

NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code/DBN:	14K050
School Name:	John D. Wells JHS 50
School Address:	183 South 3 Street Brooklyn, NY 11211
School Leader:	Denise Jamison
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring Advanced Comprehensive English Language Arts- All Students; Black Students; Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners; and Economically Disadvantaged
Area(s) of Identification:	
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	March 15-16, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Community and School Background

John D. Wells JHS 50 serves 471 students in grades 6 through 8. The student enrollment is 81 percent Hispanic; 16 percent Black; two percent Asian; and one percent White students. Of these students, 21 percent are English Language Learners (ELLs), and 21 percent are students with disabilities. Most students attending the school are from the surrounding Brooklyn community, but some students travel to the school by public transportation.

The administrative team includes the Principal and two Assistant Principals (APs). The Principal is serving in her eighth year. The school is divided into three academies, and the oversight of these academies is shared between the school leader and the two APs. There are 40 teachers on staff, and only one teacher has been at the school for less than one year. Ninety-five percent of the teachers are highly qualified.

PART 2: ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL’S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

A. Performance on Key Indicators of Student Achievement Trends and School Progress

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	
	NYSED Quantitative Performance Measures	
-	School is ten or more points away from meeting its Effective Annual Measurable Objective (EAMO) for one or more identified subgroups in subject/area(s) of identification.	✓
-	Performance data for the school on NYSED Accountability Overview Reports (AOR) for 2007-08 and 2008-09 show an increase in the number of subgroups that did not make AYP in identified area(s).	✓
-	Performance data for the school on NYSED Accountability Overview Reports (AOR) for 2007-08 and 2008-09 indicate an increase in the achievement gap between identified subgroups and the <i>All Students</i> subgroup in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
	NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures	
+/	2008-09 NYC Progress Report Grade of B	✓
+/	NYC Quality Review Score of Proficient	✓

B. School Strengths

Teachers willingly and independently collaborate to share classroom practices. Some teachers conduct professional development (PD) sessions in the absence of a schoolwide comprehensive PD plan. For example, one teacher has incorporated flexible grouping into instruction and others are now being collegially supported in the development of this strategy.

C. Key Findings and Recommendations

Summary of the key issues (causal factors), and other areas of concern, identified during the on-site diagnostic review that are negatively impacting student achievement in identified areas, as well as recommendations, as related to the seven JIT Indicator Categories:

I. Curriculum

Findings:

- The written curriculum is not effectively supporting student learning. The school has been cited for not making English Language Arts (ELA) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in all subgroups represented in the school. Teachers report that the ELA curriculum regularly changes. The current English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum is newly created and has only recently been implemented. One staff member wrote the ELA curriculum maps.
- Classroom instruction is not sufficiently aligned to New York State (NYS) standards and learning objectives. Objectives are not consistently used by teachers to drive their daily instruction, and students are unaware of learning objectives.

Recommendations:

- The District should work with the school on the development of curriculum in all core areas and ensure that it is clearly aligned with the current NYS Learning Standards. Curriculum contents should align with the new NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards in ELA and literacy and mathematics to prepare for implementation in school year 2012-13. The school's curriculum should be developed by knowledgeable and trained individuals (national, state, or local) who understand the key elements of curriculum development.
- All teachers and administrators should participate in PD in order to improve their skills in identifying lesson objectives, planning and implementing a curriculum with rigor, as well as delivery methods that are student-centered. The curriculum and lesson objectives should be relied upon as the basis for assessing individual student mastery and progress and should be aligned with the NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards, Walkthroughs and formal evaluations should include how well the teacher knows and implements the lesson objectives for the subjects being taught.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- Whole group, teacher directed instruction is the primary strategy used at the school and is not meeting the needs of all students. In most classes, all students work on the same task and use the same materials, regardless of skill level or need for differentiated tasks and texts/materials.
- Student grouping is not consistently strategic and is not used for differentiated tasks or for targeted small group instruction. Teachers and leaders reported that flexible grouping was recently introduced into the school.
- Student engagement is poor, due to inadequate pacing and ineffective planning. Students are compliant but authentic engagement is limited. Teachers do not consistently plan for bell-to-bell instruction, do not plan effective lesson summaries, and do not effectively engage students in discussion. Students do not all sharply focus on activities and lessons due to the slow pace and lack of momentum in many classrooms.
- There is no clear understanding on the part of teachers and students of the value or purpose of identifying and using learning objectives/goals to guide lessons. Some learning goals are activities, not learning objectives, and learning goals are absent from some classes. Students report that they copy objectives from the board and that their learning goals are not reviewed by the teacher.
- Higher order thinking and problem solving does not regularly occur in instruction, and students are not appropriately challenged. Teachers are not incorporating effective questioning strategies into their instruction.
- There is a lack of authentic student work as too many teachers overuse graphic organizers and prepared worksheets. Students report that the work is too easy. Student work on display in hallways and classrooms is not exemplary and is not accompanied by explicit written feedback or next steps. Few teachers post student work with rubrics and, as a result, students are unaware of rubrics for core content areas.
- The use of technology in instruction is absent in most classes. Therefore, students are not gaining important skills because not enough opportunities are provided for them to produce written work with the assistance of technology.

Recommendations:

- School leaders should reach out to the Network or other outside expertise and provide PD that equips teachers with the skills to adopt and apply the workshop model and incorporate a variety of strategies into daily instruction. Teachers should implement mini-lessons that include reading and writing objectives across all content areas, teacher modeling, student-to-student accountable talk, student use of rubrics and self assessment, differentiated learning tasks, and student work that is produced collaboratively as well as independently. School leaders should monitor the successful implementation of these appropriate strategies through an effective observation process and regular evaluation of teacher planning.
- Teachers and school leaders should ensure that student grouping is maximized to provide students with targeted and appropriate instruction. The Network should provide ongoing support and mentoring for school leaders and teachers to better understand the purpose, process and

methods of flexible grouping, and to ensure that the use of student achievement data is built into the flexible grouping process. Teachers should incorporate discussions about flexible grouping into Common Planning Time (CPT) and use faculty conferences for feedback and sharing.

- Teachers and school leaders should establish clear expectations for the use of all instructional periods to ensure there is a clear and effective flow of the day. School leaders should seek support from the Network or other expertise to provide PD to all teachers so that they can effectively structure instructional periods to provide students with meaningful activities that motivate and enthruse them and improve the present poor levels of student engagement. School leaders should closely monitor teachers for adherence to flow of the day structures and ensure that learning time and student engagement are maximized.
- Teachers should establish student centered learning objectives/goals that will allow them to be clear about what they are to teach and enable students to fully understand what they are expected to learn. School leaders should establish clear expectations for teacher use of learning goals and closely monitor the incorporation of learning goals into instruction. School leaders should establish a schoolwide system to analyze individual progress made towards achievement of learning goals.
- Teachers should include higher order questions in the lesson planning process to ensure that academic rigor is incorporated into classroom discussions. School leaders should request Network support to assist in a PD initiative to incorporate synthesis, analysis, comparisons, summaries, and other higher order thinking strategies into the lesson planning and delivery structure.
- Teachers should be expected to use CPT to examine student work and to establish grade-level benchmarks for exemplary student work. Teachers should access exemplary student work samples on the State and DOE websites and review accompanying rubrics to assist the school in establishing higher expectations for student work. School leaders should ensure that these practices are quickly embedded throughout the school.
- School leaders should seek the support of the Network to apply for grant funding to acquire and update the school's technology resources. School leaders should ensure that teachers receive training to effectively integrate technology into instruction and follow up through the observation process to monitor for the use of technology in student work.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- The school leader has not established high expectations for teacher and student outcomes and does not use the teacher observation process to improve teacher performance. The school leader reports that rigor is absent from instruction, but does not set high enough goals or targets for staff improvement and does not effectively communicate a sense of urgency in instructional priorities.
- The Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) goals are inadequate and the school leader is uncertain if the school will make AYP even if these goals are met.
- The school leader has not provided effective instructional leadership and does not regularly challenge the instructional decisions of the administrative team and teachers. She does not hold

leaders or teachers accountable for improvement and puts relationships over performance. The school leader stated that school improvements should naturally emerge from collegial exchange, yet this hands-off approach is not providing staff with the structure or guidance to make instructional improvements.

- The school leadership has ineffectively engaged parents and other members of the School Leadership Team (SLT) in the creation of appropriate school goals. The expectations for the CEP goals are low and will not ensure that the school will make AYP.
- The school leadership has not managed financial and human resources to reflect the declining school enrollment. Each year, enrollment declines as students elect other public school options. As enrollment has declined, there has been no re-evaluation of the three-academy design, and students are now assigned to academies that no longer offer students unique programs. The leader's decisions not to replace key instructors needed to maintain academy features has reduced the appeal of programs offered to students. The leadership at the school is insufficient to support newly developing teachers.
- The school leadership does not demonstrate an understanding of the importance of PD and has not developed a comprehensive PD plan. The Principal provides insufficient direction to teachers to influence teacher participation in voluntary PD choices. The school leader reported that there is no plan for the recently started voluntary Friday PD sessions for the rest of the year and reported that she is now realizing that the school should have documented who attends PD sessions. Without this recordkeeping process the school leaders are unable to provide targeted ongoing support.
- The school leadership has not created nor implemented a Language Allocation Policy (LAP). This omission impacts negatively on the implementation of the program. There is no evidence of parental choice and a school leader reported that the school is unaware of parental choice letters.
- The school leadership is not adequately knowledgeable about suspension regulations. The school leader has not developed a schoolwide alternative to out-of-school suspensions.
- The school leadership have not adequately and effectively supervised instruction to bring about sustained improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school leader has not adequately supervised APs in their execution of the instructional supervision process. There is no coherence in the observation process from leader to leader. The observation of identical events resulted in conflicting recommendations from different administrators. Some leaders write detailed summaries with many comments and recommendations and others write brief descriptions and few suggestions for improvement.
- The school leader has not ensured that the observation process is rigorous and appropriately focused on the school's identified areas. The recommendations provided to teachers in observations neither reflect school goals nor provide adequate feedback to ensure that teachers address weaknesses related to the school's identified areas. The school leader instituted a new observation schedule this year so that all teachers will be formally observed four times.

Recommendations:

- School leaders in collaboration with their SLT should establish high standards for instruction as a matter of urgency. With the support of the Network, school leaders should closely monitor instruction for integration of objectives, differentiation, high levels of active student engagement, the creation of student work that is aligned to rubrics, and high levels of student-to-student interaction.
- School leaders should conduct a thorough analysis of student achievement trends and modify the CEP with the close involvement of the School Leadership Team (SLT). With the support of the Network or other external expertise the school should address weaknesses in the instructional program to assure that AYP targets are met.
- The school leadership should communicate clear expectations for professional performance and address non-compliance and underperformance of staff through direct documented communication. School leaders should regularly monitor instruction and address and support underperforming staff. The school leader should establish a specific focus for weekly walkthroughs and conduct the walkthroughs as an administrative team to ensure shared expectations and standards for performance.
- The school leadership should work closely with the Network to provide training to SLT members to ensure that they fully understand their roles and fully exercise their responsibilities. The school leader should use Network resources to examine well-written CEP goals and action plans and model the construction of CEP goals on exemplary models.
- The school leadership should seek to reduce the number of out-of-classroom teaching positions, for example, Academy Advisors, and reallocate resources to restoring middle school programming.
- The school leadership should seek the assistance of the Network leader to develop and implement a comprehensive PD plan that is aligned with the school's identified needs, document who is attending sessions and monitor for effective implementation of good practice in the classroom.
- The school leadership should seek assistance to create and implement a LAP. School leaders and identified teachers should attend PD on developing the LAP.
- The school leadership should establish a School Against Violence in Education (SAVE) room and provide appropriate staffing that will effectively support students with interventions that do not interrupt their learning.
- The school leadership should ensure that there is alignment between overall teacher performance ratings and the quality of instruction observed.
- The school leader should seek Network support to create a tool or process that will be used schoolwide to evaluate instruction and ensure that teachers are effective and student achievement improves. The Network should provide supervision to the APs as they conduct observations by initially conducting joint observations and collaboratively writing observation summaries to ensure alignment and coordination of focus.
- The school leadership should communicate to all teachers, with urgency, that literacy across all subject areas and ELA is a focus for classroom observations. School leaders should focus on

students in identified subgroups while conducting classroom observations and observe for student engagement, academic rigor in their work, and differentiated instruction to address their needs. School leaders should continue to conduct as many observations as necessary to ensure that instructional improvements are made and that student achievement is positive.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- Expectations for the achievement of all students are low and are negatively impacting the school's sense of urgency to improve performance. The school's approach to meeting AYP is to increase the performance of seven students, and this narrowly focused approach is contributing to its current improvement status.
- The library is not effectively used because it serves as a classroom, and the library collection is merely a compilation of teacher-donated books that are no longer used in classrooms. The library's nine computers are primarily used for Academic Intervention Services (AIS) classes and are not freely available for student research.
- Parent attendance at parent association meetings is sporadic and is sometimes low. Parents are not involved with the parent association and are not fully benefiting from an effective home/school partnership.
- The required proportion of parent representation on the SLT has not been achieved. One parent regularly attends SLT meeting, and SLT meetings occur at 7:45 am at the convenience of this one parent. The school has not sufficiently explored other meeting times in an effort to accommodate greater representation.
- Most written communication between the school and parents is offered only in English. The school was unable to produce a copy of the monthly newsletter in Spanish and English.
- Parents are not frequently surveyed; therefore the school is not well informed about parent perceptions and concerns. Parents are only surveyed using the annual New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Parent Survey.

Recommendations:

- With the support of the Network, the school leader should seek out successful peer schools, research how they successfully serve all student subgroups in ELA, and seek to implement similar strategies. The school leader should maintain ongoing collaborative relationships with these schools and conduct visitations so that teachers can see similar students succeeding in ELA classes.
- The school leader should secure funds to establish a functioning middle school library/media center, update the collection and automate the infrastructure. School leaders should provide open access to all students so that the library can be used throughout the day for ongoing research projects and as a source for fiction and non-fiction reading materials for all students.
- The school leader and parent coordinator should seek support from the Network to improve attendance at parent events.

- The Network should support the school in establishing a fully functioning SLT. The school should survey parents to determine convenient meeting times and vary meeting schedules to allow for greater parent participation.
- The school should consistently provide parents with written communication in Spanish and English and prominently display notices of translation services throughout the school in places where parents are likely to see them.
- The school leader should regularly administer parental surveys to increase the school's understanding of parent concerns and issues that impact their child's experience and success at the school.

V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- School leaders and teachers are not effectively analyzing all available data and are unaware of precisely what aspects of ELA need to be improved. There is no schoolwide or grade-level sense of the causes for underperformance of students in ELA. Student performance data is not used to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions or school educational programs.
- There is an absence of urgency and strategic planning for school improvement. The school has not fully explored the causes of underperformance. A plan to strengthen ELA instruction for all students has not been developed. The school plan to address the needs of overage students is to explore how to more effectively place overage students in alternative settings. The action plans in the CEP are not sufficiently developed to ensure significant improvement in teaching and learning.
- The school leader's understanding of the school's approach to AIS is different from the understanding of other members of the school community. Chess/Mathematics is used as an incentive but the school leader reports that it is the only AIS program offered to grade 6 students other than Success for All. The Success for All reading program is used as a second ELA class each day for all grade 6 students and is not AIS.
- AIS are not effectively designed around student achievement data. Students are identified for AIS based on State test scores, report card grades and classroom grades. AIS provide students with smaller group instruction, but the instructional strategies used in AIS do not differ greatly from what is used in the classrooms, with the exception of computer-based remedial instruction. This approach is intended to raise scores but is not sufficiently targeted to directly address the causes of low test scores, or poor report card and classroom grades. Grade 6 students in need of AIS services for ELA do not receive appropriate support.

Recommendations:

- The school leader should seek the support of the Network to train leaders and teachers to effectively analyze and then use data to drive instructional planning. The school leader should facilitate the carrying out of pre and post testing of students to evaluate the effectiveness of AIS, Success for All, and all other current supplementary and intervention programming.
- The school leader should seek the support and assistance of the Network data specialist to develop specific action plans to be carried out at the department, classroom and academy level to address

low student achievement in ELA. School leaders should facilitate the development of action plans based on the careful examination of achievement trends and link this to root causes. School leaders should ensure that action plans include measurable improvement targets and specific improvement initiatives and strategies. School leaders should, through a rigorous classroom observation process, frequently monitor for the effectiveness of improvement initiatives and refine strategies accordingly.

- The school leader should develop a clear AIS plan and communicate the plan so that all staff understands the AIS model to be used with individual students. The school leader should ensure that all students who are eligible for AIS receive it.
- The school leader should ensure that AIS services provided to identified students are more closely targeted and aligned with the specific needs of students. The school leader should ensure that the services include instruction with a focus on the development of discrete academic skills that will in turn contribute to increased student performance.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- The school leaders have not developed a long-term comprehensive PD plan. There is no formal PD occurring at the school, and this has a negative impact on the quality of instruction and student achievement.
- Due to the lack of a PD plan, CPT sessions are not informed by action research and do not support the identified needs of the schools and its teachers. There is no plan for how to use upcoming Friday sessions for the remainder of the school year.
- The Inquiry process is not sufficiently guided by the school leaders, nor is the use of inquiry time and CPT time effectively contributing to school improvements. Inquiry activities do not differ significantly from CPT activities. The school leader does not have a clear understanding of the purpose or process to be used by Inquiry teams. The school leader reported that teachers should only be involved in inquiry if they are authentically interested in inquiry topics. Not all teachers are working on Inquiry teams.
- The school leadership has not conducted a formal needs assessment that includes teacher observations and student achievement data to determine PD priorities. There are no feedback mechanisms being used to plan PD. Teachers seek out PD based on personal preferences and interests only.
- The school leadership has not communicated explicit expectations for the implementation of strategies learned in PD.
- There is no PD for teachers who serve ELLs, and there are no formalized or specialized efforts to support teachers of ELLs. The school has a large ELL population and ELLs are in most classes. General education teachers are not provided with PD on ELL strategies.

Recommendations:

- The school leader should seek the assistance of the Network to develop and implement a comprehensive PD plan that is aligned with the school's identified subgroups. The school should document attendance at sessions and monitor for effective implementation of PD in the classrooms.
- The school leadership should conduct a thorough needs assessment of the staff and develop a PD plan and calendar that will impact both teacher effectiveness and student achievement. The school leader should make use of the Network and consultant support already at the school to develop a plan and implementation calendar. The school leader should publish the plan so that teachers know about impending PD sessions.
- The school leader should contact the Network to provide support and training on the inquiry process so that all teachers can participate in action research that will positively impact student achievement. The school leadership should monitor the inquiry results and disseminate effective strategies.
- The school leader should use the teacher evaluation process and student achievement data to determine priorities for PD. For example, use the item analysis process to identify common trends of student weaknesses and initiate PD around the results of this examination.
- School leaders should observe teachers through formal observations and walkthroughs to focus on the effective implementation of new strategies learned during PD sessions. The outcomes of these observations should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the PD and to determine next steps.
- The school leadership should contact the Network specialist and the Office of English Language Learners to identify upcoming training sessions and institutes. The school leader should consult the School Leaders' Weekly for availability of PD events and ELL news. The school should request workshops that align with the ELL needs of the school and ensure that general education teachers are provided with training specifically targeted for ELLs.

VII. District Support**Findings:**

- The Network has not effectively monitored the creation and implementation of the school's CEP. There are just two goals, yet there are three action plans, and the performance targets have not been calculated to ensure that the school will achieve AYP.
- The Network has not ensured that all staff takes advantage of the Network's PD opportunities.

Recommendations:

- The Network should work closely with the school leader and the SLT to ensure that the goals in the CEP address all identified areas. The Network should ensure that the school has an understanding of the gains that the students will need to make to achieve AYP and ensure that written CEP goals reflect needed improvement targets.
- The Network should assist the school in selection of PD priorities for the staff and assist the school in its efforts to enroll staff in PD sessions. The Network should assist the school leader in the

monitoring of PD sessions so that teachers who attend sessions can receive appropriate follow up support and sufficient monitoring following training.

- The Network should support the school in the implementation of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) recommendations.

PART 3: JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM OVERALL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Overall Findings

Reference	JIT Finding for Restructuring Advanced Schools	✓
(c)	The school has not made sufficient progress in identified areas, and is unlikely to make AYP under the current structure and organization.	✓

B. Overall Recommendation

Reference	Recommendation by the JIT for Restructuring Advanced Schools	✓
(c)	Develop and implement a new Restructuring Plan that includes <u>significant changes in staff, organizational structure, leadership and/or configuration</u> , to address issues that continue to negatively impact student academic performance in identified areas.	✓

C. In the space below, include specific information to support the District in determining how the above JIT recommendation should be implemented.

- Develop and implement a new Restructuring Plan that includes new school leadership. Reduce the number of out of classroom teacher positions (Academy Advisors). Academy Advisors hold teacher licenses and should be returned to full time teacher positions.
- Assign all previous Academy Advisor responsibilities to APs.
- Reevaluate the academies and restructure the academies to address current school size and student enrollment. This could include reducing the number of academies or the possible elimination of the academy structure. John D. Wells Middle School should be restructured to provide programming and supports that attract students to the school and a strong middle school program.