

# Allentown schools look to fix passing rates of students

Jaccii Farris Posted: Dec 08, 2017 05:41 PM EST

ALLENTOWN, Pa. - According to the Allentown School District, 277 Allen High School and 139 Dieruff High School freshmen were held back last year. This year, 321 freshmen at Allen and Dieruff are failing two or more classes.

"These are challenges that have existed. Now we're beginning to quantify them, we're being really transparent about our challenges and we're going to do the work necessary to meet the needs of kids," said Allentown School District Superintendent Thomas Parker.

Parker says as part of the new strategic planning framework, those students who are failing are being identified and intensive instruction will begin immediately. The goal is to bring as many of those students up to passing before the semester ends at the end of January. Student progress will be tracked on a daily basis. District officials say teaching methods and data systems will also be evaluated and improved to support the intensive learning effort.

"We are clearly establishing a baseline whereby we can measure our level of success or our level of not succeeding as a school district and then address those things necessary so that we can move forward to providing greater success," said Charlie Thiel, Allentown School District school board president.

District officials say a task force will also meet with teachers and administrators twice a week to identify challenges and ways to address them.

"We have to look at best practices throughout the country, such as night school," Thiel said.

Even though Dieruff has fewer failing students than Allen, it gets more funding. Parker says that's because of grants. He says going forward the differences in funding and programs for failing students will be evaluated and best practices will be put in place.

This intensive instruction means some students will be working over the Christmas break. Parker says students who don't pass will be placed in a credit recovery program next semester so they can hopefully catch up. District officials say the intensive monitoring and instruction will become the standard moving forward.

You can also watch the video online: <http://www.wfmz.com/news/lehigh-valley/allentown-schools-look-to-fix-passing-rates-of-students/669892876> or type in Google: "WFMZ Allentown passing rates"

**For 5 points extra credit in Quiz category: Due Monday, December 18**

2 paragraph response. (Each paragraph should be at least 5-7 sentences.)

1. Summarize the article: What is the problem? What are they doing to fix it? What do you think it feels like to be one of those students getting daily monitoring and having to do extra work?
2. Why do you think your family enrolled you here instead of a different school? What are some of the benefits of going to a smaller school? What are some of the drawbacks? Do you think it's worth it?