NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code/DBN:	31K051
School Name:	Edwin Markham
School Address:	20 Houston Street Staten Island, NY 10302
Principal:	Nicholas Mele
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring Advanced Focused
Area(s) of Identification:	English Language Arts- Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	May 17-18, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Community and School Background

IS 51 Edwin Markham School serves 1,081 students in grades 6 through 8. The school enrollment is 21 percent Black, 44 percent Hispanic, 10 percent Asian and 25 percent White students. Of these students, nine percent are English language learners (ELLs) and 22 percent are students with disabilities.

The administrative team includes the Principal, three Assistant Principals (APs), a dean and a literacy coach. The Principal is new to the school, having been appointed in January of 2011. The three Assistant Principals (APs) each lead one of the school's three academies of Health, Law and Engineering. The tenure of the APs in their current positions ranges from five to 14 years. Sixty teachers are on staff and none are new to the school this year. Teacher turnover at the school is low.

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 2 consecutive years (2007-08 and 2008-09), as indicated by an decrease in the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 and/or a decrease in the Performance Index.	✓
-	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.	✓

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

B. School Strengths

In a short amount of time, the new school leader is addressing the school's climate with urgency and purpose and has established processes to address student behavioral and social needs. The new school leader has ensured that parents on the School Leadership Team (SLT) are well informed about school improvement efforts and that they are actively involved in proposed improvements in the academy structure. The school's literacy coach works closely with the new Principal in leading the academic program.

C. Key Findings and Recommendations

I. Curriculum

Findings:

- The written curriculum for English language arts (ELA) is not modified for ELLs and students with disabilities. Differentiated instructional materials are not referenced in the written curriculum for each grade; each grade level is offered the same set of instructional materials.

- New York State (NYS) Learning Standards are not explicitly incorporated into instruction. Teachers do not post standards/learning objectives and do not verbally inform students of the lesson objectives.

Recommendations:

- The Network should work with the school in the development of all components of the ELA curriculum and ensure that it is clearly aligned with the current NYS Learning Standards. The curriculum should be aligned to the new NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards in English language arts and literacy to prepare for implementation in school year 2012-13. All curricular should be developed by knowledgeable and trained individuals (national, state, or local) who understand the key elements of curriculum development and should reflect adaptations to be used with ELLs and students with disabilities.

- All teachers and administrators should participate in professional development (PD) on how to identify lesson objectives and plan and implement a rigorous curriculum with 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. 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:

- A limited set of instructional strategies and materials are used by teachers, and the needs of students in the identified subgroups are not consistently addressed. Whole group direct instruction is the teacher strategy that was observed in most classes. The absence of variety in instructional approaches and the uniformity of instructional tasks lead to lessons that are not sufficiently engaging or challenging for students with diverse learning needs.

- There is no evidence that achievement data is used to group students for targeted small group instruction. Students are physically arranged in small groups and sit in clusters or in pairs, but teachers report that the physical arrangement of students is used to manage students who are distracted by each other.

- The Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) model is not effective and is not skillfully implemented. Teachers and leaders report that for the majority of the instructional time, one teacher is primarily responsible for the delivery of instruction and the other teacher plays a much less significant role of a teacher's assistant. Students are not fully benefiting from having two certified teachers in the classroom. The teachers are not effectively distributing their time or attention to provide additional support to students or to work with small skill-based groups. CTT teachers are not consistently planning together, which negatively impacts the effectiveness of the co-teaching model.

- There is little evidence in classes that students are aware of their learning goals. Goals are not posted, and teachers do not verbally review goals with students.

- Teacher-to-student dialogue is the only discussion technique employed by most teachers in the delivery of instruction. Teachers frequently pose closed-ended questions to one student at a time and often call on students who represent a small subset of the whole class. The majority of students are not engaged in discussions or accountable talk. There is minimal student-to-student interaction in most classes, and students are passive learners rather than active participants in interactive discussions.

- Students are not actively engaged in meaningful, developmentally appropriate, middle school-level instructional activities. For example, in one observed grade 6 class, the entire period was dedicated to the writing and coloring of a simple acrostic poem. Although most teachers teach the same content, the level of rigor of each teacher's activity varies greatly. Some teachers infuse rigor into activities, but many teachers require students to complete simple assignments and lead students rather than require them to work independently to complete complex tasks.

- There is limited evidence of higher order thinking or processes in most observed classes. Teacher questioning is recall and fact-based and students simply need to recall what has been presented or covered. Processes are often unsophisticated, and all students complete the same simple tasks, regardless of student learning needs.

- Technology is not effectively integrated into instruction, limiting student engagement and student motivation. SMART Boards are present in some classes, but they are not used effectively to enhance instruction. No students were observed using computers in any instructional class.

Recommendations:

- Clear expectations for the delivery of instruction should be established. The school leader should work closely with the school's literacy coach and APs to identify best practices to be used in instruction and communicate these expectations to all teachers. The school leaders should provide in-house PD to ensure that all staff develop instructional competency and use instructional resources to meet the needs of the identified subgroups as well as all other students. The Principal and APs should monitor for implementation of best practices through the formal and informal teacher observation process and provide feedback and follow through to ensure continuous teacher growth.

- All teachers should group students based on the academic assessment information, academic performance and social needs of the students. These groups should be provided with differentiated instruction, cooperative learning and targeted small group instruction. In-house PD should be arranged to prepare teachers to effectively provide differentiated instruction and to reduce the amount of whole group direct instruction. School leaders should monitor for implementation through the formal and informal teacher observation process and provide feedback and follow through as appropriate.

- The school should provide on-site training for the full implementation of CTT model strategies. Scheduled common planning time should be provided so that co-teachers can equally share in the planning and delivery of effective instruction. Administrators should monitor for implementation of effective co-teaching strategies through the formal and informal teacher observation process and ensure that best practices are shared across the school. Where teachers are not effective further PD should be provided. Monthly department meetings should be used to review lesson plans for the incorporation of State Standards and to ensure that learning goals are aligned with planned instruction. School leaders should regularly monitor the incorporation of learning goals in direct instruction and should highlight good practices in sharing learning goals as the focus of an intervisitation schedule.

- The school leaders should identify schools and classrooms where students effectively and purposefully interact with each other and demonstrate high academic achievement. Staff should visit these successful schools to observe model classrooms and good practice. The school leaders should monitor and evaluate outcomes regularly and robustly until high standards of learning and teaching are reached.

- Administrators should provide PD to ensure that the rigor of instruction is consistent across all classrooms and appropriate for all subgroups. School leaders should conduct joint walkthroughs with the Network to monitor for instructional rigor and student engagement. The administrators should use observational data to tailor PD to ensure that all teachers are challenging all students.

- The school leaders should provide in-house PD to facilitate the incorporation of Bloom's taxonomy into instructional lesson planning. All teachers should create lessons that require students to work independently on activities that include comparing, contrasting, synthesizing, analyzing and applying information to new situations. School leaders should review lesson plans to ensure that higher order thinking and critical thinking processes are evident. School leaders should monitor classrooms to ensure that strategies learned in PD are implemented and are leading to higher levels of student engagement.

- The school should create and implement a technology integration plan that enables teachers to design instruction that is interactive and incorporates educational technology and software. The new Media and Technology Academy should be used as a model for the integration of instructional technology for the rest of the school. The school leader should identify possible funding sources to increase the presence and use of technology in the school.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- The APs are not consistently conducting effective teacher evaluations and are not able to discuss in detail the academic issues affecting the school. To compensate for the lack of educational leadership assistance from the APs, the literacy coach has assumed significant responsibilities as data specialist, testing coordinator and literacy supporter, and is unable to dedicate sufficient time to support instruction.

- There is limited direct administration and supervision of the special education department and program. The CTT program/model is ineffective and requires support and supervision to maximize the benefit of having two teachers in a classroom. No formal observations have been completed this year on special education teachers.

- The AP in charge of special education has not established the formal processes that are normally part of the special education identification process and delivery of services. The AP in charge of special education reported that teachers are responsible for ensuring that students receive required services and she is unaware of how many identified special education students are served in the school and is unable to report the number of students performing at Levels 1 and 2.

- No formal observations have been undertaken this year for the ESL teachers. The AP in charge of ELLs is unable to report on the student performance trends of this subgroup. Low student motivation was cited as the reason for underperformance and that student motivation is decreasing over time.

- The school leader reported that PD opportunities are presently limited within the school. There was no PD plan at the school when the new leader was appointed in January.

- Documents provided indicated that APs have not complied with the Principal's established observation policy, which went into effect in March 2011. Each AP was charged with conducting one observation per week. Since March, one AP conducted five observations and the other two completed two and three observations each. One AP reported that teacher feedback is done in the form of verbal dialogue in his office or in passing in classrooms. Acknowledgment of the need for written documentation was made. The AP in charge of ELA, the school's identified area, has not completed any ELA teacher evaluations this school year.

- The AP in charge of safety reported that the same teachers send students out of classes for misbehavior. It was reported that parents of students who are repeat offenders of the school's discipline policies are encouraged to transfer to another school.

- The AP in charge of attendance was unable to accurately explain the new attendance-taking process. It was communicated that official attendance is taken during or after period two, but the

Principal reported that attendance is taken at the beginning of the day and checked over by the period two teacher to update it for late arrivals.

- The current Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) does not differentiate performance targets and includes the same improvement target for three separate subjects, regardless of performance trends. Goals in the CEP are based on a five percent gain for three subjects and are not based on the needs of identified subgroups.

- There is no common planning time formally scheduled. Teachers report that they voluntarily meet to share practices, but there are no formal agendas, and there is no established expectation for the productive use of these meetings.

Recommendations:

- Student academic achievement and teacher effectiveness should urgently become the primary focus of the APs. The literacy coach's efforts should be solely focused on supporting and developing teachers in improving instructional practice while the APs should be actively supervising, guiding and overseeing student achievement in their assigned departments and academies. APs should approach teacher evaluation and feedback as a matter of urgency to ensure that all students are being provided with quality instruction and that they are reaching high academic achievement targets.

- The Network should ensure that the school develops effective systems to support students with disabilities. This should include proper and sufficient supervision of students with disabilities and staff. The supervisor for special education should work closely with the special education staff, provide ongoing supervision and guidance and be fully informed of the achievement trends of the identified subgroup. The school leader should closely monitor the administrative and supervisory performance of the AP in charge of special education.

- The AP in charge of special education should design and implement all of the standard best practices involved in creating an effective special education department. The oversight process should begin with a comprehensive understanding of the number of students identified for services, a regularly scheduled and effectively conducted special education pre-referral and student support team process, and the involvement of the IEP teacher in student support team meetings. The Principal should closely monitor the quality of the AP's work and take appropriate action if necessary.

- The Principal should ensure that effective systems to support ELLs are developed. This should include proper and sufficient supervision of the ESL staff. The supervisor of the ESL program should work closely with the ESL staff, provide ongoing supervision and guidance and be fully informed of the achievement trends of the identified subgroup. The school leader should closely monitor the administrative and supervisory performance of the AP in charge of ESL.

- The AP responsible for the ELL program should be provided with training and support to gain a better understanding of the academic performance of ELLs and use this information to set high expectations for students and teachers. The AP should closely work with the supervisor of students with disabilities, as some ELLs are also students with disabilities The Principal should monitor the work and expectations of the AP.

- The administrative team should survey the staff, collect observational and assessment data and use this data to create a PD plan and calendar. The majority of the activities should be delivered on-site to attract and train as many staff members as possible. School leaders should monitor for the timely implementation of PD initiatives and should hold staff accountable for the incorporation of new instructional strategies.

- Each AP should establish a weekly schedule of formal and informal observations and present the schedule to the Principal. APs should submit weekly reports to the Principal and share observation reports with teachers in a timely manner. The Principal should establish a shared observation schedule with each AP to ensure reliability and rigor among all of the raters. The Principal should seek the Network support to conduct joint observations to refine the Principal's and APs' observational lenses.

- The AP with responsibility for safety should familiarize himself with the Chancellor's regulations and the school and citywide discipline codes to ensure that they are adhered to with fidelity. The Network should provide guidance and support to the AP to ensure that the management of students is addressed within Department of Education (DOE) requirements. The Principal should closely monitor the impact of the AP's work on improving student behavior.

- The AP in charge of attendance should ensure that the school's attendance-taking processes are completely understood and effectively executed. The AP should work toward implementing effective methods of recording and tracking daily attendance for all classes and for after-school extended day sessions. The work of the AP should be monitored by the Principal.

- School leaders should ensure that each subgroup has its own goals and action plans based on current achievement data and that each goal is customized to address the needs of each subgroup. These goals should be rigorous to enable the school to achieve Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) as quickly as possible. The school should appoint a full-time data specialist. The data specialist should be experienced in best instructional practice, skilled at data analysis and presentation, and able to assist teachers in understanding the implications of the data on instructional practice and lesson planning. The data specialist, school leaders, the Network and the School Leadership Team (SLT) should collaborate to establish goals and action plans to be incorporated into the next CEP.

- The school leader should ensure that the school programmer provides weekly common planning periods. An instructional team should plan the agendas for the use of common planning time that should be comprised of the literacy coach, administrators and teacher representatives. The school leaders should participate, through observation and monitoring, in the common planning periods to ensure productivity and effective planning.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- Teachers and some APs express low expectations for the academic achievement of students and cite external factors as the root causes of the school's accountability status. They cite student apathy, disinterest and lack of parental involvement as factors. The staff has attached low point value to projects and homework as a component of course grades to reflect their expectation that many students will not complete these tasks.

- The school has not effectively established and communicated a clear and effective system for identifying and supporting students for Academic Intervention Services (AIS). The extended day program is poorly attended and does not serve students well. Some teachers reported that they are unaware of how the students were selected for extended day classes. One AP reported that he assumes extended day is used for enrichment or for homework support.

- Students are not provided with adequate facilities for hands-on, inquiry-based science experiences.

- Parents and care-givers who speak languages other than English do not consistently receive communications in their home language. The Principal reported that only some written communications are translated.

Recommendations:

- The school leader should seek the support of the Network to identify high performing schools that serve similar student populations to observe students in effectively structured and supported classrooms. PD should be provided to enable successful practices to be implemented within this school. All staff should cease citing external factors as excuses for underperformance and focus on improving the school's effectiveness with all students.

- The school leaders should ensure that the data specialist and APs in charge of special education and ELLs develop an effective system to identify at-risk students. This identification process should be communicated to all teachers and should continue to inform classroom teachers on student progress. Once students are identified, they should be assigned to targeted AIS services and closely monitored for attendance and improved academic performance. School leaders should ensure that all teachers providing AIS services are trained and provided with the materials and supervision necessary to positively impact student achievement.

- The school leader should work with the Network to identify resources and funding to permanently establish a dedicated science lab.

- In order to ensure that all parents have the opportunity to participate in the life of the school and support their own child's learning, the school leader should ensure that all documents sent to families are translated into all appropriate languages.

V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- The APs are not effectively involved in the examination of student performance data. They are unable to speak about student performance trends of the identified subgroups and are unaware if students are receiving mandated AIS.

- Teachers do not use data to inform their instructional planning or to modify instruction. They implement the curriculum with fidelity, regardless of the need of the students for differentiated instruction to address their specific learning requirements.

- The progress of students who attend AIS during extended day is not examined. Some teachers report that they are not familiar with student status and are not aware if students have been

identified for mathematics or literacy support. There is no oversight of the service and few students attend.

Recommendations:

- The APs should collect and analyze student performance data to assess the effectiveness of the educational programs and teacher performance. The school leader should identify a data specialist and a testing coordinator so that the literacy coach can fully focus on improving instruction and on supporting teachers in literacy instruction.

- Teachers should use student performance data, both summative and formative, to create instructional groups, design skill-based activities for small groups of students with similar needs and adjust the planned curriculum with a special focus on at-risk students and identified subgroups.

- The school leader should assign an AP to supervise all aspects of the extended day program to ensure that all mandated students attend and teachers are provided with adequate materials, student data and support to serve the most at-risk students.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- The school has no PD plan. The Principal reports that many of the PD offerings occur in other boroughs and teachers express resistance to attending workshops that require long commutes. On-site PD sessions are few. Offerings have been limited to mandated training and some technology training.

- There is no dedicated and formally scheduled time provided at the school for PD. A School-Based Option (SBO) has been implemented and provides time on Thursday afternoons for inquiry work. This is the only type of PD activity that is occurring at the school.

- Expectations for incorporating suggestions offered in the lesson evaluation process are not well communicated, and accountability for implementing suggestions does not occur. The Principal reported that the APs have not effectively followed up on next steps outlined in teacher observations.

- PD for teachers who serve students with disabilities and ELLs does not regularly occur. Interviews revealed that just one of two ESL teachers attended off-site PD. The common branch teacher assigned to the grade 6 self-contained ESL class has not been provided with training in language acquisition.

Recommendations:

- The school should seek the assistance of the Network to identify PD options and providers that can deliver programs and resources directly to the school staff on-site. All PD offerings should be aligned with the CEP goals and the needs of the identified subgroups.

- The instructional team and core inquiry team should collaboratively develop a PD calendar to maximize the use of SBO Thursdays. This should include both inquiry work and PD sessions to

address the specific, identified needs of all teachers. School leaders should ensure that strategies agreed or learned through these activities are implemented in the classroom.

- The school leader should establish a formal and informal observation process that includes oral and written components centered on improving instruction and the identified needs of teachers. The school leader should hold APs accountable for providing documentation of follow up on all teacher evaluations and for establishing a program of differentiated PD that meets the needs of teachers and students.

- The school should ensure that PD encompasses a focus on the needs of teachers who serve at-risk students, students with disabilities and ELLs. School leaders should ensure that there is alignment between the goals in the CEP and the PD plan. The school leader should ensure that staff members are provided with opportunities to attend training in differentiated instruction, CTT models, grouping for small group instruction and integrating technology into instruction.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- The Network has not ensured that the school has adequate systems and support to collect and analyze student performance data.

- The Network has not provided adequate assistance to the school leader's requests for support in the allocation of funds. The school leader reported that responses to requests for help with budget and human resources are inconsistent and do not occur within a reasonable timeframe.

Recommendations:

- The Network should provide ongoing PD on the analysis and use of achievement data to increase the school's capacity to improve instructional planning and instruction. The Network should monitor the school's progress in the use of data so that subgroups are receiving appropriate targeted instruction based on their specific academic needs.

- The Network should provide prompt responses to all school inquiries and requests for assistance. The Network leader should meet with the Principal to establish effective communication structures and clear expectations for the communication chain and follow through process.

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

Other Concerns:

- There are concerns about the effectiveness of the current leadership structure at the school. The current administrative team does not effectively support the efforts of the new Principal to increase academic achievement for all students. The APs are not consistently conducting teacher observations and are not providing adequate professional feedback to ensure that teachers are focused on meeting the needs of all students. The current APs lack of urgency to improve instruction is evidenced by a lack of awareness of student performance trends and a lack of support for their assigned departments, teacher observation schedules and other administrative assignments.

- Teachers and some APs attribute the root causes of the underperformance of students to lack of motivation, the absence of goals and lack of parent involvement. Students are perceived as lacking motivation and devaluing education.

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 significant changes in staff, organizational structure, leadership and/or configuration, 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.

The new school leader should immediately communicate a clear instructional vision for the administrators. The school leader should document professional expectations for each AP in the form of a job description that includes specific recommendations for performance in their assigned academic department, as academy leaders and as supervisors. The new Principal should provide the support, resources and oversight necessary to guide the development of the APs. The school should develop a PD plan and calendar for onsite embedded PD focused on academic rigor, higher order thinking and application, the use of data to inform instruction, the appropriate delivery of instruction for special education teachers and co-teachers who teach in CTT classes and literacy integration across the content areas.