



RANDOLPH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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To: All Randolph Public Schools Staff and Families
From: Oscar Santos
Re: Department of Education Findings and Recommendations
Date: May 2, 2011

Dear Staff, Families and Community,

As many of you know, from 2008-2010, the Randolph Public Schools has worked on a Turnaround Plan from to help improve our school district. When the plan ended in June of 2010, the Department of Education visited in our school district from October 25-28, 2010 to gather information regarding the following questions:

1. How has the district addressed the issues that placed it in Level 4?
2. Is student achievement on the rise?
3. Do the district and schools have strong systems and practices in place to continue to make progress without assistance from the Department of Education?
4. Has the district build the capacity to maintain continuous improvement on its own, without continued DESE Targeted Assistance support and intervention?

The evaluation team reviewed documents, met with groups of administrators, teachers, parents and conducted classroom visits. This past month we received the full report as well as a summary of the findings and recommendations. The entire report is 65 pages; it is posted on our website. Attached we have provided the Summary of the Findings and Recommendations.

We are very proud of the progress that we have made and realize that there is still a great deal of work for us to do. We look forward to working with you as we create a new plan to make sure that we meet the needs of ALL Students in the Randolph Public Schools.

The next plan will be due within the next 2 months. We are having a community forum to get your input. The ultimate goal is to create and implement a plan with input from parents, community members, teachers and administrators. Please join us on Tuesday, May 24, 2011 6 – 8 PM at the JFK Elementary School, 20 Hurley Drive.

Thank you for the hard work and commitment to our district and community!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Oscar Santos".

Oscar Santos
Superintendent of Schools

Level 4 District Review: Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Randolph Public Schools

The Department's Center for District and School Accountability conducted a Level 4 district review in the Randolph Public Schools during the week of October 25, 2010. The complete district review report is in Attachment #6. A summary of the findings in response to each key question follows.

Key Question 1: How has the district addressed the issues that placed it in Level 4?

The Randolph Public Schools have made a concerted and largely successful effort to address the issues that placed them in Level 4.

Key Question 2: Is student achievement on the rise?

The district has increased achievement in ELA and mathematics in the aggregate but not in all subgroups.

Key Question 3: Do the district and schools have strong systems and practices in place?

Leadership and Governance

1. School district and town officials have established a significant collaboration in support of the public schools; they have the view that unified support of the schools will result in higher performing schools and improve the quality of the community.
2. The new school superintendent is developing an educational plan to drive the school system, merging the current strategic plan and the turnaround plan into a District Improvement Plan using a grass roots approach and putting a focus on quality teaching and learning.

Curriculum and Instruction

3. Since 2008 the district has taken significant steps toward Goal I of the Randolph turnaround plan through development and implementation of a standards-based curriculum in many areas. Work continues, as the district does not yet have a comprehensive document that includes all subjects, is aligned horizontally and vertically, and is accessible to all staff and the public.
4. The reduction of the number of coaches at the middle and high school levels reduces support for implementing curriculum, improving instructional strategies, and analyzing data to inform instruction.
5. In classroom observations, the review team found substantial evidence of several characteristics of effective classroom management and instructional practice, but less evidence of instruction that fosters higher-order thinking skills.

Assessment

6. The district has developed a substantial system of formative and summative assessments, creating a culture among teachers and administrators where assessment is central.
7. Teachers are routinely engaged in data review and analysis during district-scheduled common planning time, examining student work and collaborating on the refinement of instructional and assessment strategies. This use of common planning time is part of an overall emphasis on data in the district that as yet has not been advanced by the creation of a district data team.

Human Resources and Professional Development

8. The human resources department conducts a comprehensive teacher recruitment program aimed at employing highly qualified, experienced teachers while simultaneously expanding the

Attachment #3: Summary of Findings and Recommendations

diversity of the teaching staff. Beyond recruitment, the district successfully strives to create the conditions for retaining newly appointed teachers.

9. The school committee and the administration, particularly the superintendent of schools, have created a labor relations climate with the teachers' association which is conducive to problem identification, dispute resolution, and productive collective bargaining.
10. The evaluation and supervision process is focused on timeliness, consistency, and improved methodology. Not all teacher or administrator evaluations include comments aimed at improving instruction or recommendations for professional growth.
11. The district engages in a substantial number of professional development activities largely dictated by the three goals of the turnaround plan. Not surprisingly, given the general lack of recommendations for individual professional growth in teacher evaluations, there are areas where more professional development is needed.

Student Support

12. Randolph has numerous student support programs at all levels, many of which have been instituted since the district was declared underperforming in 2007. In some cases, these programs are new, while in others they represent reconstituted programs lost during the years before the override.
13. Efforts to improve the performance of special education students have not yet resulted in improved results on statewide assessments. The addition of new programs and accompanying training, along with the district's strengthened support programs for all students, should foster such improvement in the future.
14. The district has increased the involvement of parents in district affairs, thus building a stronger group of interested and active stakeholders committed to supporting its efforts to improve the schools.

Financial and Asset Management

15. The Randolph school district has the support of the town in developing its budget based on goals that arise from a combination of its strategic plan and its turnaround plan. The process used is open, participatory, and designed to elicit input from all stakeholders.

Key Question 4: Has the district built the capacity to maintain continuous improvement on its own, without continued assistance from ESE targeted to the district?

In the opinion of the review team, the district has in place a framework that would allow it to maintain continuous improvement without continued assistance targeted to it from ESE. This framework, however, is still too new to be able say, with certainty, that the district has proven its capability to maintain continuous improvement on its own.

Attachment #3: Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Recommendations

Leadership and Governance

1. The school district and town officials should continue their monthly joint committee meetings to address Goal III of the turnaround plan, which deals with student enrollment, community pride, media relations, and partnerships.
2. The new superintendent of schools should continue developing an educational plan to drive the school system. The new district plan should be linked to the current district plans and be implemented by a cohesive educational team.

Curriculum and Instruction

3. Randolph should continue work to complete the remaining pieces of the K-12 curriculum and make it accessible on the district's website to staff, parents, and the public.
4. Randolph should consider increasing coaching support at all levels.
5. The district should continue to use data analysis to improve curriculum and instruction so as to increase achievement in ELA and mathematics, especially in subgroups.

Assessment

6. The district should expand its system of formative, benchmark, and summative assessments to core subject areas other than ELA and mathematics.
7. The district should consider developing and making available to all students, staff, and parents a districtwide assessment calendar that includes common assessments, standardized assessments, and mid-year and final exams across all subject areas.
8. Randolph should consider forming a district data team to improve the analysis and use of data already available within the district.

Human Resources and Professional Development

9. The district should put procedures in place, consistent with the new statewide evaluation framework to be established in spring 2011 by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, to ensure that all evaluations of teachers and administrators include comments on how to improve practice and recommendations for professional development.
10. The district should place a priority on planning, coordinating, and evaluating professional development activities that reflect the new District Improvement Plan, the School Improvement Plans (SIPs), and professional development recommendations contained in teacher evaluations. The Professional Development Committee should be charged with determining the professional development calendar based on these resources as well as semi-annual teacher surveys.

Student Support

11. The district should use student assessment results and other student data, especially for ELL and special education students, to evaluate the newly created or modified support programs and to improve them or eliminate them as indicated.

Attachment #3: Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Financial and Asset Management

12. With diminishing financial resources, the superintendent, school committee, town manager and town council should develop a five-year strategic plan for financial operations and consider ways to increase income and decrease expenses.