NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code/DBN:	30Q141
School Name:	IS 141 The Steinway School
School Address:	37-11 21st Avenue Queens, NY 11105
Principal:	Miranda Pavlou
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring Advanced Focused
Area(s) of Identification:	English Language Arts- Students with Disabilities
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	April 5-6, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Community and School Background

IS 141 serves 1016 students in grades 6 through 8. The school enrollment is five percent Black, 42 percent Hispanic, 29 percent White, and 23 percent Asian students. Of these students, 74 are English language learners (ELL) students, 24 of whom have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). There are approximately 148 students with disabilities, of whom 32 are in self-contained classes and 48 in Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) classes. Most students attending the school live in the surrounding neighborhood.

The administrative team includes the Principal, three Assistant Principals (APs) and three Deans. The school is organized into three academies; the Jewels Academy for students in grade 6 and the Einstein and Shakespeare Academies for students in grades 7 -8. The academies were designed to provide both general education and honors programs in each academy. The Principal, who has worked in the school for 24 years, is serving in her fourth year as Principal**. The APs have served for 12, 17 and 22 years respectively and the Deans between seven and 18 years.** There are 56 teachers on staff. There are no new teachers and all teachers at the school are highly qualified. The teacher turnover rate 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	
+	Positive 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 increase 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).	✓
-	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 ***All Students*** subgroup in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓
	NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures	
+	2008-09 NYC Progress Report Grade of A	✓
+	NYC Quality Review Score of Well-Developed	✓

B. School Strengths

- There was 100 percent response to the parent survey, with a high satisfaction rate in all areas.
- The school presents as a warm and rich environment that is conducive to learning. Students feel safe, are motivated and want to succeed. Student behavior is good in both the classrooms and during transitions.

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

Finding:

The school has not developed English language arts (ELA) curriculum with clearly identified performance standards for English language Learners (ELLs) and ELL students with disabilities, as evidenced by the review of teacher lesson plans, student portfolios and current classroom work. As a result, the ELA instruction provided to ELLs and ELLs with disabilities does not address their specific language development needs.

Recommendation:

The school leader and teachers should, in collaboration with the Network, implement a curriculum for the teaching of English as a second language (ESL) to ELLs and ELLs with disabilities. This should include the required performance standards per grade level for English language proficiency. The curriculum should include grade-level standards and the appropriate modifications to address each student's specific level of second language acquisition. The school leader should ensure its effective implementation in the classroom.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- The variety of instructional strategies used is limited in special education classes. Teachers do not effectively meet the needs of all students within those classes. Differentiated instruction is not evident in many classrooms to support the varied learning needs of the students. There was no evidence of teachers modifying their instruction to meet the specific learning needs of these students.

- There was little evidence of small group differentiated instruction being employed in the majority of classes for students with disabilities. There were few opportunities for group interaction within lessons for students with disabilities and ELLs.

- The quality of cooperative teaching in the CTT classes was inconsistent. Teachers in the CTT classes did not participate equally or fully in the instructional process. There was a lack of well-defined roles and responsibilities in these classes. This resulted in cooperative teaching lacking sufficient impact on student learning.

- The pacing, sequencing and content of instruction in self-contained classes and those for students with learning disabilities was not rigorous. The rate of instruction in these classes was slower because the teachers did not fully engage students, and the paraprofessionals were not used effectively to support the instructional process. This lack of rigor had a detrimental effect on the progress of the students.

- Learning goals and instructional strategies were not amended appropriately to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Consequently, their quality of learning was not maximized and they do not make the progress of which they are capable.

- Teachers did not use probing questions or supportive strategies to encourage students to make inferences, draw conclusions or synthesize information in the majority of self-contained special education classes and some ESL freestanding and CCT classes. Therefore, higher order skills were not developed in these subgroups.

- In freestanding ESL and self-contained special education classes, teaching was poor. Direct instruction was the primary method of delivery. There was insufficient differentiation of activity in lessons. Students with disabilities were frequently given the same tasks as their general education peers rather than modified and adapted tasks that could promote and facilitate their learning congruent to individual IEP goals. The IEP goals were not sufficiently used to drive instruction or for task modification.

Recommendations:

- The school leaders, with the assistance of the Network, should provide opportunities for APs and teachers to visit schools that are identified as having exemplary practice. The school should use research-based best practices for students with disabilities and ELLs. This should focus on modifying the curriculum and adapting activities to better support the learning needs of these students. Differentiated, individualized and modified classroom instruction, aligned to New York State (NYS) Standards and Core Competencies, should become embedded into routine practice and school leaders should monitor classrooms to ensure compliance.

- The school leaders, with the assistance of the Network, should review the current assessment tools and select assessments that will more closely identify and measure the reading and writing needs of students with disabilities. These assessments should then be used to provide more accurate grouping and planned support for this diverse learning community. Teachers should be provided with training to develop strategies to better engage ELLs and students with disabilities in the learning process.

- The school leaders, with the assistance of the Network, should provide professional development (PD) for teachers of CCT classes on planning and role definition during instructional time. The training should emphasize the equity of responsibility for direct teaching and the role of the co-teacher in monitoring understanding and assisting unfocused or struggling students. The Principal should seek to provide additional planning time for co-teachers and monitor the quality of co-teaching through regular classroom observations and walkthroughs.

- The school leaders should closely monitor sequencing and content of instruction in self-contained and ESL classes to ensure that lessons match student needs. Additionally, the role of each paraprofessional should be evaluated through informal and formal observations, as well as classroom walkthroughs to identify best practices and teacher training needs. Written feedback should be provided for teachers on the quality of their planning for the use of paraprofessional support during lessons.

- The school leaders, with the support of the Network, should provide PD for teachers in writing quality IEPs. Particular attention should be given to developing learning goals that are specific to the assessed student needs. The learning goals should be achievable, measurable, realistic and time-bound, and supportive of student progress across a year's continuum or more. School leaders should evaluate the impact of the IEPs on improving student learning and outcomes.

- The school leaders, with the support of the Network, should provide PD for teachers in varied questioning techniques and strategies to better support ELLs and students with disabilities in developing their higher order thinking skills. Teachers should ensure that these strategies and techniques are included in their lesson planning and carried through to classroom practice. School leaders should make the effectiveness of questioning a focus of classroom observation.

- The school leaders, with support from the Network, should provide focused PD on differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students. Specific attention should be given to teachers of students with disabilities and ELLs so that they can develop strategy- based planning specific to the identified needs of these respective subgroups. School leaders should ensure that the strategies and techniques teachers learn in PD are consistently implemented across the school.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- The Principal is not strategic in her planning. The administration has not carried out a sufficiently rigorous evaluation to establish the key reasons for students with disabilities not achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and there is no coherent, sequential plan to remedy the problem.

- The School Leadership Team (SLT) does not carry out its role effectively. They are recipients of information rather than actively engaged in decision-making. Parents state that they were not

part of the process to identify goals. Leaders are well aware of the progress they are making but there is insufficient accountability from the SLT.

- There is insufficient time scheduled for effective planning between staff who co-teach and other service providers. Although staff supplement formal discussions with informal contact both during the school day and in the evening, there is an over-reliance on staff goodwill for the level of dialogue that is required.

- The school leaders do not ensure that program requirements are being appropriately implemented. Academic intervention Services (AIS) are not sufficiently targeted at specific students. There is no evidence of specially designed instruction being implemented for students with learning disabilities.

Recommendations:

- School leaders should use the recommendations contained in the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) report to develop a detailed Restructuring Plan. This plan should encompass all essential components, such as use of data to improve instruction, modification of the curriculum and individual student development plans so that there is a coherent and holistic strategy to address student need. Advice should be sought from specialists in the Network to support the formulation of this plan.

- The school leaders, with Network support, should provide training for SLT members so that they acquire greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the SLT. The SLT should be provided with opportunities to contribute to the decision-making processes. School leaders and the Network should ensure that the SLT is equipped with the skills to enable them to contribute to strategic goal setting and to rigorously monitor school performance against these goals.

- The Principal should reexamine the schedule to create sufficient time for articulation to take place between all members of the school staff so that they effectively carry out their responsibilities.

- The school leaders should ensure that AIS supports are delivered to all students who require them and that the impact of this support is monitored. Instruction for students with disabilities should be informed by data and the programs of instruction modified and redesigned so that they more effectively meet individual student need.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- There is insufficient time for effective articulation between teachers and support staff. This lack of effective articulation has resulted in planning that is not sufficiently comprehensive and this has resulted in an inconsistency in service delivery.

- The school does not have a consistent method of identifying at-risk students. The services provided are not evaluated for their impact on student learning. AIS are a continuation of skill-driven class work and provide limited opportunities for strategy-based remediation. AIS supports are not provided in small groups. The school does not develop Pupil Intervention Plans (PIPs). As

a result, the current system of service delivery constrains the program's effectiveness in supporting and enhancing student learning.

Recommendations:

- The school leader should review schedules and create increased formal opportunities for articulation between staff. Documentation should include common instructional planning for content area needs and/or individual student needs. Staff providing required support services to students with disabilities should be included in the new schedule. Advice should be sought from the Network for assistance with scheduling.

- The school leader should restructure the school's AIS program to ensure that all at-risk students are properly identified (entrance/exit criteria) and that all receive AIS services in small groups to address their specific needs.

V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- The use of student and class assessment data does not form the basis for systemic instructional improvement. Data is not tracked from year to year. The year to date (YTD) data that is tracked is not used to measure the effectiveness of current educational programs, identify schoolwide priorities for improving student achievement, and inform the school's continuous improvement planning.

- The school does not effectively monitor the performance of students with disabilities and ELLs. The use of Design Your Own (DYO) periodic assessment does not include passages that are selected for their readability or their rigor. This prohibits the school from measuring anticipated performance outcomes, and the school is unable to measure if it will be able to meet its stated goal of a two percent increase in performance on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) until after the students have taken the exam.

- The school disaggregates the data by subgroups to measure the students' incremental progress in skill acquisition. Although teachers use this data to reteach, regroup and restate the skills, data is used rarely to identify instructional effectiveness. Instructional change strategies are discussed anecdotally and are not formalized to provide the basis of departmental, academy or grade-level best practices.

- The school's internal assessments are not tied to State standards or performance indicators. DYO, baseline and benchmark assessment data are used to measure student skill acquisition. The internal assessments are not used to identify students requiring AIS or to monitor the effectiveness of those services. There are no specific assessments related to the standards for the ESL freestanding program and content area classrooms.

Recommendations:

- The use of student and class quantitative and qualitative data should serve as the basis for systemic instructional improvement. School leaders should ensure data are tracked from year to year. The data should be used to measure the effectiveness of current educational programs, identify schoolwide priorities for improving student achievement, and inform the school improvement strategies in the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP).

- School leaders should rigorously monitor the performance of students with disabilities and ELLs. The school should enlist the support of the Network to ensure that the DYO periodic assessments accurately measure and predict student performance outcomes. These internal assessments should focus on targeted NYS Learning Standards and performance indicators and should form a cadre of instructional best practices for teachers to regularly refer to and share.

- The school's analysis of disaggregated data by subgroups should be measured to identify instructional effectiveness. School leaders should ensure that instructional change strategies are discussed formally and form the basis of departmental, academy and grade-level best practices. School leaders should use the observation protocols to ensure that agreed strategies are effectively implemented in classrooms.

- The school's internal DYO assessments should be revised to reflect State Standards and/or performance indicators. The internal assessments should be used to identify at-risk students requiring AIS support and to monitor the effectiveness of those services. There should be assessments to measure the effectiveness of the ESL instruction and to ensure that ELLs are progressing toward meeting the ESL standards. These assessments should form one criterion for students entering and exiting AIS services.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- There is no comprehensive PD plan aligned to school goals and based on assessment data that is reflective of student and teacher needs. As a result, PD does not have sufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

- There is limited PD provided on the most effective instructional strategies for ELLs and students with disabilities.

- There is insufficient time provided by the school for high quality PD that incorporates research-based best practices and the principles of adult learning and includes rigorous follow up, monitoring and feedback from staff participants.

- There are no opportunities for targeted training for paraprofessionals in students with disabilities classes. PD for teachers does not include the best practice in effectively using paraprofessionals to support student learning in the classroom.

- The administration has had insufficient support to help develop their leadership skills. The school leaders are relatively new as a team and lack experience in a number of areas. Teachers who are new to the school are partnered with another teacher who acts as their mentor. However, there are no mentors to support members of the administration.

- The impact of PD for teachers to meet the different learning needs of ELLs, students with disabilities and at-risk students has not been effective enough to positively impact student performance levels. Training has taken place in areas such as IEP writing, positive behavior support and alternate assessments but these have had limited effect on instructional practice. Training in differentiation has not been fully effective, and teachers have not developed sufficient

instructional strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of the different groups of students in the school.

Recommendations:

- The Principal should develop a comprehensive PD plan that is aligned to the school goals and the needs identified in this report. The plan should be shared with the school community and implemented. School leaders should monitor the impact of the plan on improving instruction and improving the academic performance of students with disabilities and ELLs.

- The school, with the support of the Network, should provide ongoing PD focused on strategy-based curriculum specific to the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities. Additionally, the Network should provide specialists services for ELLs and students with disabilities to support the teachers and appropriate APs in order to improve instruction and accelerate progress for students in these identified subgroups.

- The school leader, with the support of the Network, should review current scheduling to create regular articulation and PD periods to support teaching and learning for the identified subgroups of ELLs and students with disabilities.

- The school, with support from the Network, should provide PD for teachers and paraprofessionals so that additional staff in the classroom are more effectively used. School leaders should monitor how well teachers and paraprofessionals provide support to students.

- School leaders should contact the Network to seek mentors with administrative experience in a large middle school. Administrators should identify key areas for PD that includes strategic planning, instructional leadership, time management and effective scheduling. Mentors should provide ongoing constructive feedback to further improve the leadership skills of administrators.

- School leaders should evaluate the PD needs of teachers through discussion, data analysis and rigorous lesson observations. Leaders should contact the Network to provide appropriate training to meet those differentiated needs. Training should focus on specific skills that will enable the teachers to better understand the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs and to develop effective strategies to address them. This should include the ability to understand student data and effectively use it to inform effective differentiated instruction in the classroom.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- The PD offerings from the Network have not been targeted on the needs of the school in the identified area of ELA instruction for students with disabilities and ELLs. The Network has not provided the school with PD on the strategic use of data to guide and improve instruction for these student populations.

- The school was previously using America's Choice and has implemented a new ELA curriculum this year. This thematic integrated curriculum is being developed by the literacy coach. The Network has not been instrumental in supporting the school with this initiative or assisted in ensuring that the developing curriculum provides adequate entry points for students with disabilities and ELLs.

- The Network has not been proactive in assisting the Principal to prioritize resources to ensure that all at-risk students receive services as required. The Network has provided the Principal with limited assistance in maximizing staff members and resources to best meet the needs of the at-risk students in the identified areas.

- The Network has not ensured that the stated goals of the school, within the CEP, were sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the school would make AYP for students with disabilities in ELA. The Network did not provide adequate guidance in developing a strategic plan for the school to monitor progress in achieving its stated goals.

Recommendations:

- The Network should provide the school with PD in the strategic use of data to guide and improve instruction for these subgroups. These PD offerings should occur regularly throughout the course of the school year and be onsite. Teachers should be targeted to attend these trainings, based on their stated and observed level of need.

- The Network should support the school and the literacy coach with the design and implementation of a new curriculum. The Network should assist, review and help the school to revise the curriculum that has been developed thus far. The Network should help to ensure that the curriculum provides adequate entry points for students with disabilities and ELLs in all content areas, with a special focus on ELA.

- The Network should assist the Principal in prioritizing resources so that all at-risk students receive services as required. The Network should provide the Principal with assistance in maximizing staff members, resources and programming to best meet the needs of the at-risk students in the identified areas.

- The Network should ensure that the CEP goals are sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the school will make AYP for students with disabilities in ELA. The Network should provide guidance in developing a strategic plan for the school with specific, time-bound benchmarks, success criteria, with designated roles and responsibilities for staff members and key stakeholders to monitor the school's progress in achieving its stated goals.

- The Network should support the school in the implementation of the JIT recommendations.

Other Concern:

The school has alternated between making and not making AYP for students with disabilities and ELLs for several years.

PART 3: JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM OVERALL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Overall Findings

Reference	JIT Finding for Restructuring Advanced Schools	✓
(b)	The school has made some progress in identified areas, and may make AYP with further modification to the Restructuring Plan.	✓

B. Overall Recommendation

Reference	Recommendation by the JIT for Restructuring Advanced Schools	✓
(b)	Implementation and development of a Restructuring Plan with modifications recommended as a result of the review.	✓

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

The Network should support the school in creating a Restructuring Plan to implement the JIT recommendations. The plan should focus on improving outcomes for all students but with a particular focus on students with disabilities and ELLs. The plan should address the following areas:

Infrastructure for Student Success:

- Make the students aware of their goals so that they are involved in and have responsibility for their own learning.
- Ensure that parents are aware of the goals and the role they are to play as a co-educator.
- Appoint a teacher mentor to meet and discuss progress/issues with the student on a regular basis.
- Provide a student advisor who can support the learning process

Collection, Analysis and Utilization of Data:

- Ensure that available data is used to inform planning and the next steps in learning.
- Use data to track and monitor progress.
- Improve teachers' ability to use data to inform instructional best practices.

Teaching and Learning:

- Use data to identify student prior knowledge and use this information to match learning tasks to student performance levels.
- Modify the curriculum so that students can access their learning at the appropriate level.
- Continuously assess and modify the learning experiences for each student so that progress is maintained.
- Widen the range of teaching strategies, ensuring that all work is differentiated to meet student need.

School Leadership:

- Engage in regular, focused classroom observations to monitor student progress and identify the teacher skill set needs.
- Ensure there is adequate time for PD to meet teacher need.
- Monitor the impact and effectiveness of PD to ensure that new skills are embedded in practice.
- Ensure that all services meet requirements and that they are implemented in a way that maximizes their effect on student learning.
- Ensure that the schedule allows time for articulation to occur.
- Hold teachers accountable for implementing strategies and improving student outcomes.
- Use the SLT as a body to develop, implement and monitor school goals and priorities.
- Develop a strategic plan to ensure that the school is proactive in its future development.