

November 6, 2020

Dear Beacon Community:

In late February 2020, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) announced district and school accountability determinations as required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). NYSED listed 245 schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and 125 schools for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) including several in Dutchess County. CSI schools are closely monitored by the state and TSI schools are self-monitored by the districts.

Both Rombout Middle School and Sargent Elementary School have been identified as TSI schools based on state test data from the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school year. The identification for both schools comes from Black students at both schools not showing enough academic growth on the state tests from those two years.

When the pandemic hit New York, NYSED put this program on pause. Now, we are working on it again and will be developing plans for both schools with stakeholder input. The plans are due in January 2021.

The Beacon City School District has published its student data in our Equity Report Card which is linked here:

https://public.tableau.com/profile/liza.lucky#!/vizhome/BeaconCitySchoolDistrict_EquityReportCard_2020_V6/Welcome

We have made positive strides with increasing outcomes in our graduation rates and some reductions in disproportionality in our school discipline rates. We also have much more progress to make meeting the needs of our students of color and we are committed to this work.

We do have some concerns with this program as it is based almost solely on state testing. We also have concerns with the state's plans to hold testing for 3-8 graders this year in the midst of an unprecedented and exceptional effort by our teachers to mix in-person hybrid and remote learning to students during a pandemic.

That said, we will use this opportunity to develop and implement improvement strategies and to provide targeted support for students who need extra help.

There will be an informational zoom meeting to describe the process for Sargent Elementary School at 6:30 on November 16 and Rombout Middle School on November 17 at 7:30. They will be hosted by Principal Archer or Soltish, Assistant Superintendent Bill Rolon, and Assistant Superintendent Erik Wright.

Here are the next steps for this work:

Stakeholders from both Sargent and Rombout will receive an online climate survey next week. Both principals will send out robocalls to remind people to fill it out.

The first week of December both schools will have focus groups or individual interviews of stakeholders including students to collect data.

Both schools will work on completing their plans in the month of December and will work with teachers, staff, and parents to complete their work.

We will keep you updated as we progress through this process.

Sincerely,

Matt Landahl