ACADEMIC RECOVERY PLAN FOR YOUNGSTOWN CITY SCHOOLS

October 2, 2014

The Ohio State Superintendent of Public Instruction established the Youngstown Academic Distress Commission (YADC) in 2010 pursuant to Section 3302.10 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). The statute requires that the Superintendent establish an Academic Distress Commission for each school district that has been declared in "Academic Emergency" pursuant to Section 3302.03 of the ORC and has failed to make adequate yearly progress for four or more consecutive years. The ORC further requires that the YADC develop an Academic Recovery Plan (ARP) and submit that plan to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for approval. The most recent ARP was approved by Superintendent Richard Ross on April 19, 2013. This revision of the ARP has been delayed for two reasons: the panel was awaiting the results of District Review by ODE so those results—presented on August 28, 2014—could be assimilated into this plan; and the chair of the YADC resigned and a new chair was sworn in effective June 26, 2014.

The 2014 revision of the ARP has been presented for adoption by the YADC panel at its October 2, 2014, meeting. As approved, the ARP is currently being forwarded to the State Superintendent for his approval. This ARP addresses the academic challenges Youngstown faces and includes:

- Short-term and long-term actions to be taken to improve the District's
- academic performance;
- Sequence and timing of the actions and the persons responsible for executing the actions;
- Resources for monitoring and assessing the improvement efforts; and
- Requirements regarding reporting of results to the Commission and the Board on the status of improvement efforts.

The YADC will monitor regularly the implementation of this plan by requiring reports by the superintendent, the treasurer, and the senior staff of the District and will modify the plan based upon the District's progress toward achieving the goals using identified success measures. The ultimate goal of the YADC is to improve academic achievement for the students of the Youngstown City School District (YCSD) to such an extent that the Commission (YADC) will be dismissed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction—when the YCSD earns a grade of "C" or better for both the performance index score and the value-added progress dimension for two of the three prior school years, as outlined in section 3302.03 of the ORC.

The YADC believes that it is the primary responsibility of the teachers and staff of the YCSD to teach all students in a manner that will allow them individually to learn as effectively and efficiently as possible and to learn how to learn so they may become the very best that they can become. Given the focus of the YADC's mission as

prescribed in the ORC, the YADC has limited the majority of the academic expectations in the ARP to the areas of reading and mathematics as they make up the vast majority of the Local Report Card (LRC) and are the primary determinants related to a school district's achievement on those measures critical to the assessment of the District and those that contribute the most to the ratings on the LRC. By no means, however, does the YADC intend by its focus on reading and math to diminish the importance of other academic areas—notably social studies and science—in the development of students and the effect they have on the overall success of the District. Similarly, the YADC extolls the virtues of elective coursework and student participation in extracurricular activities as they round out students' educational experiences that will turn them into productive and happy citizens.

The YADC also recognizes the tremendous effect that academic subjects other than language arts and mathematics have on the success of students in reading and math. Many students deepen their development of mathematical thinking and reading skills in their other academic and elective coursework based on the assignments teachers give them, on their interactions with fellow classmates, and on connections they draw on their own from reflection and discussion. For this reason, the YADC recommends that school leaders mine their environments for opportunities for purposeful and specific support of reading and mathematics across their curricula, notwithstanding the apparent omission in this plan of goals in subjects other than language arts and mathematics.

Similarly, the YADC recognizes the powerful influence of school climate and culture on student learning: positive school climate and culture boost student learning and achievement while a climate that tolerates disruption, disrespect, violence, or academic malaise undermines student success in their academic pursuits. For this reason, this revision of the ARP retains the goals and activities of prior plans that make explicit efforts at improving school climate and culture.

The YADC has included achievement data from the 2013-2014 school year in this report. On the surface, the most recent LRC for the YCSD reflects dismal results: NO state indicators met; a four-year graduation rate less than 70% (state target 90%) and a five-year graduation rate less than 75%; a Performance Index rating of about 65% (a "D" on the LRC); an Annual Measurable Objective under 28%; and an overall Value Added rating of "F" on the LRC. Hidden in this bleak news is the fact that the District raised passing percentages on state assessments in 14 of 22 rated academic areas. Though subpar, the graduation rate is slowly increasing, college acceptance rates are on the rise, and in buildings where teaching and leadership staff have embraced the tenets of the Quaglia program to improve school culture through enriched student-teacher and student-student relationships, violence is down and suspensions and expulsions have decreased.

For the purpose of writing the ARP, the YADC limited its data examination to district-wide data as the configuration of schools and grade levels of students attending schools has changed significantly based on the recommendations of the

prior ARP, Strategy II, "To increase student choice grades K-9 and 10-12" in an effort to increase student achievement and slow the loss in student enrollment the District has experienced over many years. No additional school configuration changes are recommended in this revision of the ARP making longitudinal data for individual school buildings more applicable and appropriate for future revisions of the plan.

In developing this revision of the ARP, the YADC has also relied heavily on the recommendations of the Ohio Department of Education in its District Review Report generated from the visit of the review team to the district from May 5-9, 2014. (The review team will return in November 2014 for a brief follow-up assessment.)

Finally, the YADC depended heavily upon the previous plan. The District has been challenged to make several changes in the past two years, and those changes need time to settle into the fabric of the District and the schools. Reference was made in the ODE review of what is commonly called "initiative fatigue", a common occurrence in districts that are desperately trying to discover and deploy initiatives that will work to turn around failing schools. Often times in education, promising changes initially generate only moderate or even minimal improvements and are abandoned as unsuccessful too soon. This revision of the ARP contains few, if any, surprises and reflects an intent to keep forging ahead with the strategies of the prior plan and to improve monitoring and assessment efforts that focus on what is and is not working in the District.

The superintendent, treasurer, and district staff should be commended for already starting to take actions called for in many of the strategies presented in this plan. Similarly, district officials have already reviewed and reacted to the recommendations presented by ODE in their district review. Therefore, the relatively long list of strategies presented in this plan should not be overly daunting or cumbersome. For example, the District has already published an assessment calendar and developed a monitoring plan to track the completion of teacher and principal evaluations; the treasurer has included building and district goals as he has developed the budgets for the year; and professional development has been planned for teachers and principals.

Summary of ODE Challenges and Areas for Growth

- Leadership and Governance—The board members, district leadership team, and other stakeholders need to develop clarity around roles, responsibilities, and communications. "Because of current communication patterns among the board of education, the administration, the staff, and the Academic Distress Commission, there is constant tension throughout the district." (District Review Report, 2014, p. 12)
- Curriculum and Instruction—The District lacks consistency regarding materials, programs, assessments, and the Ohio Improvement Process. Monitoring of processes is inadequate or ineffective. Lack of fidelity in

district personnel meeting pedagogical or procedural practices limits academic success in some cases. "The lack of monitoring of district initiatives and the frequency of assessments increases staff and student stress and encourages the mobility of both groups out of Youngstown." (District Review Report, 2014, p. 13)

- Assessment—Though the District uses SchoolCity as an assessment tool, the primary use is for summative assessments. It is unclear how well teachers gather and use data for formative purposes. Teacher-based teams do not consistently follow the 5-Step Process as they conduct their meetings, and technology has been seen as an impediment to communications and access to assessment data. "The lack of monitoring of the implementation of district initiatives allows distractors and derails the main plan." (District Review Report, 2014, p.14)

- Human Resources and Professional Development—Teacher and administrative turnover presents a critical challenge to the Youngstown City School District. The amount of change, both in personnel and in programs, stymies improvement efforts in some schools. Though the per pupil expenditure in Youngstown is high compared to many districts in the area, the District lacks the resources to meet all of its needs. And inconsistency degrades the District. "The inconsistency in programs, personnel, leadership, system-wide goals, building-level organization . . . as well as program target changes all contribute to the high mobility rate of staff and students out of the system." (District Review Report, 2014, p.15)

- Student Support—Not all of the current programs and services that to support students and families are aligned as a comprehensive system of support. In some instances the resources are aligned, but they are not implemented consistently and with fidelity. There is also "no evidence of prevention and early intervention programs for students at risk of dropping out of school." (District Review Report, 2014, p.17) Finally, some concern exists that teachers don't help make school climate positive. "When teachers are not aware of or following culturally appropriate practices, students' motivation may be impeded." (District Review Report, 2014, p.17)

- Fiscal Management—The goals and objectives of the District to be supported by the budget need to be clearly linked to the budget. Another concern is that preventive maintenance costs may deplete the Fund 34 account to the point that "it may be insufficient to replace equipment when it reaches the end of the expected life span." (District Review Report, 2014, p.19)

Long Term Goals

Based upon these findings and an analysis of the 2013-2014 LRC, and in consideration of the recommendations provided in the District Review report (pp. 18-22), the YADC developed the following Long Term Goals for the YCSD. The YADC recognizes that the YCSD has made progress in several academic areas, but the improvement has not yet resulted in improving the LRC rating issued by ODE.

Nonetheless, it is progress, and with dedication to formative instruction and assessment, close monitoring and feedback, and a commitment to the belief that all students can and must learn, larger incremental gains can be realized, and better LRC ratings will be achieved. Most importantly, the children of Youngstown will be better equipped and prepared to succeed at college or in the workforce by the education they receive in the YCSD. While the temptation is to demand that the Long Term Goal be that 100% of all indicators on the LRP be achieved, such a goal is likely to discourage the teaching and leadership staff who know that they face an uphill battle. The metaphor of eating the elephant applies here: you can't eat the elephant in one bite. And you can't reach 100% passing rates in one or two school years. The Annual Goals and the Priority areas that follow will assist in achieving the Long Term Goals of the ARP.

- By the end of the 2016-2017 school year, the Youngstown City School District will have achieved a Performance Index score of 85 (a "C" on the LRP) for two consecutive years.
- By the end of the 2016-2017 school year, the Youngstown City School District will have achieved a Value-Added rating of "C" for two consecutive years.
- By the end of the 2016-2017 school year, the Youngstown City School District will meet proficient standards in 14 out of 22 academic performance indicators.
- By the end of the 2016-17 school year, the four-year graduation rate will exceed 80%.

Annual Goals

In addition to the long-term goals detailed above, the YADC has developed Annual Goals to support the Long Term Goals. The Annual Goals were developed to create annual benchmarks toward the achievement of the Long Term Goals. The YADC recognizes that the Annual Goals are ambitious and will require purposeful and significant commitment, cooperation, and collaboration. However, the YADC also recognizes the learning needs of the students who deserve a school and a district which will no longer accept poor achievement results that have been prevalent for far too long. The Strategies included in the prior ARP continue to be addressed in the Annual Goals as well. The YADC is committed to the achievement of the ambitious Annual Goals and is pleased to have the opportunity to assist the YCSD in achieving the goals.

- Improve the climate and culture of the individual schools and the school district as measured by surveys of students, staff, and parents in cooperation with the Quaglia group.
  - Reduce student offenses that result in suspensions from school by 10% per year over the next three years.

- Increase the percent of students proficient in mathematics by an average of 11% (see Appendix A for grade-level breakdown) as measured by the OAA/OGT assessments using the 2013-2014 results as the baseline measure.
- Increase the percent of students proficient in reading by an average of 10% (see Appendix A for grade-level breakdown) as measured by the OAA/OGT assessments using the 2013-2014 results as the baseline measure.
- Achieve a composite district Value-Added rating of "met expected growth" for all subgroups for two out of the next three school years.
- Reduce the education gap between YCSD and the State of Ohio subgroup AMO by 10% per year as measured by state assessments using the 2013-2014 results as the baseline measure.
- Increase the District's four-year graduation rate to at least 80% in 2015, 82% in 2016, and 84% in 2017.
- Increase the student attendance rate to 95% in the elementary schools, 94% in the middle schools, and 92% in the high schools, and to 85% in the alternative school.
- Increase staff attendance rate to 95%.
- Increase staff participation rate for professional development to 95%.
- Increase the YCSD's positive interaction with parents/guardians as reflected in an annual satisfaction survey.

Quarterly Progress Assessments

The YADC recommends Quarterly Progress Assessments as benchmarks toward achieving the Annual Goals. Quarterly Progress Assessments should be ambitious and reflect a positive trajectory toward the achievement of yearly goals. The Quarterly Progress Assessments will be developed by the District, or the District may purchase vendor developed assessments for this purpose (e.g. SchoolCity). The YADC encourages the District to develop short-cycle assessments that will align to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

In addition, district officials should monitor on a quarterly basis the following data:

- The percentage of high school students on track for successful completion as measured by course grades.
- The percentage of high school students on track to graduate in four years as measured by number of credits earned and required courses passed.
- The percentage of students in grades K-3 reading at or above grade level as measured by quarterly reading assessments aligned to the Ohio Academic Content Standards.
- The percentage of elementary and middle school students making progress toward grade-level content standards in reading and math.
- The percentage of elementary school students with attendance rates of 95% or greater (94% for middle school; 92% for high school) as measured by EMIS attendance records.

- The percentage of students suspended out of school or expelled from school as measured by EMIS disciplinary data looking specifically for decreases in these percentages.
- Student enrollment as measured by EMIS enrollment data looking specifically for increases in enrollments.
- The percentage of students participating in school-sponsored extended learning opportunities that support academic and non-academic achievement (e.g. sports and other extracurricular activities, tutoring or homework assistance, or counseling services) looking specifically for increases in these percentages.
- Improved staff attendance aiming for 95% attendance rate as measured by EMIS.
- The number of teachers, administrators, and staff involved in professional development looking specifically for more involvement in professional development.

Ohio Improvement Process

The YADC recognizes that in high need districts such as YCSD that only through the use of practices contained in the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) and regular assessment, data analysis, and adjustments in instruction can increased academic achievement occur on a system-wide basis. The YCSD has hired and trained instructional coaches to assist teachers improve instructional practices , curricular planning, and assessment writing to make data collection and analysis against State Content Standards an asset to the education of YCSD students. The data teachers collect will be central to the focus of Teacher Based Teams (TBTs), Building Leadership Teams (BLTs) and the District Leadership Team (DLT). The YADC will request that district leadership report the progress of TBTs, BLTs, and the DLT on a quarterly basis during regularly scheduled YADC panel meetings.

The YADC understands the importance of the robust implementation and intense monitoring of the ARP. It also recognizes the significance of high quality teachers, high quality instruction, and the need for financial and non-financial resources in support of the ARP and in support of student achievement.

The YADC will depend upon the Superintendent and his staff to monitor the academic process of instruction and assessment and to provide the YADC with regular reports of progress as requested during meetings of the YADC.

Supportive Environment

The YADC recognizes the importance of a positive school climate, a culture of high expectations for student achievement, and a culture of high levels of staff support for student achievement. The YADC believes that increasing student achievement must become the responsibility of all adults associated with the school district. The

professional staff in the schools and at the central office may ensure significant increases in student achievement occurs by creating high expectations for student achievement and providing high levels of academic and non-academic support for students.

High levels of support must include:

- On grade level, standards based instruction
- Relevant and innovative teaching methods
- Academic and non-academic support
- Wrap-around social service support
- Extended academic and non-academic learning activities
- Regular and positive communications with student families
- An understanding and appreciation for the diversity of students, families, and the greater community.

Priorities/Strategies

The priorities that follow are framed by the ODE District Review Report Recommendations and information from the previous ARP. The YADC fully realizes that initiatives begun by the YADC in earlier ARPs need more time to settle in and become part of the fabric of the District. Wherever possible and advisable, the YADC has included the strategies of prior ARP's as part of this revised ARP. The Commission also recognizes that significant district improvement has taken too long, and some urgent additions have been detailed already in this plan.

PRIORITY 1: Leadership and Governance

Create trust and a sense of cooperation between the Board of Education ("the Board") and the administration of the YCSD. The current conflict between the Board and the District administration is counterproductive to the goal of improving academic performance of the children within the District. Creating trust and cooperation will require new ways of doing business and changes in communications practices between the Board, the District, and the Commission.

Strategies

- Arrange training sessions for the Board in an effort to clarify roles of the Board and the professional staff and to eliminate micro-managing actions by the Board because micro-managing can slow down or even up-end critical decisions and actions that affect student achievement. Training to be arranged by the YADC Panel and paid for from district funds.
- Limit the number of paid board meetings to two per month. This limitation will not apply in the event that the Board has to hire a superintendent or treasurer. Meetings with search providers, interviewing candidates, and

deliberating about who should be offered employment are not subject to the two meetings-per-month restriction. In addition, this restriction does not apply to board meetings convened for training purposes.

- Recommendations about curriculum, instruction, and assessment as well as matters regarding support services for students will be presented by the superintendent to the YADC for their approval.
- All administrative appointments will be recommended to and approved by the Academic Distress Commission. For the purpose of this Academic Recovery Plan, administrators will be defined as leadership and special assistance positions and whose primary responsibility is the assistance or supervision of adults, not the support and instruction of students, i.e. individuals being offered administrative contracts.
- Develop a communications plan whereby the superintendent provides weekly written updates to all board members and commission members apprising them of key district goals and initiatives, current event and developments, progress toward goal attainment, and important new challenges.
- Review board policy and guidelines regarding who among the board members may speak officially on behalf of the Board. If this is unclear in policy or guidelines, determine who will speak officially on behalf of the Board and modify the policy to reflect this.
- Dedicate at least one of the two monthly board meetings to school building presentations and celebrations of student success. Invite students who will be honored and their families to attend the board meeting when they will be recognized.
- Continue to review board policies to ensure compliance.

Success Measurements

- Training of Board initiated by November 2014 and completed by January 2015.
- Curriculum-Instruction-Assessment recommendations (for example, Pearson Math) and student support services (e.g. Quaglia Institute program) are presented to the YADC for their approval.
- Recommendations for administrative employment actions are presented to the YADC for their approval
- Superintendent provides weekly updates to the Board by end of September 2014 and weekly thereafter. Superintendent forwards copies to ADC panel chair for monitoring purposes.
- Board agendas and minutes reflect at least once per month recognition of students and/or staff and building presentations.
- Semi-annual meetings of superintendent and key central office staff scheduled to review policy and guidelines and make recommendations for additions, deletions, or modifications to the board for their approval. First meeting to be scheduled no later than November 15, 2014.

PRIORITY 2: Student Support

Create a climate and culture of learning that systemically embraces high expectations for staff and students and provides high levels of academic and non-academic support to enable success for all students.

Strategies

- Continue the work of the QISA program coordinated by the Quaglia Institute. Develop buy-in on the basic tenets of the program from all staff in schools where QISA is being used. Expand the QISA program to more schools in the District. Establish a committee to review the Quaglia outcome data.
- Fully implement the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) framework in all schools. Establish systems of supports to include strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments.
- Foster the belief that all students can learn when they are meaningfully challenged and skillfully supported. Establish the expectation that every adult's primary purpose for working in the YCSD is to help all students achieve at high levels.
- Celebrate student and staff achievements publicly and frequently, either at board meetings or in other public venues (e.g. Chamber of Commerce meetings, service organization meetings such as Rotary or Kiwanis Clubs, or parent-teacher organization meetings.)
- Monitor suspension and expulsion data monthly at the building level and quarterly at the district level.
- Celebrate the ethnic diversity and multi-cultural richness of students, the community, and staff. Provide all staff professional development on the value of diversity and multi-culturalism and the importance and appreciation for the demographic diversity of the classroom; communication practices; instructional practices; relevant content and classroom management techniques that work most effectively with diverse populations of students related to race, ethnicity, culture, socio-economic status, and ability levels.
- Continue to implement a staff recognition plan that will recognize and celebrate staff for achievement and performance including leadership excellence at all levels of the organization.
- Conduct resource mapping of internal and external supports and resources to provide alignment of services and easier access for staff and families. Explore resources from the UCLA Mental Health in Schools website (http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/) for resource mapping tools and additional information on developing a continuum of support for students and families.
- Convene a committee to review school choice acceptance criteria and develop a plan to be more inclusive of all students.
- Refine the practices of the District Leadership Team (DLT), Building Leadership Teams (BLTs), and Teacher Based Teams (TBTs) to promote staff

modeling of professional behaviors that support student achievement. Make distributed leadership the primary purpose of these professional learning communities, not allowing them to devolve into gripe sessions or sessions where the primary accomplishment is "admiring the problem."

Success Measurements

- Committee to review the Quaglia outcome data is established and has met. Report the progress and expansion of Quaglia practices throughout the district quarterly to the board of education and at YADC panel meetings.
- The District will report on the extent of implementation of PBIS throughout the district quarterly to the board of education and at YADC panel meetings.
- By October 2014 and again in May 2015, survey all staff members on their belief that all students can learn. Report findings to the board of education and the YADC in November 2014 and June 2015.
- Report monthly to the YADC at their panel meetings on the students and staff who have been publicly celebrated.
- Present the map of the internal and external support services to students and families and report on the types and frequency of support actions to the board of education and the ADC at their panel meetings in January 2015 and June 2015.
- Committee to review school choice acceptance criteria is established and has met. Present plan to be more inclusive of all students to the board of education and the ADC panel in February 2015.

PRIORITY 3: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

While all elements of the curriculum are important to developing a well-rounded ready citizen of the 21st century, the curricular emphasis in this ARP remains focused on reading and math. The YCSD will be judged and evaluated against meeting proficiency standards in reading and math in grades 3-11 with other subject areas added in a few grade levels. In addition, the District must work hard to reduce the education gap documented in race, socio-economic status, and special education subgroups over many years.

One key in this regard is to assure that all students are afforded the opportunity to be presented with well-designed curriculum—and supporting instructional materials—that are aligned with state content standards and the Common Core. Teachers and administrators are charged with assuring well-designed, challenging, and aligned curriculum.

But the best curriculum cannot succeed if it is not delivered by a skilled instructional workforce. Teachers, coaches, and intervention specialists must be at the top of their game every day, designing instruction that is both rigorous and aligned to the standards as well as compelling for students so they show interest in

their academic success and personal growth. Classroom management challenges are noticeably reduced when the students are eager to engage in the learning that teachers have designed for them and when students who struggle clearly understand that academic challenges are expected in the learning process and know they can go to their teachers for help and guidance. The best teachers don't accept failure or even mediocrity from their students and see student failings as failings of their own.

Finally, assessments must be developed that inform instruction and give teachers an insight to the success of their students. Assessments must give the professional staff **formative** information (essentially checks along the way to assure that instruction is having the impact it was designed to have) and **summative** (essentially for the purpose of grading students.) Formative assessments are generally shorter and narrower, and with a major purpose not to judge a student but to inform near-term instructional design and practice. Summative assessments are generally longer and broader, and with a major purpose of assessing student success on a project or a unit of learning. Both formative and summative assessments must be used, however, if the teacher is to feel confident that all of her students have learned—and how well they have learned--what was intended by the teacher.

Strategies

- Create a team of teachers, administrators, and curriculum staff to develop formative and summative assessments. Provide adequate professional development for this team on assessment creation. Develop and follow a yearly assessment calendar for staff, students, and the community and include it in the district's instructional framework document.
- Develop a yearly professional development (PD) calendar. Include all district-designed PD and state-sponsored PD such as Response to Intervention (RTI), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Formative Instructional Practices (FIP) and Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (BPIS). Survey the staff periodically to assess their PD needs and include these on the calendar as well. Solicit the assistance of State Support Team 5 to determine training they can provide in District at no cost to the District.
- Align all District resources to Ohio's New Learning Standards, and assure that any curriculum items purchases are aligned with the standards. Provide training to the District staff whenever new curriculum resources are purchased.
- Appoint a committee to chart, monitor, and evaluate both the frequency and number of assessments throughout the school system.
- Provide training for all staff throughout the district on the 5-Step Process. Use the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council's (OLAC) video series to introduce the concept and contact the State Support Team 5 to provide training at no cost to the District. The BLTs and TBTs should meet during the school day to allow for regular use of the 5 Step Process.

- Create a timeline for school improvement with measurable annual objectives (See Appendix A for academic goals assigned by the YADC.)
- Continue to use academic monitors to help oversee the academic processes and development in the district and to report findings to the YADC to ensure that the curriculum is being presented with fidelity and instruction is reaching all students effectively.
- Expect that all teachers use student and classroom-level reports available in SchoolCity to inform instruction. Make ProgressBook® modules available for students and parents in all schools, and monitor to make sure parents and students are using the system.
- Provide training for teachers in understanding and using Value-Added information to critique their own success in helping students realize a year or more of growth each year they are in school..
- Assure that available technology is sufficient to administer online assessments. Conduct an audit of electronic instructional tools and make repairs and purchases to meet classroom needs.
- Executive cabinet and central office staff should attend building and teacher-based team meetings to observe how the meetings are conducted and make recommendations as necessary to improve the practice.

Success Measurements

- Team of administrators, central office staff and teachers is created to design formative and summative assessments. Team meets monthly or as needed with first formative assessments written in reading and mathematics by November 2014. Assessment calendar written, distributed, and included in the District Instructional Framework document.
- Yearly PD schedule written and distributed to all staff and to the board of education. After each PD session, survey participants about the quality and usefulness of the PD using Survey Monkey or similar simple on-line survey instrument.
- District budgets for supporting the New Ohio Content Standards and for PD when new district-wide curriculum materials have been purchased; such PD is folded into the PD calendar.
- Committee to monitor assessments is established; district-wide assessment calendar is developed and distributed to all schools.
- Training provided for the entire staff on the use of the 5-Step Process, the Ohio Improvement Process, the OLAC training materials, and Value Added by March 2015. Visiting administrators to BLTs and TBTs report improvement in the professional learning community practices.
- Benchmarks met for academic improvement in 2015, 2016, and 2017.
- Academic monitors report weekly to the chair of the YADC and other conference call participants.
- Central office monitors use of SchoolCity and ProgressBook® and makes report quarterly to the board of education and to the YADC reflecting

percentage of trained professionals using SchoolCity and ProgressBook® at least once per week with the first report coming by the end of November 2014. Percent of trained staff using these technology sources at 60% weekly having used the technology productively (not just logging on.)

- Evaluation regarding the amount of technology available completed by October 2014; by January 2015 a plan is developed to enhance computer resources and/or Internet band-width if evaluation finds technology to be inadequate for required on-line state assessments. If evaluation determines the amount and type of technology to be sufficient for state assessment purposes, the Superintendent will report this conclusion to the YADC.
- Senior and central office staff develop and follow a schedule that allows them to visit and observe BLT and TLT meetings regularly; wherever possible, enlist the support of the State Support Team 5 to assess BLT/TBT effectiveness and design PD for those leadership teams that need it.

PRIORITY 4: Human Resources and Professional Development

Like many urban districts, the YCSD needs to recruit, select, and retain the best possible teachers to work with the children of Youngstown. In addition to instructional design and delivery acumen, wherever possible the District should make specific efforts to attract minority teachers to the District as role models for the students in the schools. The human resources department must develop a needs assessment procedure to make reasonable and accurate predictions of upcoming staffing needs, and recruitment for replacement teachers should begin in late winter or early spring with a goal of filling all known openings by the end of the school year. Finally, the Human Resources department should make an effort to balance experience and quality levels of the instructional staff across the District and assure that the students with the greatest need are assigned to the teachers with the greatest skill.

Strategies

- Create, distribute, and implement a clear and concise District personnel goal plan for YCSD showing, at-a-glance by school the personnel categories, experience, licenses required and National Board Certification/Highly Qualified Teacher status (HQT).
- Join networks that attempt to recruit minority teachers to work in urban districts, and participate in recruitment events at historically African American colleges and universities in an effort to hire minority teachers and administrators.
- Conduct exit interviews for all teaching and administrative staff who leave the school district (for reasons other than termination, retirement, or "reduction in force") to determine their reasons for leaving the district and whether they are leaving for employment in another school district. Use the

data from the exit interviews to inform strategies for improvement within the district or buildings.

- Appoint a district personnel committee to monitor the movement of personnel due to school closings, new initiatives, budgetary cuts, reorganization, or state and local mandates.
- Monitor OTES and OPES processes, and track the completion of evaluations quarterly. Present reports of the status of evaluation compliance quarterly to the board of education and the ADC panel at the November, February, and May meetings.
- Create and distribute a district-wide professional development calendar and monitor the calendar. Conduct quick satisfaction surveys after each PD session.

Success Measurements

- Personnel plan is completed and presented to the board of education and the YADC.
- Minority recruitment consortia are joined and candidates are interviewed and hired to join the YCSD faculty and administration. Recruitment and employment results are shared monthly with the board of education and the YADC beginning in March each year through September each year.
- Exit interviews conducted and data collected and shared with the superintendent and his senior staff annually in June. Any changes in practice as a result of exit interviews will be presented to the board of education and the YADC in July.
- A district personnel committee is appointed to monitor movement of personnel due to school configuration modifications. Findings will be shared with the superintendent and his senior staff by March each year and will be used to inform hiring needs for the upcoming school year.
- Human resources department monitors teacher and principal evaluations (OTES/OPES) completed and reports completion rates quarterly to the board of education and the YADC.
- PD calendar created and distributed. Central office personnel monitor professional development attendance and conducts brief surveys after each PD session.

PRIORITY 5: Fiscal Management

Funding for educational programs is essential, and including staff and administration in the budgeting process increases the likelihood that district and building budgets are aligned to district and building learning goals and the delivery of student services. Tying the district's and buildings' goals to financial resources during the budgeting process will allow all stakeholders to see how the budget will meet the needs of students.

Furthermore, analyzing per pupil spending closely, especially as it compares to the spending per pupil in comparable districts, will help the district leadership consider reductions that can be made without compromising student achievement.

The district's capital improvement planning must pay close attention the Fund 34 to assure that needed repairs can be completed in a cost-effective manner and to assure that Fund 34 has sufficient funds available for the repairs anticipated. In addition, contingency planning for Fund 34 should be completed for unanticipated needs related to capital improvements.

Finally, continuing the district's recent efforts to offer choice within the public school system can help keep students and families in the district and perhaps attract a number of those who have opted for community or voucher schools or inter-district open enrollment options to return to the District, thus increasing student enrollment in the YCSD and state foundation funding.

Strategies

- Include the district's and buildings' goals in the decision-making process relative to establishing the district and school annual budgets. Where feasible, include building staff and administrators in the budget preparation process.
- Survey the parents of Youngstown students attending schools in other districts and who have exercised educational choice options to determine if changes to the District's transportation criteria would bring their children back to the District. Based on the survey results, prepare a cost and benefit analysis to determine what impact possible changes could bring to District finances.
- Analyze the District's per pupil spending to determine how much the YCSD spends per pupil compared to similar districts. Review operations and spending to determine areas that can be reduced without compromising student programs. Propose changes in operations appropriately.
- Continue implementing changes in the design of accounting systems and work flow and checks and balances in an effort to improve internal control to help catch and correct errors and improve communication. Provide accounting staff with training as changes are made to operating procedures.
- Prepare an analysis for Fund 34 on an annual basis and determine if and when required resources will be insufficient to meet the District's capital improvements plan. Prepare a menu of option to address underfunded or unfunded capital improvement needs and present those options to the board of education and the YADC.
- Continue recent school choice options but prepare a cost benefit analysis to assure that funding for those options does not force the district into fiscal distress.

Success Measurements

- District and building goals are considered in the budgeting process. If feasible, school staff and administrators are invited to participate in the budgeting process.
- Survey of parents who have opted to send their children to non-YCSD schools is written, administered, and results reviewed by February 2015. Treasurer will work with the superintendent and the senior staff to analyze the survey results and to propose changes, if any, to the Board and the YADC by March 2015.
- Analysis of district per pupil spending compared to similar districts is complete and a report is made to the Board and the YADC by January 2015. Recommendations for change in programing or operations if any are made to the YADC in spring of 2015.
- Analysis of Fund 34 complete and report made to the Board and the YADC by March 2015 and annually thereafter.
- Cost benefit analysis of the District's choice options is complete and a report is presented to the Board and the YADC by May 2015. If changes to the district's choice options are proposed, they will be proposed by May 2015 and annually thereafter.

Yearly Goals, 2014-2017

Ideally, the goal of the YCSD should be that 100% of students achieve proficiency on state assessments, that all students should achieve more than a year's growth in a year's time in order to catch up, and that all students should graduate in 4 years. Such a goal has proved unachievable in most school districts across the state. The long-range goals on page 6 of this Academic Recovery Plan may be broken down into yearly goals as shown below. Should the district achieve all of these yearly goals, they will pull out of Academic Emergency and will facilitate the departure of the Academic Distress Commission.

NOTE: New state assessments may have a deleterious effect on proficiency passing rates across the state. If this happens as expected, yearly and long-range goals for the YCSD may be recalibrated.

Indicator		**2013-14**	**2014-15**	**2015-16**	**2016-17**
Performance Index		77.7	80	82	84
Value-Added Rating		Red	Yellow	Green	Green
4-yr Graduation Rate		69.2%	73%	77%	81%
Reading	Gr. 3	61.8%	73%	80%	85%
	Gr. 4	70.5%	80%	82%	87%
	Gr. 5	54.2%	65%	75%	85%
	Gr. 6	69.5%	75%	80%	85%
	Gr. 7	55.2%	65%	75%	85%
	Gr. 8	58.9%	67%	76%	85%
	Gr. 10	70.0%	80%	85%	90%
	Gr. 11	80.7%	85%	89%	94%
Math	Gr. 3	56.5%	67%	75%	85%
	Gr. 4	54.4%	65%	75%	85%
	Gr. 5	52.0%	64%	75%	85%
	Gr. 6	69.5%	75%	84%	88%
	Gr. 7	38.2%	52%	66%	80%
	Gr. 8	44.0%	56%	68%	80%
	Gr. 10	59.6%	70%	80%	90%
	Gr. 11	70.4%	80%	88%	94%