

NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code/DBN:	17K625
School Name:	Paul Robeson High School for Business and Technology
School Address:	150 Albany Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11213
Principal:	Katherine Kefalas
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Persistently Lowest-Achieving (PLA)
Area(s) of Identification:	Graduation Rate, English Language Arts and Mathematics
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	November 3 - 4, 2010

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Community and School Background

Paul Robeson High School is a comprehensive high school that serves 681 students in grades 9-12. The school enrollment is 87 percent Black; nine percent Hispanic; one percent American Indian; one percent Asian; and one percent White. Although the school is open to students from throughout New York City, most students continue to come from the surrounding area.

The school’s administrative team consists of the Principal, six Assistant Principals (APs) and one business manager. The Principal is new to the building as of August 2010. The APs have a range of experience from two to seven years. The business manager has been in the building for several years.

The instructional and support services staff consists of 45 teachers and five school counselors. Seventy-six percent of the teachers have been at the school for more than two years, and 62 percent have more than five years of experience. Only eight percent of the teachers have fewer than three years of experience. Three percent of the teachers are not certified and 13 percent are teaching out of certification. The school recently experienced a reduction of 19 instructional staff members due to budgetary constraints. The turnover rate of teachers with fewer than five years of experience was 29 percent, and the turnover rate for all teachers was 18 percent.

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	
-	Negative trend data for one or more identified subject/areas and subgroups for the past two consecutive years as (2007-08 & 2008-09) indicated by a decrease in the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 and/or a decrease in the Performance Index.	✓

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
-	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 the past two consecutive years) show an increase in the number of subgroups that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in identified area(s).	✓
-	Performance data for the school on NYSED Accountability Overview Reports (AOR) for the past two consecutive years) 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).	✓
-	For 2010-11, the school was identified as a <u>Persistently Lowest- Achieving school.</u>	✓
-	Total Cohort Graduation rate is below 60% (for high schools)	✓
	NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures	
-	Grade of C on the most recent NYC Progress Report	✓
-	Grade of D or F (or C for 3 consecutive years) on the most recent NYC Progress Report	✓
+/-	NYC Quality Review Score of Proficient	✓

B. School Strengths

- The College for Every Student program provides opportunities for student leadership development. There is a strong student government organization.
- The Citi Program allows students to connect with a community mentor for growth and development.
- The school is well equipped with technology, including computers, smart boards and LCD projectors.
- The school has a Living for the Young Family through Education (LYFE) daycare program for children of students that includes a counseling component for the student parents.
- The Global Kids grant funded program provides opportunities for students to learn about issues that affect urban communities. This program is designed to target students with poor attendance.

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:

- There was little evidence of a coordinated and articulated curriculum.
- There is no evidence that the curriculum in core subject areas is aligned vertically or horizontally.

- Awareness of teaching objectives that connect to the New York State (NYS) Learning Standards did not appear to be a priority. There was no evidence of schoolwide teacher understanding of the new Common Core State Standards and how current curriculum aligns to these standards.

Recommendations:

- A coordinated and aligned curriculum should be developed and implemented.
- The school should create a common curriculum template to align curricula concepts horizontally and vertically.
- The school should focus on systematic professional development (PD) related to the NYS and Common Core standards planning and implementation.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- In many cases, classroom routines and procedures are posted; however, they are not consistently implemented schoolwide.
- Core elements of research-based best practice instructional strategies are missing from instruction.
- Instructional practices did not create a culture that supports the consistent integration of technology in the core areas.
- A majority of the teachers have not implemented instructional practices that engage students in higher order thinking and learning outcomes.
- There is little evidence that teaching and learning is supported by consistent PD.
- There was little evidence that the co-teaching model is being used in an effective manner.
- There are limited opportunities for students to take advanced level / college credit course work.

Recommendations:

- Schoolwide policy and procedures should be developed and implemented in order to build a solid foundation for educational organization and management.
- The leadership team should develop a plan to seek and study best practices among staff members and Network/District support personnel.
- The leadership team should create opportunities for Career and Technical Education (CTE) staff to mentor other staff in the area of technology integration.

- The staff should use a variety of engaging instructional practices, e.g., manipulatives, problem-based learning, cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, centers and primary sources in daily lessons.
- The Principal should prioritize main areas of PD and systematically monitor the understanding and implementation of them in teachers' daily work.
- Teachers, including those in the co-teaching model, should receive training on best practices. Structures for systematic follow-up should be developed and implemented.
- The Principal and leadership team should create a plan to study which advanced level/college level courses would provide the best opportunities for students to gain a competitive edge for college admission and future success.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- The Principal did not demonstrate the organizational management skills necessary for moving this school forward.
- The Principal has delegated a majority of the instructional leadership responsibilities to departmental APs.
- There is no evidence that the Principal holds teachers and staff accountable for implementing schoolwide instructional priorities and policy/procedural initiatives.
- There was little evidence that the leadership team understands how to implement procedures that use data to improve instruction. The leadership team is gathering a large amount of data, but has no systemic method or understanding of how to use this data for improvement.
- School leadership has focused on two primary initiatives, i.e., attendance and discipline to move this school forward.
- The Principal could not articulate any primary instructional goals.

Recommendations:

- The Network/District should provide an experienced mentor for the building leader.
- The Principal should develop detailed job descriptions for the APs.
- The Principal should develop a goal setting document that connects instruction, assessment, and curriculum. A consistent expectation for excellence should be produced.

- The leadership team should develop procedures for aligning schoolwide data analyses, e.g., assessment, attendance, behavior, and grading policies that impact academic success.
- The leadership team should create a plan to encompass instructional initiatives that work in concert with the two established priorities of attendance and discipline.
- The Principal should set and prioritize instructional goals aligned with NYS Standards to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA and mathematics and increase graduation rates.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- The physical environment is well maintained and seen as a welcoming place. However, some safety concerns exist within this facility. There are areas where adult supervision is inconsistent.
- While concern and passion was expressed by some students, parents and community members specific to “Saving Robeson School” from closing, ongoing parent involvement is limited and does not appear to provide support to positively impact student learning outcomes.
- There is no shared culture that focuses on student academic achievement.
- A culture of poor attendance permeates the school. Student absences continue to be a major inhibitor of student success. On the first day of the review, 245 students were reported absent. On the second day of the review, 287 students were reported absent. It was noted that 85 students are identified as “Long Term Absences.”

Recommendations:

- All efforts to maintain the facility and make all necessary repairs and upgrades as needed should be supported. A plan that addresses unsupervised areas within the building (stairwells and locker rooms) and strategies that deploy teachers/safety officers in more highly visible ways should be developed.
- Parents should be directly connected to decision-making that impacts teaching and learning. Parent supports and training should be made available that provide necessary tools to equip them for this new charge. Strategies should be employed that raise parent involvement in the school community. The School Leadership Team (SLT) should be focused on increasing parent team membership along with invigorating other committees in the school. Specific training that empowers parents and provides skills for collaborative team leadership that focuses on student achievement should be made available. Rather than just having parents demonstrate broad support, a more delineated and defined partnership plan could bring improved involvement.

- Schoolwide academic goals should be clearly delineated and communicated on a regular and consistent basis. All administrative and teaching staff decision-making and goal setting should align with the common schoolwide goals. Budgets should drive and support this effort.
- Significant supports must be made available based on best practices for turning around similar school cultures. Systemic analysis of the school day that focuses on raising student engagement, improving the teaching and learning process, and raising the level of student participation in the decision-making process should be at the core of bringing change in this area.

V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- Schoolwide Inquiry Teams models are in early stages of development.
- A great deal of data is being collected, yet teachers demonstrate only minimum understanding of using the data to drive instruction.
- The Principal has not been the primary leader for the collection, analysis, and use of data.

Recommendations:

- The Principal should research, develop and articulate clear expectations of Inquiry Teams and model the process to improve instructional outcomes.
- The Principal should become established as the instructional leader in the building by:
 - setting clear expectations and parameters for the use of data to inform instruction;
 - conducting thorough item analysis of student achievement data;
 - investigating root causes; and
 - establishing specific data-driven goals to improve student outcomes.
- The Principal should evaluate the current structures in place regarding the collection, analysis, and use of data. Systems and processes for the effective use of data should be established, articulated, and uniformly communicated to the leadership team to ensure consistent implementation. An accountability system should be established and implemented to ensure consistency across all departments.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- There is no evidence that the current PD model is impacting student learning.
- Little evidence was obtained as to how many teachers are participating in PD with appropriate follow through and implementation in the classroom.

Recommendations:

- On-going, job-embedded, data-driven PD in research-based instructional strategies should be made available for teachers. The leadership team needs to identify targets for this PD, provide supports, and hold teachers accountable for implementing best practice.
- A comprehensive PD plan needs to be developed. This plan should be data-driven, incorporate a needs assessment that is reflective of teachers’ strengths and needs, and result in measurable student outcomes.

VII. District Supports

Findings:

- Minimal evidence has been ascertained to support that the Network/District has provided operational leadership for this school.
- Interviews indicate that some level of support for financial and budget planning has been provided by the Network/District.

Recommendations:

- Data should be examined that provides baseline information of supports provided by the Children First Network (CFN) team. The school leaders should be well informed of all supports available through the CFN Network and how to connect to these services. Staff development in this area will be crucial for the successful future growth of the school.
- The fiscal management team of the school should continue to develop a connection with services provided from the CFN team. Long term budget planning should be a focus for these supports for more effective fiscal management.
- The Network should provide support in implementing the recommendations of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT).

PART 3: OVERALL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Overall Finding

Reference	Review Team Finding	
(b)	The school has not made sufficient progress in identified areas, and is unlikely to make AYP under without further significant change.	✓

B. Overall Recommendation

Reference	Review Team Recommendation	
(b)	Phase-out or close the school.	✓

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

The learning culture of Paul Robeson High School is critically challenged. Persistently low academic achievement, chronic attendance problems and disruptive student behaviors characterize the operations and functions of the school. Significant instructional redesign and personnel changes, on many levels, will need to occur before Paul Robeson High School can begin to provide the academic experience necessary for students to become college and career ready and be successful in the 21st Century workplace.

Evidence ascertained during the Joint Intervention Team review supports the belief that student achievement will not improve to the level necessary to make AYP under the current school leadership team, faculty/staff and organizational structure. It is also noted that significant instructional and organizational change would need to be provided and directed by the District/Network Team to improve graduation rates.

Based on the following evidence the Joint Intervention Team is recommending that consideration be give to closing Paul Robeson High School at the end of the current school year (June 2011) and non-graduating students who attend Paul Robeson High School be given the opportunity to enroll in another school that is higher performing:

- The current high school Principal gave evidence of caring about the students within the high school but provided little evidence of having the necessary experience and skill set that could provide the required comprehensive leadership necessary to turn around this school.
- A majority of the APs gave evidence of caring about the students within the high school but have not developed cohesive instructional support systems within the school that have or will affect positive instructional outcomes.
- Only small segments of the primary instructional staff demonstrated effective instructional practice that was student focused and outcome based.
- Accountability measures and instructional evaluation systems are not being effectively used to monitor teaching and hold faculty and staff responsible for impacting positive student learning outcomes.
- Little evidence was found that high-quality, job-embedded PD is being implemented within the school.
- Little evidence was found that the school is effectively using instructional data to target learning outcomes and to coordinate vertical and horizontal alignment of current curriculum. There was little evidence that the administrative and instructional staff has an adequate understanding of the new Common Core State Standards and are analyzing current curriculum for alignment.
- Only isolated evidence was discovered that teachers are implementing or have an adequate understanding of delivering differentiated instruction within the classroom.
- Only minimal evidence was found that indicated implementation of problem based learning experiences that integrate technology and allow students to acquire 21st Century learning skills.
- Accountability systems are not effectively used to focus schoolwide policies, procedures and learning outcomes in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

- Some Inquiry Team work is in the early stages of development but has not reached a level of effectiveness that is required to impact student learning in this school setting.
- No clear plan exists that clearly delineates how parents will be tasked with affecting positive student learning outcomes.