**Closing the Gap Interventions**

**Goal**: Decrease the percentage of Black/African American student scores in performance Level 1 and Level 2 by 7% in all learning areas tested

**Data-Identified Need**: LPHS’s 2014 Illinois School Report Card shows a disproportionate percentage in the number of Black/African American students performance levels in the learning areas test; reading, mathematics, and science.

**Systems Concern**: Black/African American students make up 25% of the students enrolled at LPHS, with 89% of the students on track to graduate in 4 years. This is a 2% decrease from white students. The overall percentage of Black/African American students performing in Level 1 (academic warning) and Level 2 (below standards) demonstrates the gaps in learning and the ability to apply knowledge and skills effectively as compared to other racial/ethnic backgrounds. For example: In mathematics, 13.3% of Black/African American students performed in Level 1 as compared to 1.3% of white students; In reading, 8.7% of Black/African American students performed in Level 1 as compared to 0% of white students; and in science, 11.3% of Black/African American students performed in Level 1 as compared to .6% of white students.

**Research**:

1. “When students value the work they are doing, they feel a sense of belonging in the classroom context in which they are working, feel capable of succeeding, and believe they will master challenging material with effort, they are much more likely to engage in difficult work and see it through to completion” (Farrington et al., 2012).
2. “In the study published in *Science* in 2006 (Vol. 313, No. 5791), the researchers found that the short exercise [self-affirmation] reduced the achievement gap between the black and white students in the class by up to 40 percent over one school term, and that it was particularly effective for low-achieving black students, halving the percentage of black students who got a D or below in the class” (Wineman, 2011).

**ASCA Standards**:

*Academic Development*

A:A1.1 Articulate feelings of competence and confidence as learners

A:A1.3 Take pride in work and achievement

A:B1.1 Demonstrate the motivation to achieve individual potential

A:C1.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the value of lifelong learning as essential to seeking, obtaining and maintaining life goals

**Activities That Will Occur to Create Systems Change**:

1. School counseling/Administration team reviews data from LPHS 2014 School Report Card with administration and instructional staff revealing the disproportionate percentages in PSAE for Black/African American students.
2. School counseling/Administration team reviews research that speaks to “Closing the achievement gap”. School Conselor introduces the concept of “stereotype threat”, as well as highlights information from a recent study that shows “when people who are about to take a test are reminded of negative stereotypes about their racial, ethnic or other group, the subconscious worry that they might confirm those stereotypes undermines their performance by sapping cognitive resources that they could be using to do better on the exam” (Wineman, 2011).
3. School counseling team introduces 15 minute intervention that could change student’s attitudes about their sense of fitting in, and change the way the student’s think about learning, e.g. self-affirmation exercises.
4. School counseling/Administration team develops additional assessments, additional school performance indicators and quarterly data analysis meetings to specifically review achievement gaps in racial/ethnic groups.
5. School counseling/Administration team invests in and supports family and community engagement initiatives.
6. Administration enhances cultural competence in the following areas; cultural competency training for all instructional and non-instructional staff; ensures academic standards are vetted for cultural competency.