

NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code/DBN:	28Q072
School Name:	Catherine and Count Basie Middle School 72
School Address:	133-25 Guy R. Brewer Blvd. Queens , NY 11434
Principal:	Crystal Taylor-Brown
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring Advanced Focused
Area(s) of Identification:	English Language Arts- Students with Disabilities
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	March 29 – 30, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Community and School Background

The Catherine and Count Basie Middle School 72 serves 761 students in grades 6 through 8. The school enrollment is 69 percent Black, 18 percent Asian, 12 percent Hispanic, and one percent White students. Of these students, three percent are English language learners (ELLs) and 21 percent are students with disabilities. The school is divided into three academies.

The school administrative team includes the Principal, three Assistant Principals (APs) and three deans. The Principal is serving in her third year, while the APs have been in the school nine, four and four years, respectively. There are 63 teachers on staff, including three new teachers, four teachers who have been at the school for one year or less, and five teachers who have been at the school for between one to three years. Of these teachers, 93 percent are highly qualified. Teacher turnover rate is 14 percent per year.

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	
+	Positive trend data for all identified subject/areas and subgroups for the past two consecutive years (2007-08 and 2008-09), as demonstrated by an increase in the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 and/or a Performance Index increase of five or more points.	✓
+	Performance data for the school on NYSED Accountability Overview Reports (AOR) for 2007-08 and 2008-09 indicate the school has reduced the achievement gap between identified subgroups and the <i>All Students</i> subgroup in ALL identified subject/area(s) by ten percent or more.	✓
-	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	✓

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
	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.	✓
-	For 2010-11, the school was identified as a <u>Persistently Lowest-Achieving school.</u>	
-	Total Cohort Graduation rate is below performance index (for high schools)	
	NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures	
-	2008-09 NYC Progress Report Grade of C	✓
+	NYC Quality Review Score of Well-Developed	✓

B. School Strengths

- The school has a team of support personnel who provide counseling and guidance services to all students.
- The school offers a wide range of after school and Saturday programs for students and parents that include academic support, athletics, the arts and family and individual counseling.

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 no evidence of an English language arts (ELA) curriculum apart from *America's Choice* genre monographs. Only one classroom was observed using a commercial anthology.
- There was no evidence of scope and sequence in the documentation provided by the school. The only curriculum document provided was a pacing calendar that listed the New York State (NYS) Standards by number. This document was difficult to interpret without having the actual Standards to cross-reference.

Recommendations:

- The Network should work with the school on the development of an ELA curriculum and ensure that it is clearly aligned with the current New York State (NYS) Learning Standards. The curriculum should be aligned to the new NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards in ELA to prepare for implementation in school year 2012-13. The 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 professional development (PD) on how to plan and implement the ELA curriculum with rigor, as well as delivery methods that are student-centered. The curriculum should be relied upon as the basis for assessing the individual student mastery and progress. Walkthroughs and formal evaluations should include how well the teacher knows and implements the curriculum being taught.

- All teachers should be provided with a copy of the NYS ELA Standards and the New York City scope and sequence document. Teachers should implement these documents in their instructional planning and delivery and school leaders should observe implementation in the classroom.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- Out of 64 classes, differentiated instruction was observed in only five classes and, in many instances, all students worked on the same materials and activities. Observations revealed that some students did not understand their tasks, as the material provided did not closely enough match their instructional level. The tasks set were too easy for the more able students and too difficult for other students, particularly those students with disabilities. This did not allow the students, particularly students with disabilities, to work at their level and make progress.
- In many co-teaching and team teaching classes, one teacher was the main instructor and the other teacher did not provide any instruction and had limited student interaction during the lesson.
- Instructional time was not maximized in most classes. Too much time was spent on 'do now' activities and lesson preparation discussion work. This did not allow the teachers to complete the objectives for their entire lessons.
- ELA lessons were not rigorous, as evidenced by a lack of higher order thinking skills. Observations revealed little evidence of problem solving, inquiry, self-reflection or research. This limited the opportunities for students to be suitably challenged or take an active part in their own learning.
- Questioning in many lessons is low level, expects little of students and does not promote an open dialog that enhances the thinking and learning of all students.
- Most of the books in the classroom libraries are above the instructional and reading level of many of the students and this hinders the progress of students with disabilities in particular.
- There is inconsistent design and use of rubrics across the school. Various kinds of rubrics were posted in classrooms, each designed by teachers but not all clearly referenced to the State Standards. Student work was not scored consistently within the class, on portfolios and bulletin boards, or among classrooms on the same grade.
- The varied technology hardware provided by the school, such as SMART Boards, computers, iPads and iPods, are not being regularly or efficiently used by students during instructional time in the classroom.

Recommendations:

- A literacy consultant should be hired and PD arranged to improve the use of differentiation in lessons to ensure that work is better matched to the differing abilities of students, particularly students with disabilities. Inter-visitations to other schools with known master teachers who can model differentiation should be arranged. The Network should provide assistance in identifying schools of excellence. School leaders should ensure that strategies learned from PD are implemented in all classrooms.
- The school leaders, with assistance from the Network, should arrange for all Collaborative Team Teachers (CTT) to visit schools with exemplary models of co-teaching in order to improve their practice. These teachers should be provided with weekly articulation time so they can plan together to ensure that each teacher understands their role in the instructional lesson. School leaders should regularly observe lessons to assess the quality and impact of co-teaching.
- With the assistance of the Network, the school should provide PD on effective pacing for the workshop model so that the three components are evident in all lessons and lesson plans. Teachers should use timers at the initial stages to pace themselves accordingly. School leaders should make the pacing of lessons a regular focus for walkthroughs and observations.
- School leaders, with PD assistance from the Network, should ensure that all students are regularly engaged in interactive, hands-on stimulating tasks that allow them to use higher order thinking skills and learn how to work together and be active participants in the learning process. Teachers should build a range of instructional practices and a toolbox of strategies from which to choose and create appropriately differentiated lessons. These practices and strategies should be a focus for routine classroom observations, and teachers should be held accountable for incorporating learned strategies from PD into their instruction.
- The school should provide teachers with a copy of Bloom's Taxonomy to be used during staff development workshops on questioning. The school leaders should model the different types of questions so that students can formulate ideas that incorporate rigor instead of the typical low-level questions that require a one-word response. School leaders should evaluate the quality of questioning when conducting walkthroughs and observations.
- Teachers should reconfigure classroom libraries so that they are organized by genre and Fountas and Pinnell levels. The Network and AP responsible for ELA should assist in this process to ensure that all teachers have a range of books on the appropriate level for each student in the class. Appropriate books should be available for students with disabilities to aid their progress in reading and better foster an enjoyment of literature.
- School leaders and teachers should develop rubrics that are grade specific and align closely with the ELA standards. The teachers should be held accountable for the use of these rubrics when grading student work. Students should be assisted in understanding how these rubrics could be used to consistently improve their work to reach the next levels. School leaders should monitor the use of rubrics in all classrooms during routine classroom observations.
- The school, with Network support, should provide PD for all teachers on the effective incorporation of technology into instructional practice. Technological skills should be routinely incorporated into all content areas of the curriculum. The Principal should ensure that technology resources that are already available in the school are used to enhance the quality of learning.

School leaders should monitor the use of technology across the school when conducting walkthroughs and observations.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- School leaders are not effectively promoting parental involvement. Attendance at PTA meetings is low, unless a school performance or student celebration is connected to the meeting. The parent coordinator schedules events that are requested by parents but attendance is also low.
- School leaders do not analyze the causes or types of incidences of inappropriate behavior rigorously enough to bring about significant improvements. Student behavior is a serious problem in the school, as evidenced by 241 suspensions during the first seven months of the school year.
- School leaders do not ensure that resources in ELA classrooms are at an appropriate level to ensure students, in particular students with disabilities, make the academic progress of which they are capable. A review of the ELA classroom libraries revealed that although teachers have a sufficient supply of books, many of these books are written for students working at grade level. Over two-thirds of the school's students are reading at Level 1 or Level 2. The school does not have a literacy coach to assist teachers in improving their practice and model best practices.
- School leaders do not ensure that PD is planned and effectively used to bring about improvement in student achievement. Documentation for PD sessions revealed that most offerings did not address the needs of ELA teachers or teachers of students with disabilities. Most of the PD offered was conducted by the Teacher Center staff or one of the APs. Few teachers participated in Network PD workshops.
- The system for teacher evaluation and feedback is ineffective and has not brought consistent and sustained improvement in teaching and learning. Documentation indicated that only three formal observations were conducted thus far this year. Two informal observations of lessons conducted by one AP had no rating on them. A teacher who received an unsatisfactory rating last year had only been formally observed once this year.

Recommendations:

- The Principal, with Network support, should arrange for the parent coordinator to visit schools with similar demographics that have been successful in increasing parental involvement. The parent coordinator should survey parents to find out what types of events would motivate them to become more involved in their child's education.
- School leaders and deans should analyze the student suspension data to determine if all of the suspensions were necessary. The school's three guidance counselors should work with all homeroom classes to discuss positive and negative behaviors to help students develop the skills necessary to respond appropriately in different situations. The Principal should seek Network support to provide PD for teachers who struggle with behavior management in the classroom. The school should research behavior and anti-bullying programs that similar schools have successfully implemented in order to improve student behavior. Strategies, procedures and outcomes learned from PD, visits and research should be implemented and school leaders should monitor their effectiveness in bringing about improvements.

- The AP with responsibility for ELA should conduct an inventory of every ELA teacher's classroom library to determine if the books are appropriate for the different ability levels of the students. After completing the inventory, books for classroom libraries should be purchased that meet the instructional and academic needs of the students from the most able to the less able. . The school should hire an experienced literacy coach to model best practices, mentor ELA teachers and provide general support for ELA instruction. The literacy coach should also have experience in supporting students with disabilities.
- School leaders, with support from the Network, should design a comprehensive PD plan to address the needs of teachers of ELA with a strong focus on teachers of students with disabilities in order to improve their delivery of instruction. This plan should include workshops on differentiating instruction so that the diverse needs of the student population are met. School leaders should closely monitor the delivery of ELA instruction by reviewing lesson plans weekly, providing feedback on lesson plans and conducting informal and formal observations with written feedback that includes recommendations for improvement. School leaders should conduct follow-up observations in a timely manner to ensure that these recommendations are being implemented.
- The school leaders should perform frequent observations for any teacher who did not receive a rating of satisfactory. School leaders should develop a plan to assist any teacher who did not receive a satisfactory rating on a formal observation. The lesson observation process should be strengthened by increasing the frequency of informal and walkthrough observations, with a clear focus on monitoring the quality of student learning. All observations should include developmental feedback for teachers leading to further support or PD as appropriate. Good practice identified should be celebrated with opportunities provided for peer inter-visitation.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- Interviews with students indicated that they do not all feel safe in the building because of bullying. Students stated that there are fights every day and that the school safety officers (SSOs) are not helpful. Three review team members witnessed a fight in the hall when SSOs reacted slowly after they became aware of the fight.
- Not all teachers of students with disabilities and ELLs are available to attend common planning time meetings. Articulating with teachers and support staff to discuss student progress is not part of these regularly scheduled meetings.
- Although the school has a system to identify at-risk-students, post-identification support does not always address the specific learning needs of the students in this subgroup. During classroom observations it was noted that the lessons were not always appropriate and at the instructional or interest level of these students. Teachers have not received training on the use of instructional strategies to promote the progress of the at-risk student population, particularly in ELA.
- The school is not effective at increasing parental involvement and enabling parents to participate in the decision-making processes. Although the school uses the phone messenger system and sends letters out in English and Spanish, the school is unable to increase parental involvement. It is only able to attract 10-12 parents to the monthly PTA meetings.

Recommendations:

- School leaders should provide a learning environment in which the students feel safe. School leaders should contact the Network liaison in charge of school safety and security to assist with the development and implementation of a revised safety and security plan and should create a safety and security committee that meets regularly to address the issues of fighting in the hall, bullying, and classroom behavior issues. School leaders should be highly visible around the school and regularly make behavior the focus of observations and walkthroughs.
- School leaders should reorganize the teachers' schedules to ensure that common planning time is provided to all teachers by subject area, across grades and including those that teach students with disabilities. Support staff should be invited to attend these meetings to ensure that the focus of all meetings is on planning and delivery of seamless instruction that benefits all learners. School leaders should attend some of the meetings and ensure that strategies agreed to are implemented in the classroom.
- School leaders should establish a PD committee that has the responsibility of assessing student and teacher needs and developing a comprehensive PD plan and calendar. Providing quality PD in the area of ELA should be a priority. The plan should include training to assist teachers in developing their skills to meet the needs of the ELLs, students with disabilities and all at-risk students.
- The Principal should request assistance from the Network to work with the parent coordinator in the development of a plan to involve more parents in the processes that impact their child's education.

V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data**Findings:**

- The technology teacher/data specialist, does not provide data to teachers and only provides assistance if teachers ask for it. Teachers do not effectively use data to plan their instruction. This is evidenced by the lack of differentiated instruction and student materials, and in the predominance of whole group, teacher-directed instruction.
- The Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) does not contain goals that are rigorous, or that effectively address the urgent academic issues that affect student achievement in ELA, particularly the underachievement of students with disabilities.
- Most assessments are teacher-made tests and are not uniform across grades or departments. As a result, student outcomes on these tests do not relate closely enough to outcomes in standardized tests. Analysis of test results did not routinely lead to instructional planning to meet the specific learning needs of all students in all classes.
- The data binders that are present in all classrooms are not used by all teachers to drive their instruction. Some binders did not have up-to-date data. There was no evidence that school leaders monitored the contents or use of the data binders.

Recommendations:

- Consideration should be given to make the data specialist a position with a reduced teaching load to afford regular opportunity to work side by side with teachers and school leaders on the effective collection, analysis and use of data in planning instruction. School leaders should regularly review teacher planning to ensure that data is being used as an important tool for differentiating teaching and learning.
- The Network should provide the school leaders with support to revise the goals of the CEP in order to adequately address the academic issues that impact student achievement in ELA with a particular focus on students with disabilities. The Network should also assist the school leader with the development of strategic action plans aimed at producing gains for all students, but particularly for students with disabilities.
- The Network should provide comprehensive PD to school leaders and staff in the effective use of data to drive instruction. The training should go beyond the analysis of the data and should assist the school community in disaggregating the information to effectively assess the learning needs of students. Instruction should be directly informed by student needs. The Network should support the school in designing interim assessments, particularly in ELA. School leaders should assess the impact of this work on classroom practice.
- School leaders should regularly review the data binders and hold teachers accountable for making the best use of all the information available to improve student outcomes.

VI. Professional Development**Findings:**

- PD has addressed only one of the four CEP goals. Little evidence was provided to indicate that the PD provided has addressed the identified ELA subgroup needs or the needs of students with disabilities to positively impact on student performance.
- The schoolwide inquiry process, focused on improved student learning, only began in February 2011. As a result, the work of the team has not had an impact on teachers' instructional strategies or student outcomes.
- There was no evidence of a feedback mechanism from PD sessions to enable school leaders to adjust PD offerings to better meet the needs of students and teachers.
- A review of observation reports indicated that teachers were not held accountable for incorporating strategies learned in PD into their instructional practice.
- The many PD opportunities do not address the identified needs of students in ELA, including students with disabilities. It was not evident that teachers of ELLs, students with disabilities and at-risk students received sufficient PD to enable them to develop the specific instructional strategies required to improve the progress of these subgroups.

Recommendations:

- The school leaders should work with the Network to conduct a schoolwide needs assessment, including the needs of the identified subgroups in ELA and students with disabilities to inform the CEP goals and to develop a comprehensive PD plan that is aligned with these goals.
- The school leader should ensure that an infrastructure is in place early in the school year for Inquiry Team meetings that are focused on the use of data to improve student learning. The Network should be involved in conducting training for all teachers to effectively use this process. The APs should be members of these meetings and the classroom observation process should be used to ensure that the Inquiry Team's work has a positive impact on improving instruction and student achievement.
- The Network should work with the school leader to assist in designing a feedback mechanism within the PD plan that can be used to evaluate the quality and value of the PD provided. This can also be used to modify or adjust future offerings to ensure that the needs of teachers and students are continuously being addressed.
- School leaders, through formal and informal observations, should ensure that all teachers are implementing strategies learned during PD into their instructional practice. Part of this practice should be the scheduling of inter-visitations to other teachers' classes where such strategies are being effectively implemented. Teachers should be held accountable for incorporating strategies learned during PD into their planning and delivery.
- School leaders, with the support of the Network, should use the school's accountability data to identify the root causes that contribute to subgroups not being able to make AYP. Based on the identified needs, school leaders should provide ongoing PD to support teachers in developing specific instructional strategies that are research-based and aligned to the needs of all subgroups.

VII. Network Support

Findings:

- The Network has provided limited academic and operational leadership support for the school. The school has not made AYP for students with disabilities for the past six years and does not have a literacy coach in place to support teachers and students.
- There was little evidence that the Network has provided assistance in addressing the needs of the school in ELA and for students with disabilities. The documentation in the PD binder did not include evidence of PD for teachers of students with disabilities. Few teachers participated in Network PD workshops for ELA, students with disabilities or ELLs.
- There was little evidence that the Network regularly monitors the implementation of the CEP. There was no evidence of benchmarks or progress monitoring included in the documentation.

Recommendations:

- The Network should ensure that the school addresses the urgent issue that 67 percent of the students are below grade level in ELA. The Network should also monitor the school budget to ensure that funding benefits all students.

- The Network should work with the school to design a PD program that targets ELA instruction with an emphasis on improving the delivery of instruction in ELA for teachers of students with disabilities. Network staff should assist teachers in disaggregating data and creating differentiated instructional strategies that will accelerate student growth.
- The Network should work with the School Leadership Team (SLT) to assist in rewriting the CEP goals in order to address the school’s identified needs for students with disabilities in ELA as well as the overall low performance of all students in ELA. The Network should provide on-going feedback to the school on the CEP that will enable the SLT to monitor progress towards achievement of whole school goals. Also, adjustments should be made to programs and supports at regular intervals to respond to the identified needs of students and teachers.
- The Network should support the school in the implementation of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) recommendations.

Other Concerns:

- The school’s three academies show no evidence of curriculum or instruction aligned with the posted theme of each academy.
- Parents, teachers and students do not feel safe in the building. The school has an excessive number of suspensions.
- Although the school’s accountability status in mathematics is *In Good Standing* for 2009-10, the students with disabilities did not make AYP for the first time.

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.

- The Principal should be provided with a mentor to assist her in understanding the administrative and instructional role and responsibilities of a school leader.
- The Network should closely monitor and assist the SLT in developing meaningful CEP goals that are based on the identified needs of students, particularly those with disabilities.
- School leaders should conduct the required number of formal observations each year for all teachers and should provide meaningful and timely feedback to inform their instructional practice. In addition, school leaders should conduct follow-up observations to determine if recommendations for improvement have been implemented.
- The AP for ELA should receive assistance from a mentor in order to provide meaningful support to the ELA teachers so that their practice can improve to accelerate student growth.
- The school should consider hiring a literacy coach from outside the school to assist teachers in improving their instructional practices, including differentiation, so that the academic needs of all students are better met.
- School leaders should revise the master schedule so that the data specialist has periods available to assist teachers and school leaders in collecting, analyzing, distributing and using data to inform instruction and improve student-learning outcomes.
- The academies should be restructured so that each academy has an equal distribution of students performing at each instructional level. In addition, instruction in each academy should be reflective of its stated theme.
- The master schedule should be revised so that all teachers of ELLs and students with disabilities can meet with their colleagues on the same grade and in the same content area.
- School leaders should investigate behavior programs in order to reduce the number of incidents that lead to suspensions. The SSOs should receive additional training so that they can more effectively monitor student behavior in the school and respond to incidents in a more timely fashion.
- School leaders should change the room of the students with disabilities teacher who works in an unsafe room (209) not visible from the hallway.