

**Urbana School District #116**  
**UHS Restructuring Plan**  
**April 2008 (REVISED September 2008)**

**Introduction:**

The federal No Child Left Behind legislation and the state procedures that are associated with it, require that any school district that has a school that has not made adequate yearly progress for five consecutive years to create a Restructuring Plan for that school. With the posting of the Prairie State Achievement Scores for 2007, Urbana High School did not make AYP for its fifth consecutive year. The district created a Restructuring Planning Committee to help guide the development of the Restructuring Plan. This committee was made up of district administrators and program directors, building administration and teachers, a representative from the University of Illinois's Center for Education in Small Urban Communities, a consultant from the Regional Office of Education, and the Urbana Board of Education President.

NCLB requires the district to select from one of four options for restructuring the school. These options are:

1. reopening the school as a public charter school, consistent with Article 27A of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/Art.271],
2. replacing all or most of the school staff, which may include the principal, who are relevant to the school's inability to make AYP,
3. entering into a contract with an entity, such as a private management company, with a demonstrated record of effectiveness, to operate the school as a public school,
4. implementing any other major restructuring of the school's governance that makes fundamental reform in:
  - i. governance and management, and/or
  - ii. financing and material resources, and/or
  - iii. staffing

The district chose to work under the provisions of the fourth option. Reopening as a charter school would drastically limit parent and student options for educational programs. Replacing all or most of the school staff would not be viable in a district of this size, because tenured teachers would have to be placed in positions for which they are highly qualified. Entering into a contract with a private management company was not deemed to be in the best interest of the students, parents, or community. The focus of the Restructuring Planning committee was on the fourth option. Specifically, the committee focused on making fundamental reforms in the governance/management and scheduling/staffing of the school.

The committee worked under a set of norms; the foremost among the norms is: We will focus our discussions on issues that will improve student learning. The committee used the ISBE Restructuring Plan Guide and Restructuring Monitoring Prompt as well as conversations with Carol Diedrichsen from ISBE in order to develop the guiding questions:

- Is the plan sufficient enough to bring about change in student learning and achievement?
- Is there data to back up the decisions and a plan for evaluating the changes?

### **What has brought UHS to Restructuring?**

In the past three years, Urbana High School has implemented a variety of initiatives designed to improve teaching and learning. The school has also undergone a complete change in their administrative team. The student PSAE data indicates that there are still significant areas for improvement, and the initiatives have had mixed and hard to evaluate results.

Student data from the past four years has shown steady decreases in PSAE scores for all subgroups in all subject areas (see [irc.niu.edu](http://irc.niu.edu)). Overall the percentage of students meeting or exceeding on the reading portion of the PSAE decreased from 67% in 2004 to 52% in 2007. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding on the math portion of the PSAE dropped from 58% in 2004 to 44% in 2007. The largest achievement gaps for reading were between white students (64% meets and exceeds) and IEP students (9% meets and exceeds) followed by black students (23% meets and exceeds) and low-income students (31% meets and exceeds). In math, the gaps followed the same pattern with white students (54% meets and exceeds) and IEP students (7% meets and exceeds) showing the largest gap followed by black students (16% meets and exceeds) and low-income (25% meets and exceeds). The racial, socio-economic, and special education achievement gaps are all severe, but the fact that the over all student population has done worse on the PSAE for four consecutive years indicates that the problem of student achievement at Urbana High School is not going to be solved by targeting one subgroup of students, but rather looking at supports that can benefit all students.

Despite the downward trend in PSAE scores, Urbana High School students have scored higher than the state average on the ACT, for the fifth straight year. The average composite score at Urbana High School was 21.8, and the state average was 20.5. The scores on the Work Keys portion of the PSAE reveal that the students do not perform as well on that portion of the PSAE. The percentage of students who scored a 5, 6, or 7 (out of 7) on the Work Keys dropped from 64% in 2006 to 47% in reading and from 62% to 49% in math. This would seem to indicate that the students perform better on the ACT than on the Work Keys.

As noted in the UHS 2007 SIP:

As with the rest of the country, the white students at UHS are outperforming the African American students academically and are over-represented/under-represented in several critical areas. African American students are under-represented in the weighted and advanced placement classes, are over-represented in special education and remedial classes, and constitute a disproportionate amount of discipline referrals ranging from the mundane to extremely serious.

During 2004-2005, African American students comprised 28.6% of the total student enrollment. However, 42.7% of students receiving special education services were African American, 67.1% of students in the lower level English courses were African American, 56.3% of students in the lower level math courses were African American, and 9.5% of students enrolled in one or more weighted or advanced placement courses were African American. African American students made up 65% of the out of school suspensions and generated 49% of the total number of discipline referrals. For 2005-2006, African American students made up 68% of the out of school suspensions and generated 56% of the total number of discipline referrals.

Prior to 2004-2005, teachers at Urbana High School were not provided with the time necessary to collaborate with one another. There was little consistency from one section of a class to another section of the same course. Some students received content based on the Illinois Learning Standards and some didn't. Even though this issue is currently being addressed, we are still a couple of years away from being able to claim that all students in all classes are receiving instruction and content based on the Illinois Learning Standards.

Student data from the last four years indicates that while there are significant gaps between AYP subgroups, the decreases in student achievement across all students and all areas indicated the need for providing increased student support, increased emphasis on program evaluation, and new systems for monitoring and accountability. Many initiatives have been put in place over the past six years in order to improve student achievement. One of the goals of the restructuring process for Urbana School District is to carefully evaluate the benefits of these initiatives. The purpose of the restructuring process was not to dispose of all previous initiatives, nor to create more initiatives, but rather to put in place a system that would increase support for students and provide more monitoring and accountability of teaching and learning.

### **Restructuring Plan:**

#### **Governance and management:**

The Restructuring Planning Committee proposed two initiatives to meet the requirements for fundamental changes in governance and management that were approved by the local board of education. The emphasis of these recommendations is to provide increased monitoring of student engagement and learning, a more systematic approach to analysis of student data, and a clear plan for evaluation of programs and activities related to school improvement. The first of these initiatives is to implement the Instructional Practices Inventory, which is a non-evaluative walk-through that provides data to administrators and teachers about what type of teaching and learning is happening on any given day. The second initiative is to implement a systematic method for evaluating programs to determine if the initiatives are having their desired effect.

The Instructional Practices Inventory is a process for profiling student learning experiences and engaging all faculty members in the analysis and use of data for school improvement. Effective, periodic analysis of IPI profiles can enhance school-wide and

sub-group collaborative conversations about student learning and instruction. Engagement in collaborative conversations about learning and instruction can foster faculty commitment and help build a stronger professional community. The significance of these important school-wide characteristics is well documented in the school improvement and educational change literature. As school faculty members become more and more accustomed to collecting instructional data about student learning and using those data as a basis for collective reflection and problem-solving, the nature of student learning experiences evolve, most often shifting from higher to lower percentages of student seatwork and from lower to higher percentages of student engaged, higher-order learning.

A program evaluation subcommittee created a template for analyzing school improvement initiatives, and used the template to partially evaluate the Academic Learning Support (ALS) course that UHS has implemented to provide literacy skill instruction and math support for students. One of the biggest recommendations from the sub-committee was to determine the specific outcomes of each initiative and set benchmarks for success in order to determine if the initiative is having its desired impact.

The group that will be responsible for monitoring the success of school improvement initiatives will be the District Improvement Monitoring Team. This team will be made up of the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Assistant Superintendent for Special Services, the principal of the high school, the principal of the middle school, one principal from the elementary level, the Director of the Center for Education in Small Urban Communities, and a Professor/Executive Associate Dean from the Bureau of Educational Research. This team will meet monthly in order to review and evaluate the impact of specific school improvement initiatives. The monitoring team will use the program evaluation template to guide their work.

The District Improvement Monitoring Team will also work with the University of Illinois' Center for Education in Small Urban Communities to investigate possibilities for University of Illinois resources to provide technical assistance in data analysis and program evaluation. Additionally, during the 08-09 school year, the monitoring team will work to develop a more comprehensive plan for program evaluation in the future. The monitoring team will prepare regular reports for the Board of Education and building and district teachers and support personnel.

In addition to these suggestions, the high school is involved in several new initiatives that the district supports. The most important of these initiatives is adopting the model of Professional Learning Communities as a structure for continuous growth and improvement. The high school just introduced PLCs this year, and they are training staff and participating in book discussions. The district is fully supportive of the PLC model and will continue to assist with training opportunities as well as modeling PLC principles in its decisions and actions.

#### Staffing:

The Restructuring Committee approached the requirement for substantial changes in staffing using three mutually agreed criteria for their recommendations.

First, the primary goal for changes in scheduling and staffing is to provide additional student support within the school day. Second, the committee emphasized its commitment to preserving elective programs. Third, there needed to be an effort to gain "team" time for teachers of the ALS courses in order to help differentiate, individualize, and improve student learning.

With these criteria, the Restructuring Committee studied seven different schedules for the school day that would expand the Academic Learning Support course by providing the course for students who are not passing either math or English. While the ALS classes have not been in existence long enough to determine their impact on PSAE scores, there is a substantial amount of data from grades and final exam scores that indicate that students in the math ALS are benefiting from the additional support. The data from the English ALS course is not as clear, however the content of the course continues to evolve. The Restructuring Committee made recommendations that the UHS administration work with English teachers, ALS teachers, and other content area teachers to evaluate the curriculum and instruction in the ALS courses, for the 08-09 school year. The smaller class sizes and team time will result in the addition of between two and four certified FTEs depending on enrollment.

#### Stakeholder Feedback:

The Restructuring Committee also has started conducting a series of surveys of teachers, students and parents. The survey of staff is a general climate survey that will be used to provide additional information to the PLC teams, administration, and teachers as a baseline for the climate of the building. The student and parent surveys include information about student and parent perceptions about the school, support for students, and the rigor of the curriculum.

#### Professional Development to Support Restructuring:

The district will continue to support content area literacy professional development through CRISS training and work with the UIUC Center for Education in Small Urbana Communities. District administration will work with UHS administration and faculty to create a professional development plan that will focus on the content area literacy and Professional Learning Communities. The Regional Office of Education will provide training in the Instructional Practices Inventory and also provide RESPRO funds to help with the implementation process.

#### **Timeline:**

After carefully reviewing the historical AYP data, the district has decided that upon board approval, it will begin implementing the Restructuring Plan for the 2008-2009 School Year.