

## **Summary of the *DRAFT* Diagnostic Tool for School District Effectiveness Report – East Ramapo Central School District**

The Draft Report to be released later this month by the State Education Department has found and documented significant failures by the leadership of the East Ramapo Central School District, including:

- A lack of direction from the district for improving students' achievement throughout the district, which has resulted in considerable inconsistencies in the extent to which the district meets students' needs. After years of decline in student achievement, the district's goals have remained stagnant since 2009, and district leadership was found to lack direction and clarity about an overall district goal.
- District leadership reports that it has not implemented a robust financial planning strategy to ensure that the district's limited resources are effectively invested.
- The district has failed its teachers by acknowledging it does not have a staffing strategy that allows it to address students' needs effectively and lacking a coordinated approach to professional development. This has contributed to an environment where students' academic needs are not being met in the classroom, and to insufficient support to address the social and emotional developmental needs of students.
- The report validates multiple other reports of the district's inability to build positive relationships with the community, families and students.

## **Summary of the Diagnostic Tool for School District Effectiveness Report – Spring Valley High School**

The Report prepared in May by the State Education Department found and documented significant failures of leadership by the leadership of the East Ramapo Central School District, including:

- The report found little evidence of planning to address the needs of English language learners (ELLs). The school contains only one bilingual class made up of students with varying proficiencies, despite a large ELL population.
- The school leadership was reported to be ineffective in providing adequate support to the instructional staff, including reports of teachers indicating that professional development is not responsive to teacher needs identified in observations, no common planning time for teachers, and failure by school leaders to monitor lesson plans on a regular basis to ensure consistency.
- The school environment was reportedly very troubling, including reports by students that some staff members do not treat students with respect, and as a result, most students do not see the classroom or school as an intellectually safe learning environment. This could in part be explained by staff reports that there is little professional development provided to support student social and emotional development health.

## **Summary of the East Ramapo Central School District Review of English Language Learner (ELL) Violations**

The Report prepared in February by the State Education Department found and documented significant failures of leadership by the leadership of the East Ramapo Central School District with regard to services for ELLs, including:

- The district has failed to provide bilingual education to students who are entitled to those services. While approximately 1/3 of East Ramapo Central School District's (East Ramapo, or the district) student population is ELL (65% of which are Spanish speakers), as of 2014-15 the district operates only one Spanish Bilingual Education program and one Yiddish Bilingual Education program. The district's Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) are ineligible to enroll in Bilingual Education programs.
- There is a pervasive lack of cultural competency by the district's superintendent, Joel Klein, which, at best, indicates a failure to understand the background and needs of the district's ELL community. When discussing plans for the alternative/transitional program in the district, Superintendent Klein expounded on problems resulting from placing older (18-20 year old) students in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, resulting in the recent pregnancies of 19 "Hispanic" students. This was a follow up to comments made by Superintendent Klein at an August 2014 board meeting, where he said of immigrant students, "They want to learn the language. They want free lunch, breakfast and whatever else they can get. They know they cannot get a diploma...It's a major, major issue."
- The district has failed to provide ELLs access to required coursework and credits toward graduation. At the high school level, Beginner and Intermediate level ELLs are denied access to the core curriculum and credits necessary for graduation. Beginner and Intermediate ELLs instead take introductory content courses (e.g., in science, social studies, and other subjects) that accrue elective credit only, and not core content area credits for graduation.
- Even where programs are available, the district's offerings fail to provide ELLs with adequate instruction. Many ELLs languish in classes where instruction is well below grade level. Some Advanced ELLs were asked to interpret class lessons for Beginner ELLs. Students are not adequately supervised. Very young children were left without supervision for five or more minutes, and high school students were observed sleeping or eating in class without teacher intervention.
- SED initially refused to approve the district's Title III proposal over concerns that the district's plan is inadequate and out of compliance with the program's requirements.