08 at assistant principal training. Effort complete.
Ensure accurate identification and use of updated 10th grade student cohort data, transcripts to meet AYP testing requirements	Began week of 2-6-08, review is ongoing. . Next meeting March 17 (completed). Review will be ongoing with Dr. Zhang, principals and IIO's.
Assist efforts to encourage attendance, track down missing students on EOC test days	Process began week of 2-6-08 and will be ongoing during the semester. Next meeting March 17 (completed).
Monitor identification and PLATO enrollment of seniors needing credit recovery to graduate	Ongoing since November 1, 2007. Collaborative effort with graduation coach, counselor and principal. Next meeting March 17 (completed). 12th grade transcript review completed by guidance department and sent to schools on 3/31/2008. IIO's to follow up on necessary adjustments week of 4/21/2008.
Additional funding of attendance incentives focused on meeting writing test requirements.	Additional funding and plan of action completed 2/08/08. Effort complete March 11.