

New Jersey Department of Education  
Division of Educational Programs and Assessment  
Office of Vocational-Technical, Career and Innovative Programs

# Englewood Report

New Jersey State Board of Education  
November 16, 2005

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its April 2, 2003 decision on the motions brought before it in the matter of Englewood Cliffs v. Englewood, seeking to vacate the State Board's 1990 directive prohibiting all public school districts in New Jersey from accepting high school age students from Englewood and Englewood Cliffs on a tuition basis or otherwise, the State Board required that the Commissioner report formally to the State Board semi-annually "to ensure that...progress continues and to avoid the possibility of regression."

In addition, in its June 1, 2005 decision on motions brought in the instant matter, the State Board directed the Commissioner to develop benchmarks to measure the progress being made toward "achieving a racial balance in the composite student body at Dwight Morrow High School."

This report is submitted to address these requirements. The report includes an overview summarizing the most current decisions and actions taken during the nearly twenty-year legal struggle to effectuate desegregation and educational improvement in the Englewood School District. The primary intent of the report, however, is to identify the extent of progress made in the development and implementation of the voluntary plan adopted by the Englewood Board of Education to address racial isolation and educational quality in Englewood's Dwight Morrow High School (DMHS) and to make recommendations with benchmarks to encourage continuous, specific and timely progress towards realizing these goals. To this end, the report will look objectively at what has been accomplished, the challenges to be overcome, and how the district, working in conjunction with the Department of Education (DOE) and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), can accelerate improvements in the racial balance and the educational outcomes for all the students in the district.

While some progress continues to be made in the district since the October 2003, September 2004 and January 2005 department reports to the State Board of Education, Englewood and the DOE are in agreement that an acceleration of the process is needed to ameliorate the racial imbalance and educational quality issues at DMHS. At this time, there is renewed cooperation between the DOE and Englewood to develop a revised, written comprehensive plan for the next three years. The revised plan, with a timetable, acknowledges the successes to date and will build on the existing assets of the Academies@Englewood initiative.

The implementation of the Academies@Englewood as an Interdistrict Public School Choice Program offering has attracted out-of-district students and resulted in an ethnically balanced student body within the Academies program. These gains in integration, however, do not yet extend to the entire student body of DMHS. This report identifies strategies and establishes benchmarks to extend this success into DMHS.

The recommended strategies and benchmarks included in this report reflect input from Englewood, SREB, and the DOE. They are intended not only to address the problems identified herein, but also to assist the district in moving toward the creation of a culture of high

expectations, high standards, and high achievement for all students. Englewood has the opportunity to implement a model of inclusion for all students in the academically rigorous climate already established for students participating in the Academies program. The High Schools That Work (HSTW) school improvement initiative emphasizes that intervention for students below grade level should be based on principles of acceleration rather than on remediation. It is this kind of creative rethinking about students' talents, abilities, and potential that can lead to extraordinary achievements for the individual students and for the entire district.

Although we never anticipated that the solution to the decades-long segregation problem in the Englewood public schools would prove to be a simple one, we are optimistic that a solution is being forged to address the district's problems. We are encouraged by Englewood's recent efforts to modify the Academies@Englewood program and to embrace a more inclusive, comprehensive and systemic school improvement plan for the district. At this juncture, the district is moving at a faster pace to implement an integration plan for the high school campus that increases access to quality programs for all students. The district's aggressive implementation of the HSTW program demonstrates a willingness to expand the vision, moving from a selective reform model to an inclusive model. In addition, the district has responded well to establishing specific goals and benchmarks.

The Department of Education supports the emerging direction for change in Englewood and will continue to work closely with the Englewood Public School District. We will monitor the district's progress in addressing the segregation and educational quality issues remaining in the district. We have made progress through the implementation of the Academies@Englewood program and acknowledge that the commitment to provide better educational opportunities for *all* of Englewood's resident students requires that we continue to develop and implement additional innovative programs to address the long-standing problems of this district.

## **BACKGROUND SUMMARY**

Almost a half century after the US Supreme Court concluded that school segregation was unconstitutional and "inherently unequal," recent national statistics show that segregation or resegregation intensified throughout the 1990s. Regrettably, much of the hard-earned progress made in the 1970s and 1980s in closing the academic achievement gaps and integrating schools was lost during the last two decades. According to the Harvard University 2001 study entitled, *Schools More Separate: Consequences of a Decade of Resegregation*, New Jersey ranks fourth among the most segregated states for black students. More specifically, the proportion of DMHS student population that was black or Hispanic rose from 65.88 percent in 1982-83 to 84 percent by 1987-88, and in 2004 to 89 percent.

It is in this complex context that the courts (including the New Jersey Supreme Court), State Board of Education, DOE, Englewood, and concerned members of the community sought a remedy to the recalcitrant issues of segregation. After a protracted and litigious struggle to identify a solution to redress the racial imbalance at DMHS and to ensure quality educational opportunities for all the students, the DOE and Englewood, in collaboration with Bergen County School Districts, worked together to find a promising educational solution. In February 2002,

the Equity and Excellence proposal was submitted to the DOE and was accepted as the long-awaited reform initiative for Englewood. The Academies @ Englewood, the centerpiece of the proposal, advanced the Bergen County Technical Schools model academic career academies. The proposal must be considered as a work-in-progress and thus, requiring ongoing evaluation and modifications to the original proposal if it is to be successful in its attempts to resolve an "American dilemma."

The history of the litigation between the 1993 decision and the State Board's 1997 and 1998 rulings are summarized by the Appellate Division in *Englewood III*. In addition, this summary includes the most salient actions taken by the DOE and Englewood during this period through July 2002.

- January 1994 -- A new administration took office and the new Commissioner of Education hired an outside consultant to conduct a regionalization study rather than to complete the in-house study that had been begun by his predecessor. The new Commissioner also hired an outside consultant to review efforts to develop a voluntary, cooperative solution for the racial imbalance at DMHS.
- December 1994 -- DOE contracted with Applied Data Services to conduct a regionalization study encompassing 20 Bergen County communities and with Dr. Harry Galinsky to facilitate the development of a cooperative plan to promote voluntary enrollment at DMHS.
- Fall 1995 -- DOE conducted public hearings concerning the consultant reports. The hearings evidenced strong opposition to regionalization. A task force comprised of superintendents and board members from eight Bergen County school districts was formed to create a locally supported plan for racial balance at DMHS. The task force submitted a plan to develop a magnet school that would provide an opportunity for students to earn college credits through a partnership between DMHS and one or two universities or colleges. This plan was rejected by the Englewood Board.

Englewood, meanwhile, made a series of motions to the court for an order mandating regionalization of Englewood, Englewood Cliffs and Tenafly school districts. All of the motions were denied.

- October 7, 1998 -- The State Board decision required that Englewood submit an enhanced plan to address the racial imbalance "over the next five years."
- December 30, 1998 -- The Englewood response included a revised magnet schools proposal for DMHS but it was not proffered as a plan to desegregate the high school; rather, the proposal was submitted as a plan for educational improvement.
- December 1999 -- The state issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) prepared by DOE staff. The RFP proposed converting DMHS into a "career institute" with partial financing from a DOE-administered federal grant program and Bergen County. The County's share of

the funding was contingent upon Englewood's termination of the litigation, a condition refused by Englewood.

- February 2000 -- Englewood responded to the RFP, expressing reservations about the potential of the career academies to end racial segregation at DMHS and noting its preference that the academies be a part of a comprehensive high school, rather than one that replaced the existing educational programs.
- August 2000 -- The Commissioner notified Englewood that the DOE accepted the district's response to the RFP as the basis for a two-year funding award. Englewood accepted the terms and received a grant to assist in establishing a career academy in business and finance. Englewood started plans to begin two additional magnet programs in September 2001, and asserted that the district would require additional funds to implement and operate additional and broader programs over a five-year period. The DOE and the district reached an impasse over the cost and availability of funding.

Acceptance of this plan came after many years of failed attempts at regionalization and a failed attempt to bring a viable Interdistrict Public School Choice Program to DMHS in 2000-2001. During the 2000-2001 school year, the district attracted only one out-of-district Choice student. The district reported that the student subsequently left the school.

- July 26, 2001 -- DOE invited Englewood and Bergen County Technical Schools (BCTS) to explore a partnership pursuant to BCTS offering its academy programs at DMHS as a way to significantly diminish the racial imbalance at DMHS. This invitation was well received by both districts. The DOE committed to providing start-up funding for the program.
- January 2002 -- The Board of Education of the City of Englewood entered into an Interlocal Management Agreement with the Board of Education of the BCT S, launching the Academies@Englewood. In October 2004, Dr. John Grieco, Superintendent of both districts, passed away and the agreement was renegotiated by both Boards of Education and extended through June of 2009.
- February 2002 -- Equity and Excellence Proposal submitted to the DOE. The Academies @ Englewood program brought with it the experience, reputation, and an administrative team from the Bergen Academies, a county-wide school much like the academy programs that also operate in Monmouth and Union Counties. This resulted in demonstrable and substantial change in the School Choice program in Englewood, and out-of-district students immediately vied for seats. The program has also attracted Englewood Cliffs students and other Englewood students returning from private schools.

**ENGLEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
GENERAL RACIAL/ETHNIC INFORMATION**

In October 2003, the Englewood School District reported a total enrollment of 2,702.5: 100 Caucasian students or 3.7 percent of the total student body; 1,534.5 Black students, or 56.8 percent; 940 Hispanic students or 34.8 percent; 124 Asian students or 4.6 percent; and four Native American students or .01 percent.

The total enrollment for the 2003-2004 school year in grades 9 through 12, which includes both DMHS students and students enrolled in the Academies@Englewood, was 846. Of these, there were 47 Caucasian students or 5.5 percent of the total high school population; 434 Black students or 51 percent; 292 Hispanic students or 34.5 percent; 72 Asian students or 8.5 percent; and one Native American student or .001 percent.

The total enrollment reported by the district for the 2004-2005 school year in grades 9 through 12, which includes both DMHS students and students enrolled in the Academies@Englewood, was 863. Of these, there were 76 Caucasian students or 8.81 percent of the total high school population; 399 Black students or 46.23 percent; 286 Hispanic students or 33.14 percent; 102 Asian students or 11.82 percent; and no Native American students. (See Table F.)

For this report, we have added the Englewood Cliffs and out-of-district students accepted into the Academies@Englewood for the 2005-2006 school year to the reported totals for grades 7 through 10 for the 2004-2005 school year. This resulted in an estimated total enrollment in grades 9 through 12 for the 2005-2006 school year of 1,032 students. (See Table F1.)

Of these 1,302 students, 147 or 14.24 percent are Asian; 454 or 43.99 percent are Black; 117 or 11.34 percent are Caucasian; 306 or 29.65 percent are Hispanic; and eight or 0.78 percent identified themselves as Other. These figures represent the following changes: an increase of 2.48 percent in the percentage of Asian students; a 2.24 percent decrease in the percentage of Black students; a 2.53 percent increase in the percentage of Caucasian students; a 3.49 percent decrease in the percentage of Hispanic students; and a 0.78 percent increase in the percentage of "Other" students. Looking only at the statistics of the total student population in grades 9 through 12, over 90 percent of the total number of district high school students are members of minority groups.

**RACIAL/ ETHNIC COMPOSITION  
DWIGHT MORROW HIGH SCHOOL  
ACADEMIES@ENGLEWOOD**

The admission of students from outside the district through the school choice program has resulted in a well-integrated student body within the Academies@ Englewood program. (See Tables A through E.) The population of DMHS, however, continues to belong overwhelmingly to minority groups. After three years progress toward integrating either the



Academies@Englewood and DMHS programs or the student bodies of the Academies@Englewood and DMHS, the pace remains far slower than desired.

Our estimates for the 2005-2006 school year show 26 Asian resident students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 in the district, or 3.47 percent of the total number of resident students in those grades. Of these, 14 are enrolled in the Academies@ Englewood program, leaving 12 enrolled in DMHS, or 2.13 percent of the Dwight Morrow student body, a decline from 2004-2005 in the percentage of Asian students at DMHS of 1.42 percent. (See Tables F and F1.)

- 437 Black resident students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 in the district, or 58.27 percent of the total number of resident students in those grades. Of these, 102 are enrolled in the Academies@Englewood program, leaving 335 enrolled in DMHS, or 59.50 percent of the DMHS student body, an increase over 2004-2005 in the percentage of Black students at DMHS of 2.31 percent. (See Tables F and F1.)
- 18 Caucasian resident students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 in the district, or 2.40 percent of the total number of resident students in those grades. Of these, 6 are enrolled in the Academies@Englewood program, leaving 12 enrolled in DMHS, or 2.13 percent of the DMHS student body, the same percentage as in 2004-2005. (See Tables F and F1.)
- 306 Hispanic resident students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 in the district, or 29.65 percent of the total number of resident students in those grades. Of these, 62 were enrolled in the Academies@Englewood program, leaving 204 enrolled in DMHS, or 36.23 percent of the DMHS student body, a decrease from 2004-2005 in the percentage of Hispanic students at DMHS of 0.89 percent. (See Tables F and F1.)
- All of the resident students identified as “Other” are enrolled in the Academies@Englewood. None in this category remains at DMHS. (See Table F1.)

In October 2003, the Englewood School District reported a total in-district enrollment of 2,702.5. The following year, the total number of in-district students rose to 2,723. The following chart provides a racial breakdown and comparison of the total student body between the two years:

Racial Group	2003		2004	
	No. Students	% Total Students	No. Students	% Total Students
Caucasian	100	3.7 %	129	4.7 %
Black	1534.5	56.8 %	1517	55.7 %
Hispanic	900	34.8 %	909	33.4 %
Asian	124	4.6 %	162	5.9 %
Other	4	0.1 %	6	0.2 %

The following table compares the student racial/ethnic composition at each school using the 2004 data. While the relative percentages of Caucasian and Asian students are low throughout the district, the chart supports several key projections:

- Asian and Caucasian students tend to leave the schools in the early elementary years;
- A portion of the Hispanic population leaves the public schools prior to the middle school years; and
- As the school system continues to improve, more families may elect to leave their children in the public schools.

Englewood Public Schools	Racial/Ethnic Representation Expressed as Percentages - 2004				
	Caucasian	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Other
Quarles Elem. (PSH-PreK-K-I)	5.0 %	52.2 %	35.7 %	6.7 %	0.4 %
Lincoln Elem. (2-5)	0.5 %	54.1 %	44.4 %	0.8 %	0.3 %
Cleveland Elem. (1-5)	3.8 %	68.1 %	23.6 %	3.8 %	0.6 %
Dismus Middle (6-8)	1.9 %	63.3 %	32.6 %	2.0 %	0.2 %
Dwight Morrow (9-12) w/o AE	1.7 %	59.9 %	36.2 %	2.2 %	0.0 %
Academies & Englewood only	22.2 %	25.1 %	24.1 %	28.6 %	0.0 %

According to the district, the above charts do not show the overall future impact upon the schools of current housing development within the City of Englewood. The City is currently constructing over several hundred new apartments and condominiums.

## STATUS OF PROGRESS TOWARDS INTEGRATION

As shown on Tables A through E and the above-referenced district charts, the Academies@Englewood program has achieved a racially balanced student body. Englewood resident students enrolled in the Academies program are participating in the only integrated educational opportunity offered in the district.

The challenge is to extend this program success to the all the Englewood resident students, including those students at DMHS. Although the students are on the same campus, students at DMHS and the Academies experience two separate and distinct schools. To date, no core courses include both DMHS and Academies students in the same class. The district and DOE are in agreement that a comprehensive improvement plan can result in a more fully integrated student body and a seamless, high quality education for all the students in the district.

The 2005-2006 school year opened with 449 students enrolled in five Academy programs: Biomedicine—60 students; Law and Public Safety—106 students; Pre-engineering—118 students; Information Systems—86 students; and Finance—79 students. Of the 449 students, 271 are out-of-district students. Over 90 percent of the in-district students attended the public middle school, Janis E. Dismus Middle School. Other Englewood resident students attended non-public schools in grade 8. Following what the district refers to as the “university model,” the Academy this year is also serving an additional 97 individual students from the traditional DMHS program. These students are enrolled in a total of 190 classes. An overall interest in academic classes on the campus is credited with this phenomenon. Conversely,

Academy student interest in sports teams has increased, bringing the ratio of Academy student participation to approximately 50 percent of the interscholastic teams on the campus.

The district has reported some participation of both DMHS and Academies students in the same extra-curricular clubs and sports, as well as participation of DMHS students in the Academies' electives. A total of only 27 DMHS students enrolled in Academies electives during the 2004-2005 school year. At this time, participation is limited to choices made by the students. This can and must become part of the regular scheduling process.

Because of different bell schedules for the two schools, music programs fall within the class day for the Academies students (in the last period of their school day) and after-school for DMHS students. According to the district reports, 27 DMHS students and 235 Academies students participated in music programs during the past school year. Several of the DMHS students appear to have been counted each time they participated in a music program so that the actual number of students participating may be fewer than the 27 reported. It must be noted that the bell schedule and other scheduling impediments were to have been corrected for this academic year. Any unresolved scheduling matters must be corrected for the next school year.

For the past three years, the DOE has recommended that the district, as a first step towards enabling the true integration of the student body, develop a common schedule for Academies@Englewood students and the DMHS students. In the 2004-2005 school year, the district reported that it had moved from prescribing a trimester schedule for Academies students while the DMHS students remained on a semester schedule, to placing all students on a trimester schedule.

Nevertheless, the district continued to report an "incompatibility of the AE [Academies@Englewood] and DMHS bell schedules." When asked for an explanation of this "incompatibility," the district explained that when the administration arrived in Englewood, it was unable to match the Academies daily/weekly class schedule with the DMHS schedule because DMHS teachers were working under a contract that established a traditional comprehensive high school schedule. The bell schedule for DMHS, as provided by the district as of August 2005, is attached as Appendix II-A.

The district has reported that: "[d]uring the 2005-2006 school year, DMHS ninth grade students will follow the same bell schedule as AE." The bell schedule for the ninth grade classes and an explanation provided by the district is attached as Appendix II-A. According to the district, this schedule will enable students at DMHS and the Academies to choose to take electives, and participate in clubs and extracurricular activities together: "The matching schedules give us more flexibility in both programs for elective opportunities whereby students at DMHS/AE can take electives offered by either program." The district further reports its "aim to extend this schedule to one additional class every year" to help advance the achievement of real integration in the high school population.

The district has initiated a Healthcare Partnership Pathway Project (see Appendix II-B) in which four DMHS students and 17 Academies students have enrolled. The students will be working together during the summer and will be scheduled together in two classes. In addition,

the district is implementing Allied Health Workshops (see Appendix II-B) for students from both DMHS and the Academies. It is not known how many students will be participating in this program.

## **ADMISSION TO THE ACADEMIES@ENGLEWOOD**

The department has made some concessions to the Academies program, most notably by establishing separate student application timelines for Englewood which closely correspond to the timelines established for admission to the Bergen Academies.

Each choice district is approved by the department to open a certain number of seats for choice program students. Englewood requested and was approved for 75 seats per year for ninth grade out-of-district students. At the time of the establishment of the Academies program, the district agreed to also admit 75 resident students to the ninth grade each year.

The district's admission of resident students to the Academies program each year continues to be lower than the anticipated 75 students. In the 2002-2003 school year, 55 resident students were admitted to the ninth grade; 48 resident students were admitted to the ninth grade for the 2003-2004 school year; 42 ninth grade resident students were admitted for the 2004-2005 school year; and, 61 ninth grade resident students have been admitted for the 2005-2006 school year.

For the 2005-2006 school year, the district has admitted 95 out-of-district students, in addition to the 61 resident students and two students from Englewood Cliffs (under the sending-receiving agreement between the two districts.) In a letter to the DOE, the district administration asserted that “[s]paces not filled by qualified Englewood students will continue to be available for ‘school choice’ students.”

The district is limited to 75 ninth grade seats for out-of-district students, and the department's obligation to provide per pupil support for out-of-district students participating in the school choice program at Englewood is limited to 75 new ninth grade students and the out-of-district students who remain in the program in grades 10, 11, and 12. No information has been received from the district explaining its plans for funding the 20 additional non-resident students. Moreover, filling seats with Choice program students that are supposed to be filled by resident students would create an even greater likelihood that the district would not meet its goal of 75 resident students for each incoming ninth grade, since each choice program student represents an additional \$8,782 in funding to the district.

In order to meet its goal of including 75 Englewood residents in the ninth grade of the Academies program each year, the district must develop a process to ensure the admission of a minimum of 75 resident students. In past reports, the department has suggested as one approach that the district develop and implement a plan that will allow it to admit to the Academies program any Englewood resident student who demonstrates potential to satisfy the requirements for admission to the Academies program through a bridge or aspiring scholar initiative. The DOE will work directly with the district to implement admission policy and programs to ensure

the participation of the full complement of Englewood students in each entering Academies class.

The statute and regulations governing the school choice program provide that a choice district may establish reasonable criteria to evaluate prospective choice students, including the student's interest in the program offered by the choice district. A choice district may not impose admission criteria upon prospective choice program students other than those used by the choice district to determine admission of its resident students to the program for which the prospective choice students are applying. The department will also work with the district to refine and/or establish admission criteria that are fair, transparent, and consistent.

## **EFFORTS TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

The DOE's approval of the development and implementation of the Academies@Englewood program was predicated on the goals of achieving the desegregation of DMHS and providing quality education for all students by making the rigorous academic program of the Academies accessible to all students. In past reports, the DOE has requested that the district develop a plan to improve the opportunities for resident students to achieve high academic success.

The district reports that the following programs and practices are among the most significant initiatives that the district has implemented.

- Established a standards-based curriculum at the elementary level.
- Introduced a free summer school program for students who fail state assessments.
- Created a Ninth Grade Academy for all DMHS students with an extended day.
- Appointed new leadership at DMHS and at Janis E. Dismus Middle School (JDMS).
- Developed a middle school literacy guide and is working on a numeracy guide. The staff meets weekly to work on an implementation plan for literacy and numeracy.
- Created five career-focused academies at Academies– Pre-engineering, Law/Public Safety, Biomedicine, Finance and Information Systems (177 students are from the Englewood district, 164 enrolled from JDMS according to the district, and an additional 97 students from DMHS take one or more courses in the career academies).
- Increased offerings at DMHS and Academies in College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) courses to 11 this school year with a total enrollment of 117 students, 108 from Academies students, and nine from DMHS. On the most recent New Jersey State Report Card (2003-2004 school year), 24 students from Englewood participated in three AP courses; 15 students, approximately 60 percent, took the AP exam associated with the course. The passing rate was not available.

- Collaborated with DOE to develop a partnership at DMHS around the AP/PreAP initiative. On September 13, 2005, the Advanced Placement Incentive Program (APIP) Coordinator for the DOE made a presentation to the principal's cabinet about the program, providing information about the Test Fee Waiver component for students from income-eligible families. The principal's cabinet members also indicated a strong interest in hosting AP and PreAP content and leadership workshops for staff and administrators. The DOE is in the process of identifying the workshop areas and dates, and securing College Board approved consultants.
- Implemented AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program classes at JDMS and in grades 9 and 10 at DMHS. This program assists students to become independent learners, make better choices, set short- and long-term goals, work toward higher academic achievement and develop life skills. In the 2005-2006 school year, 23 percent of students in grade six, 29 percent of students in grade 7 and 15 percent of students in grade 8 are enrolled. One percent enrolled at grade 9 and seven percent in grade 10.
- Implemented academy prep classes in English and mathematics at grades 6, 7 and 8 that enroll 14 percent of the sixth-graders, 13 percent of seventh-graders, and 12 percent of eighth-graders for the 2005-2006 school year to prepare more JDMS students for the Academies program.
- Removed 125 unqualified paraprofessionals and uncertified teachers during the past several years.

Effective this year, the district reports the following additional steps underway to address concerns identified by the department:

- All grade 9 students follow the same schedule as Academy students.
- Any student who qualifies and wishes to take an Academy class is permitted to do so.
- All Advanced Placement classes are identified as campus classes.
- All entering grade 9 students are offered mathematics, writing and science summer classes in order to prepare them for high school. This included both remediation and enrichment offerings.
- Earlier in the month of October 2005, the district submitted two Comprehensive School Reform grants to the DOE. The high school application used the HSTW program as its foundation model; the middle school application used the Making the Middle Grades Work, another SREB program, as its foundation model.

- Weekly high school meetings are held with the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent to work on high school improvement for all students. Similar meetings are held with a middle school group.
- Important end-of-the year events (e.g., prom, commencement, National Honor Society) will be scheduled as campus events. The district's board is discussing the graduation ceremony. Note: This year, campus event must mean shared, fully integrated events and not separate events as initially planned and reported by the district.

To date, district commitments for the 2006-2007 school year are as follows:

- The high school campus will operate on a single class bell schedule to further facilitate the sharing of classes.
- All art, music and physical education classes will be campus classes for all students in all grade levels.
- Current Englewood grade 9 students who express an interest in becoming an Academy student and who demonstrate high level academic performance will be accepted as Grade 10 Academy students.
- More rigorous mathematics, reading and writing classes will be required of all students in grades 6 through 9. To this end, the district will continue to recruit instructors who are certificated specialists in this area and continue to provide training and support for existing tenured staff.

The district states that additional milestones will be developed as the year progresses and as the anticipated consultation work with the Southern Regional Education Board takes place.

## **CHALLENGES TO CHANGE AND PROGRESS**

The major overarching challenge confronting Englewood School District is the need to create an educational culture rooted in the conviction that most students can master rigorous academic studies. Such an environment values continuous, effort-based school improvement that motivates students to excel and that supports their aspirations to achieve the highest standards. To accomplish this will require a single high school where all students are engaged in the five academies and the disparity in the quality of education offered in the district is addressed.

- Merger of the traditional program at Dwight Morrow High School with the Academy program: Previous State Board reports noted operational procedures at the district's high school and commented on differences in opinion regarding how the Academy program fit into the larger picture of DMHS. Previous reports also observed that there was little common programming between students in the Academy program and those in the traditional comprehensive high school program. District officials, including the late Dr.

Grieco, contended that full development of the Academy program was necessary before assimilation of the entire campus student body could take place.

- Developing racial/ethnic balance: The Academies@Englewood program was designed to bring in a diverse student body. The racial/ethnic composition of the Academy program supports the fact that Caucasian and Asian students have enrolled in the program in numbers roughly equal to those of the Black and Hispanic students. The DOE, however, continues to hold firm in its belief that bringing a diverse student body onto the high school campus is only the first step to achieving true integration.
- Equity of access and academic standards: The balance between equity and excellence is at the core of the Englewood issue. There are two very different high schools on one campus:
  - Academy@Englewood students have access to increased instructional time through a longer school day, a rigorous and engaging core academic curriculum, technology, and other upgraded classroom materials and equipment not available to DMHS students, as well as an opportunity to participate in focused career prep “academies” with labs. The climate of the Academy programs reflects high expectations. Teachers are well prepared, classrooms are inviting, and instructional strategies are varied. Students are spirited and proud of their school and opportunities.
  - At DMHS, a climate of high expectations, support, and standards is not evident. The belief that all students can achieve at high levels is wanting. There is lack of equipment and technology in classrooms, and virtually every room is set-up in traditional rows. In many classes, students are either not engaged at all or engaged in below grade-level assignments. Students arrive late to school and to classes.
- Raising academic performance, early grades: A real and significant issue, then, becomes how to bring up the academic performance of the students who have demonstrated average to below average performance. This goal is more easily achieved in the elementary grades because learning gaps are smaller. There, gaps can be addressed successfully with measures such as aggressive tutoring within an articulated program that concentrates predominantly on mathematics concepts and the tenets of literacy, including both reading and writing. Further, education is differentiated in the elementary classroom to meet the individual needs of all students. The district reports that significant staff development continues to take place for elementary teachers to hone skills in differentiated instruction, as well as in mathematics, reading and writing. Reading First principles are followed in the district and instruction is geared to the standards, with benchmark assessments given during the school year to all students. Success of district efforts in the lower grades is evidenced by the gains in state test results. (See multi-year state test summaries: Language Arts, Mathematics.)
- Raising academic performance, middle and high school grades: It is commonly held that developing higher performing students in the middle and high school years presents



significant challenges. As 11<sup>th</sup> graders, two Academy students failed one segment of the HSPA last year. When the high school student body is examined in its entirety, the HSPA passing rate for the previous school year was as follows: Mathematics, 62.8 percent (up from 27.2 percent in 2004) and Language Arts, 76.2 (up from 56.7 percent in 2004). While these results demonstrate appreciable gains, they are still below the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmarks for 2005 which were 64.0 percent passing for Mathematics and 79 percent passing for Language Arts. Performance at grade 8 is also below state Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmarks for 2005 which were 49 percent passing for Mathematics and 66 percent passing for Language Arts. District passing rates on the GEPA test for 2005 were as follows: Mathematics, 30.5 percent passing (down from 35.9 percent in 2004) and Language Arts, 49.5 percent passing (up from 40.9 percent in 2004).

## **ENGLEWOOD'S RESPONSE TO MAJOR CHALLENGES**

At this juncture, district officials are moving at a greater pace to execute an integration plan for the high school campus that will foster greater access to quality programs for all students. Evidence of that direction includes the following:

- The Englewood district is pledged to implement the HSTW program for which planning is currently taking place. (See attachments on HSTW.)
- A team of fifteen individuals, including administrators, teachers and counselors from DMHS and Academies@Englewood participated in the two-day HSTW site development workshop in August 2005 to begin the process of identifying the school's needs and priorities based on the HSTW key practices. The school developed a preliminary action plan to share with their entire faculty.
- The district recently hosted a site visit from senior staff of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), a visit which district staff characterized as "welcoming" and "insightful." Staff at the middle school and high school are largely veteran teachers. SREB's track record with school districts similar to Englewood across the nation has sparked interest. The real work will require key stakeholders, such as veteran faculty, to see a need to change and be actively engaged in the change process.
- The purpose of the SREB visit on September 28, 2005 was to develop a Site Visit Report for the district's use with the potential that it may serve as the foundation for an ongoing relationship with SREB to help actualize SREB's successful middle grades and high school programs. It is the district's position that benchmarks and timelines will result not only from district efforts, but also from school improvement work with an SREB consultant.
- With the onset of the new school year, site administrators at Englewood's high school campus are meeting on a weekly schedule with the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent to articulate and study high school issues with the overall goal of

developing a course of action that can be operationalized for the entire campus. The major challenge is bringing up the academic performance of a greater number of low achieving students at the middle school and high school levels, while maintaining the quality of and outside interest in the Academy programs. Impetus for these actions is also coming from students and community members. An ad hoc student group composed of members from the traditional DMHS program and from the Academies program is also working with a faculty committee to recommend an agenda for high school improvement. Another challenge requiring significant district attention is the 109 classified students who are currently assigned to the traditional high school program.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND BENCHMARKS

First, over the next 18 months, steps must be taken to create one high school organized around the five Academies currently in place at the Academies@Englewood. The intent is to transform DMHS into an academy with all students enrolled in an Academies program by the fall of 2008. Therefore, it is recommended that the district **immediately**:

- Initiate an aggressive and purposeful effort to advance the achievement of under-performing DMHS students so they can succeed in the academy program. Offer students, at the end of each school year, an opportunity to transfer to the Academies program. Communicate to DMHS students that the Academies will accept students on a yearly basis beginning with the 2005-2006 school year.
- Offer 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students a “Pre-Academy” extended day program aimed at strengthening their language arts and mathematics skills so they can enter the Academy program in the fall of 2006. This extended day should be equal to the Ninth Grade Academy and the A@E school day. Require students and parents to sign an agreement about attendance and a commitment to the level of effort that will be required for the extended day instruction.
- Reassess the current leadership at DMHS and the Academies by creating one principal for the entire campus. Three assistant principal positions may be created with responsibilities as follows:
  - One Assistant Principal to serve as the instructional leader for the academy cluster of Pre-engineering, Biomedical, and Information Systems Academies.
  - One Assistant Principal to serve as the instructional leader for the academy cluster of Finance and Law and Public Safety.
  - One Assistant Principal to serve as the instructional leader for pre-academy preparation in middle grades; to oversee a JDMS summer initiative in 2006 aimed at getting at least 50 percent of the rising ninth grade students ready to enter an academy program; and to design a special ninth-grade initiative aimed

at getting the remaining 50 percent ready to enter an academy program by the fall of 2007.

- Integrate pre-algebra into existing seventh grade curriculum for the remainder of this school year and concepts of algebra in eighth grade. This will facilitate the goal of enrolling 50 percent of incoming freshmen from JDMS in the Academies program by September 2006.
- Design a special ninth-grade initiative aimed at getting the remaining 50 percent of incoming freshman from JDMS ready to enter an academy program by the fall of 2007.
- The district should move toward the following goals:
  - By the fall of 2007, enroll 75 percent of ninth graders in an Academies program at DMHS.
  - By the fall of 2008, enroll all students in an academy program.
  - By the fall of 2006, integrate all the Academies program clusters into a “unified” campus facility.

In order to actualize these goals, the district will be required to develop a three-year contract with SREB to provide the technical assistance and coaching to the middle school, high school and administrative staff that assists the district to:

- Relocate **one cluster** of the academies into the main building of DMHS by the summer of 2006. Orient assigned DMHS staff to the academy culture and ways of teaching and learning as more DMHS students enroll in the academy programs. Make each academy leader responsible for creating a support system to assist struggling DMHS students to meet academy standards through extended days, week and year efforts and through student study teams. The intent is not to lower standards but provide students the assistance they need to meet standards.
- Move the entire campus onto the same schedule by September 2006. This would mean that students and faculty work on the same exact calendar. Professional development days, back-to School nights, etc.
- Create within the academy structure appropriate course modifications for students whose individualized education plans specify them. Students with special needs and English Language Learners can be accommodated within the existing five academies.
- Emphasize and acknowledge academic success and hard work. Work with the local media to highlight student and school successes.
- Require the high school to increase by 10 to 20 percent each year the number of students who complete the HSTW-recommended academic core and either an academic or career

concentration for graduation until 85 percent of the high school graduates have met this requirement. The recommended academic core for high school completion for 85 percent of the students would include:

- Four years of college-preparatory/honors English;
  - Four years of mathematics, Algebra I and higher;
  - Four years of lab science including biology, physical science, chemistry, and one additional lab science course;
  - Completion of the state-required social studies sequence of courses;
  - Completion of at least one computer course or demonstrate proficiency in computer technology beyond simple keyboarding; and
  - Completion of either an academic concentration or a sequence of at least four courses of career studies taught in one of the academies.
- Upgrade the Mathematics curriculum to offer pre-algebra to all seventh-graders and a full course in Algebra I to eighth-graders. Immediately integrate pre-algebra into the existing seventh grade curriculum for the remainder of this school year and concepts of algebra in eighth grade.
    - Next year, 2006-2007, put all seventh-grade students into a solid pre-algebra course and as many eighth-grade students as possible into Algebra I; all other eighth-graders into the solid pre-algebra. The following year, 2007-2008, place all eighth-grade students in mastery Algebra I.
    - Provide teacher training in content and best instructional practices to ensure that teachers are able to teach the higher-level mathematics in the middle grades courses.
    - In the fall of 2006, schedule all ninth-graders into Algebra 1 or a higher-level course such as Geometry or Algebra II. Enroll students who are not ready for Algebra I into a 90-minute block aimed at catching them up and getting them successfully through Algebra I by the end of grade 9. Assign the district's best mathematics teachers to teach this class.
  - Strengthen the use of reading and writing for learning across the curriculum to advance reading achievement and to advance achievement in all core academic areas. Implement the following literacy practices:
    - Over the next three years move incrementally toward requiring students from grades 6 through 12 having to read the equivalent of 25 books a year across the curriculum.

- Have students in every course in grades 6 through 12 complete an independent research paper each year. Appoint a team of teachers to develop appropriate scoring guides that to be used at different grade levels.
- Train all teachers in all subject matter areas on how to use a series of teaching strategies that engage students in reading and writing for learning in their subject matter area. The reason reading achievement is declining in the school district is that most teachers in the middle grades and high school do not engage students in reading the content of the subject matter they are teaching.
- Make college-preparatory/honors English the only English course for students in grades six through 12. Eliminate all low-level language arts classes.
- Although there is currently not a media center at the middle school, explore other options and creative strategies to develop classroom libraries that include a range of resources to encourage reading and develop research skills.
- Provide for hands-on science instruction. Provide teacher training and classroom materials and equipment to allow for hands-on instruction in science.
- Provide teacher training in instructional strategies and setting high expectations with specific attention given to strategies related to developing the struggling learner.
- Continue the partnership with the DOE to secure Advanced Placement training for all teachers in the core areas.
- Strengthen relationships with the parent community. Develop faculty study teams to develop a plan to forge a strong partnership with parents and business community. Recruit parents to participate in the development of the school's improvement plan.
- Implement practices that provide supportive relationships to all students, including the development of a teacher advisory program.
- Create in the high school a culture of high expectations for all students. Creating a culture of high expectations starts with each teacher defining clearly for the student for each unit and grading period the quality and amount of work that the student must do to earn an A or a B grade.
  - The faculty and the school need to develop a set of criteria for what grades mean. Based on the IEP of some students, it may require faculty to develop a modified version of what acceptable work would be for those students.
  - Develop a set of standards for dress code, attendance and tardiness.
- Take steps to strengthen the senior year and to improve the transition from high school to the student's next step.

- Create opportunities for those students to earn at least nine semester hours of college credit the senior year through AP and dual credit opportunities.
- Partner with local community college to prepare students to take college credit-bearing courses upon high school graduation.
- Enroll students not pursuing a postsecondary education in a career/technical program that will lead to an employer's certification that has value in the workplace. For many of these students, certification will require that they continue to study in that field beyond high school.

**In summary**, based on the district's demonstrated willingness to embrace change and to commit to the HSTW program, the DOE is encouraged that the transformation of the district is progressing. The district leadership is aware of the need to improve student achievement and is actively involved in developing a comprehensive plan.

The recommendations and benchmarks included in this report are intended not only to address the problems identified herein, but also to assist the district in moving toward the creation of a culture of excellence and equity. Englewood has the opportunity to implement a model of inclusion for all students in the academically rigorous climate already established for students participating in the Academies program.

The DOE is pleased that the Southern Regional Education Board leadership has expressed to the district and to the DOE that they are prepared to work with the district on a three-year contract to provide on going coaching, teacher and leadership staff development, consultant services, and instructional evaluation services to address the goals and recommendations in this report. The DOE is also prepared to increase its technical assistance and monitoring support to the district.

# APPENDICES

# Appendix I

Tables A thru F



Table A

Academies@Englewood  
 Ninth Grade Racial/Ethnic Breakdown  
 2005-2006 School Year\*

	2005-2006 Resident Students	%	Englewood Cliffs	%	Choice	%	2005-2006 plus Choice and Cliffs	%	% change
Asian-American	5	8.20%	2	100.00%	42	44.21%	49	31.01%	22.82%
Black	38	62.30%			4	4.21%	42	26.58%	-35.71%
Caucasian	2	3.28%			38	40.00%	40	25.32%	22.04%
Hispanic	15	24.59%			9	9.47%	24	15.19%	-9.40%
Other	1	1.64%			2	2.11%	3	1.90%	0.26%
Total	61		2		95		158		

\*based on spring 2005 acceptances

**Academies@Englewood  
Tenth Grade Racial/Ethnic Breakdown  
2005-2006 School Year\***

Table B

	2004-2005 Resident Students	%	Englewood Cliffs	%	Choice	%	2004-2005 plus Choice and Cliffs	%	% change
Asian- American	3	7.14%	2	50.00%	25	35.21%	30	25.64%	18.50%
Black	22	52.38%	0		5	7.04%	27	23.08%	-29.30%
Caucasian	0	0.00%	1	25.00%	26	36.62%	27	23.08%	23.08%
Hispanic	15	35.71%	1	25.00%	13	18.31%	29	24.79%	-10.93%
Other	2	4.76%	0		2	2.82%	4	3.42%	-1.34%
Total	42		4		71		117		

\* based on November 15, 2004 9th grade enrollment