

NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code/DBN:	07X151
School Name:	Lou Gehrig
School Address:	250 East 156 Street Bronx, New York
Principal:	Socorro Rivera
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring Advanced Comprehensive- All Students; Black Students; Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners; and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Area(s) of Identification:	English Language Arts
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	March 1-2, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Community and School Background

Lou Gehrig serves 290 students in grades 6 through 8. Student enrollment is 25 percent Black students and 75 percent Hispanic students. Of these students, 29 percent are English language learners (ELLs) and 10 percent students with disabilities. The students who attend Lou Gehrig live in the school's zone. The school shares facility space with two other schools.

The administration team includes the Principal, two Assistant Principals (APs) and one Dean. The Principal has served the school for less than one year.

There are 26 teachers on staff. Two teachers have been at the school for less than one year, and two teachers have worked at the school for fewer than three years.

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.	✓
-	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 A	✓

Positive Negative Indicator (+/-)	or School Performance Indicators	✓
+/ 	NYC Quality Review Score of Proficient	✓

B. School Strengths

Students report that there are fewer fights than in the past, that there are clear and consistent consequences for misbehavior, and that the school is safe.

C. Key Findings and Recommendations

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

I. Curriculum

Findings:

- The English Language Arts (ELA) and social studies curriculum are not delineated from grade to grade, and all of the core content area curricula are incomplete. ELA pacing calendars and scope and sequence are the same across all grades.
- Teaching Matters forms the framework for the curriculum, but it is not sufficient to form the basis for high quality, standards based instruction. The only assessment materials for ELA from this program were the rubrics. Professional development (PD) for the implementation of Teaching Matters has been limited.
- ELA materials and standards are not sufficiently differentiated to ensure high academic achievement for students. Standards and curriculum are identical across grades 6 - 8. There are no measures in place to ensure that students are not being repeatedly exposed to the same materials every year. These materials were not consistently sorted by reading level or genre to support student independent selection of appropriate reading materials.
- Lesson plans and the ELA curriculum do not state the New York State (NYS) Standards and most lesson plans are not aligned to NYS Standards.

Recommendations:

- The Network should work with the school, or suggest a consultant, on the development of curriculum in all core areas and ensure that it is clearly aligned with the current NYS Learning Standards. Curriculum should be aligned to the new NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards in ELA, Literacy and Mathematics to prepare for implementation in school year 2012-13. All curricula should be developed by knowledgeable and trained individuals (national, state, or local) who understand the key elements of curriculum development.
- All teachers and administrators should participate in PD on how to plan and implement a curriculum with rigor, as well as delivery methods that are student centered. The curriculum should be used in the formation of assessments that measure individual student mastery of state

standards. Walkthroughs and formal evaluations should focus on effective implementation of curriculum.

- The school should select curricular materials that reflect NYS Standards and should be differentiated by grade and skill levels. Classroom ELA resources should be organized by reading level and genre to allow students to independently select appropriate and culturally responsive texts.
- All lesson plans should reference specific NYS Standards.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- There are a limited variety of instructional strategies being used in many classrooms. For example, although students are physically grouped or work in pairs, they are neither engaged in differentiated tasks nor use a variety of materials and resources when working together. Whole group lecture is the dominant and most observed instructional strategy, and students report the prevalence of this instructional strategy. There is little evidence of differentiated instruction, skill-based grouping, differentiated tasks and material and customized standards-based rubrics. One exception is a self-contained special education class, where students are frequently regrouped, based on data analysis, and are provided with differentiated materials and instruction.
- Co-teaching is inefficient and ineffective; in co-teaching classrooms only one teacher delivers instruction.
- Pacing and sequencing in some classrooms is weak and learning time is not maximized. Slow pace negatively impacts student attention span, and some students are off task and not deeply engaged in learning. Loss of instructional time was evident as students moved from one activity to another and from room to room. Lack of classroom management was evident in some classes and negatively impacted student learning.
- Effective instructional approaches are inconsistent across the school. Students report that they are assigned to create projects several times per quarter, but also report that for most of the time their teachers talk and they passively listen. Modeling and scaffolding were not observed. Instructional activities were mundane. Observed students were presented with a variety of instructional activities, but these activities lacked rigor, resulting in limited student work production. Student initiated self-reflection and self-evaluation was not observed. Students receive rubrics but do not score their own work or the work of their peers.
- There is a lack of rigor in questioning strategies; higher order thinking and problem solving is absent from the school. Students are asked to recall facts and details. Students are not challenged to analyze, evaluate or synthesize information.
- Routines and procedures are inconsistent among classrooms and the effectiveness of routines and procedure varies. Students were observed engaging in non-academic conversations and some teachers had difficulty in redirecting students.

- Rubrics are regularly used to score student work, but these rubrics are not consistently task specific and do not align with NYS Standards. Students are not receiving constructive feedback. Student work displayed in hallways is scored at the highest level and is intended to celebrate quality. However, written feedback posted on the work is limited to non-specific praise and does not include next steps or improvement suggestions.
- Technology is not effectively integrated into the academic program. Although laptops are available in most classrooms, they are not consistently used to enhance student work production or to provide students with opportunities to word process and easily revise and improve work. Students do not use or have access to the interactive ACUITY program. SMART Boards are present in most classrooms, but they are used as substitutes for overhead projectors or whiteboards.

Recommendations:

- Provide PD in differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, targeted group instruction and classroom management. Teachers should organize classrooms and structure teaching so that several activities occur at the same time. Teachers should use activity posters and grouping lists. Physical arrangements should be purposeful and flexible. Students should be seated in pairs/fours, sixes, etc. on the same academic level and at other times in mixed ability groupings. Students should be arranged in guided reading groups. Cooperative learning should be used to provide students with opportunities to learn together and interact with purpose.
- Revisit the co-teaching model to ensure teachers who work together have separate responsibilities, and that both teachers actively engage with students. For example, one teacher should work with a small group to provide targeted reinforcement to students who need additional support while the other conferences with students. Co-teachers should plan together so that students benefit from more teacher attention, smaller group size and specialized instruction.
- Ensure appropriate pacing and sequencing of instruction by requiring teachers to post the flow of the lesson with times. The students should clearly understand expectations and should be expected to be self-directed and personally accountable. For example, students should start and complete the Do Now within the first few minutes of class. Teachers should plan effective closures so that students summarize the day's lesson, the teacher is able to assess the degree to which students mastered the day's content, and students are able to efficiently transition to the next class. Classroom rules and consequences should be discussed and posted.
- Move from whole group instruction, as much as appropriate, to interactive student assignments, such as class newsletters, written and video book reviews, and student created poetry anthologies. The following should be implemented through all content areas: debates, paired reading, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, projects across the curriculum, and experiments.
- Move from teacher posed questions that require one-word answers or are recall and comprehension based to questions that require students to support answers by citing text, by elaborating on the answers of other students, and by summarizing and rephrasing new information. Teacher lesson plans should include pre-created questions that require critical thinking and discussion. Teachers should use wait time and not allow students to opt-out of class discussions. Teachers should use random selection and/or avoid calling exclusively on willing student volunteers. Teachers should require students to answer in complete sentences.

- Establish routines and procedures on the first day of the school year in every classroom. Class rules and consequences should be posted and revisited regularly until routines are clearly established and followed. Procedures should be established to address how students get teachers' attention, how the teacher will get the attention of students, expectations for entering and leaving classrooms, and the process for getting materials.
- Reflect State standards in all teacher-created rubrics. Teachers should use rubrics to give students effective, constructive feedback. Rubrics should be created with the students for each type of assignment so that they fully understand what is expected of them. Teacher feedback should include next steps. Students should be trained to use rubrics to score their own work and the work of peers.
- Develop a written technology plan and monitor it for implementation so that the full integration of technology into student assignments and projects occurs. Written assignments should be consistently word-processed. PD should be given on the uses of SMART Boards to enhance the delivery of instruction to allow students to interact with multimedia tools and activities. Students should access ACUITY.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- The Principal has not effectively communicated high expectations for student performance to staff. The Principal is just beginning to set high standards for the grading of student work and these standards have not been effectively communicated to all teachers.
- The school leader has not effectively engaged the School Leadership Team (SLT) in the creation and monitoring of the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP).
- Expectations for the use of common planning time are unclear and require further development.
- The school leader has lacked skill in managing human resources to ensure effective allocation of personnel. The school's 280 students, a majority of whom are underperforming in the area of ELA, are not well-served by seven staff members in non-teaching positions and the absence of a literacy coach, Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and ELL coordinator. Several staff members are teaching outside of their area of licensure for one or two periods per day.
- School leadership does not ensure that mandated AIS supports occur consistently across the school and for the extended day to be mandatory for students to attend. School leaders do not ensure that all ELLs are fully served.

Recommendations:

- The school leaders should further develop the school's grading policy to ensure consistency in the weighting of homework, class work, participation, and test grades. This grading policy should align with the State scoring standards. The school leaders should provide all staff with PD in order to create a uniform understanding and application of the school's revised school policy. In order to enforce the proper implementation of the grading policy across subjects and grades, the school leaders should provide all staff with exemplars (model student work samples) for each scoring level for each grade and in each content area. School leaders should conduct training sessions in

which teachers score student work samples and compare their scoring to the exemplar pieces. Exemplar pieces and rubrics should be posted in each classroom and students should be trained in scoring of their work and the work of others.

- School leaders should determine areas of high priority based on achievement data, attendance trends, subgroup analysis, parent and student surveys, and grade reports. The school leaders should engage members of the SLT in an active analysis of these documents in order to inform school goals. These documents should be the basis of the school improvement goals. In turn, the school goals should inform the creation of teacher goals.
- School leaders should create a flexible common planning schedule in which teachers can meet across grade levels and content levels and should establish protocols and expectations for the use of this time.
- The school leaders should reduce the number of non-teaching staff from seven to three to allow the school to hire additional English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher or ELL coordinator, literacy coach and AIS provider. All teachers should teach within their area of license.
- School leaders should use student data in order to create instructional groupings for the extended day. School leaders should communicate to parents that extended day is part of the school day and is mandatory. A staff member with responsibility for the successful implementation of extended day should be recruited, with accountability for increased student achievement and high attendance. Extended day should be rigorously monitored for impact. School leaders should use student performance data to create student groupings for AIS. The school schedule should be adjusted to include AIS during the day. AIS instructional support should align with classroom instruction. AIS and content area teachers should have articulation time in order to align instruction. School leaders should immediately provide English as a second language (ESL) services for all self-contained special education ELLs.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- The school does not have a strong and significant presence within the shared space. The school spaces are not sufficiently personalized to create a distinct, welcoming school that is easy to navigate for students, parents and visitors.
- The school's efforts to reward high achievement are not sufficient and require further development. For example, the school's traditions around honoring academic achievement, perfect attendance and behavior are in their early stages of development and are not providing many ways for students to celebrate success. Additionally, some teachers do not hold high expectations for all students as, rather than looking at whether students have achieved proficiency, teachers are grading student work based on growth/improvement.
- Students and families are underserved and are not sufficiently supported in order to overcome barriers within the school and the community. One guidance department staff member is expected to get all grade 8 students placed in appropriate high school settings. Members of the guidance department work in isolation; they are not sufficiently supporting the work of each other and are not effectively monitored.

- There is no plan or opportunity for the guidance department, providers of special services, or cluster teachers to regularly discuss commonly served students.
- Self-contained special education students who are ELLs are not receiving ESL service as per Individual Education Plan (IEP) requirements.
- The school is under-serving at-risk students; it does not provide AIS to a majority of the student population.
- Students do not have adequate access to library, media or science facilities.
- The school has not given parents sufficient information for accessing academic performance data.
- The school leader has not effectively engaged parents on the SLT in the creation of the CEP.
- The school does not issue progress reports, and students and parents do not consistently receive timely academic achievement information.

Recommendations:

- Use the school's unique name and associated local history to develop an identity for the school and enhance the physical space to create a welcoming student-centered facility. Name hallways, post signs and label bulletin boards.
- Further develop the school mission and vision and translate that vision into characteristics that students should display. Design incentives and rewards that exemplify the school vision. Provide regular and frequent opportunities to celebrate students who embody the vision of the school. Prominently post and display student achievement targets and goals to serve as reminders of the school's expectations for high performance.
- Require all seventh and eighth grade students to fully explore high school options and entrance requirements to selective high schools. Involve guidance staff in helping students prepare for high school and in the high school selection process. Help students to prepare for high school entrance exams. Allocate funds, if necessary, so that guidance staff ensures that all students visit schools and attend fairs. Ensure that all students are successfully matched with a high school and that students enroll in high schools that had been previously considered beyond reach or scope of awareness. Require that the guidance department monitor trends and report on student enrollment in high schools. Create a plan to support students as they transition to high school as well as transition into middle school. Require all members of the guidance department to hold a minimum number of parent meetings per grade level per month. Use incentives, door prizes, and rewards in order to promote parent and student attendance rates at monthly parent meetings.
- Provide common meeting time for the guidance department, special service providers and cluster teachers to meet with content teachers to articulate concerns and develop solutions for student and family issues.
- Closely supervise and monitor the newly appointed ESL coordinator to ensure that services are provided.

- Use student performance data to create student groupings for AIS. The school schedule should be adjusted to include AIS during the day. AIS instructional support should align with classroom instruction. AIS and content area teachers should have articulation time in order to align instruction. Furthermore, AIS teachers should communicate regularly with the school based support team on students who continue to be at-risk.
- Seek assistance from the Network and Central in the creation of a building council to share space, including the library and science laboratory. The Network should work in conjunction with the support organizations of other schools within the building to promote collegiality and equity of shared space.
- Require the Parent Coordinator to hold monthly grade level parent meetings in order to inform and educate parents on the resources available to them and to keep them informed of student progress.
- Seek the assistance of the Network to educate the SLT to better understand their role and responsibility for setting the direction for the school. Task the Parent Coordinator with responsibility for ensuring that parents are informed about the SLT and the potential impact of their full participation.
- Create a calendar with dates for progress reports and distribute it to students and parents. Form a committee of teachers to design a uniform progress report. Keep copies of progress reports on file for each teacher.

V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- The school has not created or implemented a strategic plan to identify or address the causes of ELA underperformance.
- There is no comprehensive analysis of year-to-year comparisons of school-wide, grade-level achievement data. Student performance data is not analyzed for historical trends. Data is printed and reviewed by the data specialist but is underused in planning small group targeted instructional planning.
- Performance levels on State tests are not examined against teacher assigned grades to check for alignment and academic rigor and to guard against grade inflation.
- The school leaders have been unsuccessful in leading teachers in the effective administration of multiple forms of assessment. Assessments are limited to cut and pasted released NYS exam questions on teacher created midterm exams.
- Teachers are limited in their examination of data to monitor student progress. The administration states that the school is in the beginning stages of this process. Teachers do not have access to ACUITY, and printouts of the predictive results are provided to them without specific direction on their use.

- At-risk students are not identified and AIS is limited to one period per week of support for one sixth grade class and extended day. Extended day is not monitored and not tracked through AIS. There is no effort to examine the impact of extended day.

Recommendations:

- Conduct a thorough item analysis and subgroup analysis to determine the causes of underperformance in ELA and create a strategic instructional plan for ELA based on data. The data should be reviewed from year-to-year across cohorts with instructional needs adjusted accordingly.
- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of school-wide grade level achievement data. The school should have a dedicated data specialist to analyze and archive all school data, including internal, external, NYCDOE, and NYSED information. This staff member should have regular articulation periods with all teachers, guidance counselors, parents and students.
- Compare teacher assigned grades to student performance levels on standardized tests to ensure aligned and academic rigor.
- Create or acquire internal formative and summative assessments for all departments and all grade levels and administer them throughout the school year. These assessments should be rigorous and aligned with NYS Standards.
- The data specialist should have regular PD sessions for the staff on the use of data to impact instruction. This data specialist should have the capacity to perform all of these functions upon initiation of the role. The data specialist should have mastery of instructional practices in all content areas and behavior management strategies in order to demonstrate and model the practice of the use of data for instructional change. The data specialist should have the ability to build capacity within the school to enable all teachers to independently access and effectively use data.
- Develop a system to identify at-risk learners and provide an AIS program to meet the needs of these students. These interventions should be programmed into the course of the student's regular schedule. Extended day should be monitored for effectiveness and increased student outcomes. A dedicated, highly effective AIS teacher with a certification in ELA should be hired.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- PD on standards-based instruction in ELA has not been provided. The school's historic performance on the ELA exam is low.
- The school does not use the available non-instructional staff and common planning time to engage staff in on-site PD during school hours.
- Staff is inappropriately held accountable for implementing PD that has the least potential impact on student achievement, for example, bulletin boards. PD offerings are too wide-ranging and do not target specific areas of need, such as ELA.

Recommendations:

- ELA teachers and other content area representatives should participate in an Inquiry Team led by the data specialist to conduct an item analysis and identify performance trends in ELA. They should map out the delivery of standards-based instruction to address the identified areas. The school should provide PD on the creation of standards-based lesson plans designed to close the achievement gap and move large numbers of students to grade level or above. The school should establish goals for ELA based on substantial incremental growth models.
- Available common planning time and non-instructional staff should be used to facilitate the delivery of PD during the school day.
- PD sessions should be focused on the school's identified area of need, ELA. The school leaders should narrow the offerings to no more than three major initiatives, such as standards-based instruction, differentiated instruction and AIS. The school should require teachers to commit to the implementation of the training, monitor for implementation, and hold teachers accountable by keeping accurate documentation. School leaders should conduct walkthroughs and informal observations that narrowly target newly learned strategies and pedagogy.

VII. District Support**Findings:**

- The Network has not provided the school with needed support for ELA, ELLs, or the use of data to provide targeted standards-based instruction.
- The Network has not communicated a clear set of priorities or provided sufficient guidance to improve the academic program.
- The CEP is not well written and does not provide a clear plan for school improvement. The Network approved the school CEP and provided no meaningful feedback to the school. Three of the action plans within the CEP are identical.

Recommendations

- The Network should establish weekly visits to the school that should include monitoring of standards based ELA instruction, effective and appropriate delivery of ESL services and the use of data in instructional planning. The Principal should be proactive in informing the Network when they are not meeting the needs of the school and seek outside support and expertise when the Network is unable to assist.
- The Network should communicate a set of priorities within the school and provide guidance to the school to improve their academic performance. The Network should take a proactive approach with mentoring the first year Principal and should be responsive to the school's needs to address ELA and ELLs.
- The Network should provide school leaders and the SLT with support and guidance in the creation of the CEP. The Network should ensure that a timeline including interim benchmarks is incorporated within the CEP. The Network should provide PD on standards based ELA instruction and the use of data for instructional planning.

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

PART 3: JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM OVERALL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Overall Findings

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

B. Overall Recommendation

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

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

Develop and implement a Restructuring Plan that includes changes in the allocation of staff, produces a written curriculum with an emphasis on standards-based ELA instruction across all content areas, and provides appropriate support for ELLs. This should include ongoing, focused mentoring for the school's Principal to allow her to identify priorities and focus on the areas of school improvement that will yield dramatic improvements in student achievement.

- Recruit and hire a coach/mentor for the Principal who will allocate a minimum of one day per week at the school in order to assist in strategic planning and prioritization, shadow the Principal to ensure effectiveness, facilitate cabinet meetings, and observe instruction. The coach/mentor should have been or be a successful urban middle school Principal with expertise in turnaround and ELA improvement.
- Develop and implement a new Restructuring plan in which the school leader re-evaluates teacher programs to ensure that every teacher has a full program within their license of expertise. Reduce the number of non-teaching staff to allow the school to hire an ESL teacher/ELL coordinator and a literacy coach who would also provide Academic Intervention Services.
- Recruit and hire (a data specialist with the capacity to lead the school to high academic achievement for all students. The data specialist should have mastery of instructional practices in all content areas and behavior management strategies. The data specialist should be held accountable for ensuring that all teachers can independently collect, analyze and use data to plan targeted standards-based instruction.

- Recruit and hire an ELA coach who has the proven track record of increasing student achievement in ELA for all subgroups.
- The Network should oversee the implementation of the recommendations of JIT review and ensure that mentoring is having positive effect on academic performance of all students in ELA, that PD is focused on the school's areas of highest need, and that the new curriculum is rigorously implemented.
- The school should create an AIS program that is part of the students' regularly programmed day. The school should extend the responsibilities of the IEP teacher to include becoming the AIS coordinator and provider.
- Due to the high number of students performing at low levels in ELA, the school should create a culture of urgency for improvement that is clearly articulated to teachers, parents and students.