

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,

