

NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code/DBN:	10X390
School Name:	MS 390
School Address:	1930 Andrews Avenue Bronx, NY 10453
Principal:	Robert Mercedes
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring Advanced Comprehensive
Area(s) of Identification:	English Language Arts- All Students; Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners; and Economically Disadvantaged
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	April 12 – 13, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Community and School Background

Middle School 390 serves 577 students in grades 5 through 8. The school enrollment is 79 percent Hispanic and 21 percent Black students. Of these students, 30 percent are English language learners (ELLs), and 21 percent are students with disabilities.

The school administrative team includes the Principal, two Assistant Principals (APs), a mathematics coach and an English language arts (ELA) coach. The Principal is serving in his 11th year, along with APs who have served for seven and four years, respectively. There are 49 teachers on the school staff. Of these teachers, two are new and seven have been at the school for between one and three years. Of these teachers, 88 percent are highly qualified. Teacher turnover rate is 18 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	
-	Negative trend data for one or more identified subject/areas and subgroups for the past two consecutive years (2007-08 and 2008-09), as indicated by a decrease in the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 and/or a decrease in the Performance Index.	✓
-	School is ten or more points away from meeting its Effective Annual Measurable Objective (EAMO) for one or more identified subgroups in subject/area(s) of identification.	✓

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
-	Performance data for the school on NYSED Accountability Overview Reports (AOR) for 2007-08 and 2008-09 show an increase in the number of subgroups that did not make AYP in identified area(s).	✓
-	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 <u>All Students</u> subgroup in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓
NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures		
+	2008-09 NYC Progress Report Grade of C	✓
+	NYC Quality Review Score of Well developed 07/08	✓

B. School Strengths

- The school uses a variety of data sources to assess student performance and to group students for instruction. Data binders were present and up-to-date in all classrooms visited.
- The school's wide variety of extracurricular arts and sports activities are well attended.

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:

Although the school has a comprehensive ELA curriculum, it has not been modified to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Recommendations:

School leaders should work with the Network to adjust the ELA curriculum to meet the specific learning needs of students with disabilities. This revised curriculum should be taught across the school by all teachers. School leaders should monitor and evaluate the impact of the new curriculum in meeting the academic needs of students with disabilities.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- Teacher conferencing in ELA classes lacks a protocol for assessment of student work. Teachers did not use assessment documentation during their conferencing with students.

- Classroom management techniques observed were not consistent, and this leads to disruption in some classrooms and a loss of instructional time.
- Observations of Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) classes revealed inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. Some teachers successfully engaged in co-teaching while in other classes the general education teacher dominated the instruction and the teacher for students with disabilities merely observed.
- Student grouping in many ELA classes did not demonstrate differentiation. Students were often asked to complete the same task, and work did not meet the needs of students at different instructional levels. This was the case for both the more able students and for students with disabilities.
- Some ELA teachers spent excessive time on direct, whole-group instruction that results in less time being allocated for small group or differentiated instruction. In some ELL classes, students were not on task because the work was not challenging enough for them.
- The bell schedule only allows for one minute pass time between classes in grades 6 through 8, even though it is a large building and classrooms are spread over four floors. This leads to a loss of instructional time every period because students arrive late.
- Observations of ELA and ELL classes revealed limited evidence of accountable talk when students worked in groups. In many lessons, there was an abundance of teacher talk and too little student participation.
- Too few ELA teachers used higher level questioning strategies in their lessons. Most questions required students to provide one word answers or recall simple facts rather than challenging the students to make inferences or draw conclusions. This was equally the case for general education, students with disabilities and ELL classes.
- The rubrics displayed with student work did not clearly show how students could improve their work or what was needed to reach the next level. Teachers do not consistently provide opportunities for students to use rubrics to assess their own work or that of classmates. This restricts students in playing a more proactive role in the learning process.
- Teachers were observed using SMART Boards as overhead projectors instead of using the technological capabilities of this teaching tool to engage students and make technology part of their instructional program. Many students were observed using laptops. However, most of them were doing word processing or research on the Internet and not using software applications that would prepare them for high school, college and careers.

Recommendations:

- School staff should develop an assessment form for teachers to use during conferencing. This should be used to assess student work, enabling teachers to determine what students know and what they need to learn next. A template for students should be created so that students can learn how to have a conversation that is productive and meets the objectives of the assignment.

- The Principal, with Network support, should ensure that professional development (PD) is provided on a differentiated basis for those teachers who struggle with classroom management and control. Teachers should implement strategies learned through PD, and school leaders should observe lessons to gauge the effectiveness of the use of the strategies. Additional support and PD should be provided for those teachers who continue to struggle.
- The CTT teachers should receive PD in co-teaching to ensure that they understand the model. Time should be provided for teachers to plan together, and school leaders should informally and formally observe these teachers to determine whether or not they are engaging in the correct co-teaching model.
- School leaders, with Network support, should provide PD for teachers to focus specifically on strategies and procedures to improve differentiated learning in the classroom. Teachers should be provided with a model of what good differentiation looks like and how data should be used to help plan and deliver differentiated instruction to meet the academic needs of all students, including students with disabilities and ELLs. Expectations should be made clear to teachers that this PD is to transfer into all classrooms. School leaders should regularly monitor teacher planning and observe ELA and ELL classes frequently to determine if the work is challenging enough for all students.
- The Principal, APs, ELA coach and selected ELA teachers should receive PD from an expert in the workshop model to gain the knowledge necessary to implement it properly. These staff members should then serve as turnkey trainers to assist all ELA teachers, general education teachers and those responsible for students with disabilities. The focus should be on developing skills such as pacing, mini-lessons, conferencing and reporting. School leaders should evaluate the impact of this work in the classroom.
- The Principal should consider revising the bell schedule to provide sufficient time for students to promptly arrive for lessons. School leaders and teachers should ensure that although additional time is provided, there is an urgency to ensure that all lessons start on time with the maximum number of students present.
- Teachers should provide students with more opportunities to work in groups and to be regularly involved in accountable talk activities. Teachers should monitor the activities and provide additional guidance and support when appropriate. Teachers should attend training that equips them with the skills and techniques that encourage more student-to-student interactions. School leaders should monitor this practice and include comments about it in their routine observation reports.
- PD on higher level questioning techniques from a Network specialist or an outside consultant should be considered in order to teach students to extend their thinking and improve their literacy skills. The techniques learned should be applied consistently in the classroom, and the use of higher order questioning should be a focus for school leaders' observations.
- School leaders should provide PD for identified teachers on how to best use rubrics as a vehicle for helping students improve their work. The PD should focus on providing clear and concise feedback for students to help them step up to the next level. The PD should also concentrate on how teachers can best help students become better learners by using self and peer assessment

strategies. School leaders should talk to students about the effectiveness of teacher feedback and how confident and skilled they are at carrying out peer and self assessment.

- Teachers should receive training in the use of SMART Boards as an instructional tool to increase student engagement and to learn how technology can enhance student learning. The school should purchase software applications that students can use during instruction in ELA and other subjects to help better prepare them for college or the world of work.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- There was insufficient evidence that the Principal sets high enough expectations for students and staff. The Principal stated that evidence of his high expectations were art displays in the halls, his ability to leave the building without worrying and sharing research with the staff. There is not a strong enough focus on significantly and rapidly improving the academic growth and achievement of students at Levels 1 and 2. .
- School leaders do not set high enough expectations for student behavior, and procedures for managing student behavior are not working well. Teachers and parents interviewed stated that the school leaders do not discipline students in a consistent manner. Students scream and curse in the halls and stairways during passing, and teachers reported that students do not respect them and often use inappropriate language in class. Observations revealed that the school safety agents (SSA) stayed in one spot and did not patrol the stairways during passing or make many attempts to correct student behavior during passing. Teachers and students both attributed the decline in student behavior to the elimination of the positions of two deans three years ago. The Principal provided PD for social and emotional learning that he believed would lead to improved student behavior by having classroom teachers take a greater role in dealing with student behavior. However, a review of data indicated that the suspension rate increased from three percent to seven percent from 2009 to 2010, and this year the suspension rate is higher than last year for the first seven months of the school year.
- Even though 81 percent of the students are in Levels 1 and 2 in ELA, the school does not provide Academic Intervention Services (AIS). The CEP indicates that AIS services are being provided for 22 students in grades 5 and 7, but the review team did not find any evidence of this. The Principal stated that ELA teachers should be providing AIS when they group for differentiated instruction. In half of the classes observed, students in these ability groups worked on the same assignments and materials. The lack of AIS services hinders the school's ability to accelerate student growth and meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). There was no evidence of push-in or pull-out reading instruction. Although a push-in reading teacher was listed in the budget, no such position existed in the school.
- The Principal does not ensure that the provision of instruction for ELLs and students with disabilities is overseen by APs or other key leaders.
- School leaders do not ensure that all students are provided with the necessary program or instruction during the school day to take the Regents exam. Currently students have to attend a

three-hour after-school session to acquire enough laboratory minutes to take the Living Environment Regents.

- A review of the school's PD documentation indicated that many of the PD workshops offered to staff were not aligned with the instructional needs of students or staff. Few workshops provided strategies for ELA teachers or teachers of students with disabilities in dealing with below grade level readers or the identified subgroups. The Principal provides much of the PD himself. He stated that he has the qualifications to do so, but the review findings indicate that he determined the topics without canvassing the staff to identify their PD needs.
- The school does not have a Schools against Violence in Education (SAVE) room.
- A review of documentation revealed that not all English as a second language (ESL) and bilingual students are receiving their entitled required minutes of instruction. Some students receive 180 minutes instead of the required 360 minutes per week.
- An analysis of data for students with disabilities revealed that five annual reviews and seven initial assessments were not completed within the required timeframe. Additionally, three students are not receiving required speech services, one student is not receiving required counseling and one student is not receiving physical therapy.
- The procedures the Principal uses for monitoring teaching and learning are not successful or effective in bringing about sustained improvement in teacher performance. A review of the Principal's formal observation reports revealed he had only performed 11 formal observations, during the first seven and a half months of the school year. An analysis of the observation reports written by the Principal showed that where he judged teaching as unsatisfactory, the language he used in the report was not strong enough to warrant an unsatisfactory rating. Additionally, the recommendations were superficial and not focused on assisting teachers to improve their practice in working with below-grade-level students.

Recommendations:

- The Principal should set high expectations for student and staff performance and publicize these expectations throughout the school community during the school year. The school should set challenging goals that focus on accelerating the achievement of the 81 percent of the students at Levels 1 and 2. . The goals should have benchmarks, success criteria and assessment indicators, and progress towards the stated goals should be closely monitored by school leaders and the Network.
- The school should consider reinstating the dean position to help teachers deal with students exhibiting inappropriate behavior so that instructional time is maximized. The school leaders should be visible in the halls and stairways during passing to monitor student behavior. Teachers and other available staff should be directed to stand in the hall during passing to ensure that students proceed to their next class in an orderly manner. Appropriate consequences should be imposed upon students violating the school's discipline policy. School leaders should ensure that they and teachers consistently and fairly implement the school's discipline policy.

- AIS instructional services should be provided to students in Levels 1 and 2 in ELA so that these students receive additional seat time and support to accelerate their growth. PD should be provided to assist teachers with strategies for accelerating the growth of Level 1 and 2 students.
- The Principal, with Network support, should ensure that supervision of services and provision of instruction for ELL students and for students with disabilities is delegated to the school's APs. Initial and ongoing PD should be provided as a matter of urgency to enable the APs to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities.
- The school leaders should make arrangements for students to acquire the necessary laboratory minutes during the school day to enable them to take the Living Environment Regents. Once established, these arrangements should be available to all future students taking Regents.
- School leaders should develop a PD plan that focuses on the needs of the identified subgroups in ELA and takes into account the differentiated needs of teachers. The school leaders, with the support of the Network, should assess the professional needs of teachers and match training to the identified needs. The Principal should use Network specialists and outside consultants to provide PD to assist the teachers in accelerating the growth of Level 1 and 2 students. PD offerings should also assist teachers in suitably challenging the higher performing students.
- The school should establish a SAVE room to allow teachers to maximize instructional time.
- The school leaders should review the schedules of ESL and bilingual students to ensure that every student receives the required number of minutes each week. School leaders should monitor practice closely to ensure that students receive their required instruction.
- The Principal should assign the responsibility of supervising the Pupil Personnel Team (PPT) and teachers of students with disabilities to one of the two APs. This AP should create and convene a weekly compliance committee to review all appropriate documentation and take the necessary steps to ensure that assessments and related service provision meet regulations. In addition, the AP should ensure that all reviews are conducted within the prescribed timeline and that all services stated in the Individual Educational Plans (IEP) are provided.
- The Principal should formally observe all general education and students with disabilities teachers during ELA so that he obtains a better understanding of teacher practice, the amount of true differentiation that is taking place and student performance. The Principal should write observation reports that focus on providing high quality recommendations that will inform teacher practice and help accelerate the growth of all students. The Principal should ask the Network for a mentor with an ELA background to assist him in improving the quality of recommendations given to teachers in their observation reports.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- The school has many small classrooms that are not large enough to accommodate the 32 students who are programmed to attend. Stairwells are narrow and congested, and little adult supervision was observed, which created a potential safety hazard.

- Staff expectations are not high enough to ensure that all students reach their potential. Higher performing students are not provided with challenging academic tasks and with materials that are rigorous enough to raise their performance level. A social studies teacher stated that she used below-grade reading material so that all students can understand it.
- Interviews with teachers and students as well the Learning Environment Survey (LES) revealed that the school behavior policy is not implemented consistently. Teachers feel that consequences are not enforced.
- The cluster teachers have not been scheduled to attend grade-level meetings. This limits their ability to articulate with classroom teachers about students' needs and behaviors and to have a greater impact on student achievement
- The Saturday program run by a CBO does not have certified teachers conducting academic activities; it employs volunteer college students without proper training. There is no articulation between the Saturday program staff and the classroom teachers.
- There is a low level of participation at Parent Association meetings as evidenced by an average attendance of 10 - 12 parents per month.
- Progress reports do not provide next steps for students to improve their learning outcomes, thereby preventing parents from knowing what they can do to help their child improve.
- An interview with the parent coordinator revealed that she conducts only one survey in September. This limits the participation of parents on an ongoing basis with regard to school improvement and the education of their children.

Recommendations:

- School leaders should ensure that small classrooms are appropriately programmed and that adequately sized classroom accommodation is programmed for larger groups of students. The Principal should ensure that stairwells are properly supervised by teachers and other support staff.
- School leaders should make clear to all staff the high expectations that are needed across the school to improve student achievement. School leaders should regularly restate these expectations, and through meetings at all levels and observation of classroom practice ensure that teachers transform these expectations into reality. The Principal, in coordination with the SLT, should immediately develop a comprehensive instructional AIS plan targeted to address the specific needs of all ELLs, students with disabilities and at-risk students. The school should purchase appropriate materials that differentiate instruction and provide the necessary rigorous and continuous PD to improve the performance of these students. This should be supported by monitoring, assessment, and modification of practices.
- The Principal, in collaboration with all the staff, and with the support of the Network, should train the school staff in the consistent implementation of the school's behavior policy. The behavior policy should be revised as needed. The particular social emotional needs of students with disabilities should be taken into account in the development and implementation of this plan.

- The school should schedule cluster teachers to regularly attend grade-level meetings so that they can effectively articulate with classroom teachers. The agreed outcomes of these meetings should be targeted towards improving teaching, learning and student achievement.
- The school should ensure that sufficient funds are available to staff the Saturday program with AIS teachers with a strong background in ELA curriculum and best practices. The school should ensure that there is better articulation between these teachers and classroom teachers so that the program is successful at bringing about significant improvement in student outcomes.
- The school should conduct a survey of parents to ascertain changes that could be put into effect to enhance parent participation. The administrative team should consider the flexible timing of meetings to address the personal obligations that parents have and incorporate their concerns within the agenda of monthly meetings. The Principal should seek the support of the Network in developing strategies to increase parental participation.
- The school should ensure that PD is provided to enable teachers to better incorporate next steps in student progress reports, so that parents can play a more active role in supporting and enhancing their child's learning and academic achievement needs.
- The school leaders should work with the parent coordinator to ensure that parents are regularly surveyed on topics of concern. Parents should have an ongoing role in modifying and adjusting school practices that impact student achievement.

V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- Data is not being used to drive differentiated instruction or to ensure that work is matched to the diverse academic needs of the students. Level 1 and Level 2 tiered instructional materials and activities were the same as Levels 3 and 4 in most classes observed. The Principal stated that differentiation of instruction in the classrooms meets the identified needs of the students, but observations did not substantiate this claim.
- School leaders and teachers do not ensure that the outcomes of tests and assessments are analyzed rigorously and that the information is used to guide or amend instruction and learning. ELA assessment scores declined from September to February. The pre- and post-test data analysis for all grades for ELA assessments revealed that the instructional strategies implemented in the classrooms were not effective in increasing academic performance and achievement or in addressing the drop in assessment scores.

Recommendations:

- The school leaders, with Network support, should provide PD for all teachers in making effective use of data to guide and inform instruction. The PD should ensure that instructional strategies meet the individual levels of all students to promote academic achievement and progress. AIS supports should be made available to all students with disabilities, ELLs and at-risk students who have been identified as not meeting the State performance levels in ELA. School leaders should follow up the training with regular observations to ensure that differentiation is commonplace in the classroom and is leading to better student learning and achievement.

- The school leader should plan staff development workshops aimed at a deeper analysis of test and assessment data and ensure that instruction reflects the outcomes of any changes in achievement levels. School leaders should ensure that instruction in the classroom accurately matches the academic levels of the students and, where data indicates a rise or fall in standards, instruction is modified accordingly.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- PD for teachers of ELLs and students with disabilities centers on compliance issues rather than improving instructional practices for ELA. Teachers received little PD from the literacy coach to assist them in accelerating the growth of students.
- School leaders did not provide follow-up strategies and recommendations to teachers who attended PD sessions, according to interviews and an examination of the PD binder.
- Feedback from teachers on the quality of PD provided was not evident in the PD binder provided by the school leader.
- There was little PD provided relating to classroom management techniques and strategies.

Recommendations:

- PD strategies should be provided by an ELA content specialist to all teachers serving ELLs, students with disabilities and all students who have been identified as at-risk. PD sessions should address instructional practices to improve teaching and learning for these students. In addition, an ongoing staff development program should be provided to support mentoring, modeling, planning and developing effective instructional strategies to improve outcomes for students at risk. School leaders should assess the impact of the PD in the classroom.
- The school leaders should make it clear to all staff that strategies acquired through PD offerings should be implemented as a matter of course in the classroom. School leaders should make this a focus of classroom observations and provide further additional support, guidance and recommendations to teachers. The primary focus of PD should be bringing about sustained improvement in instruction.
- The school leaders should develop effective mechanisms for collecting feedback from staff on the quality of the PD events they attend. School leaders should use this information to plan future PD, to match future PD accurately to the needs of students and teachers, and to assess how well it works in improving student achievement in ELA.
- The school leaders should, with Network support, provide PD workshops to promote classroom management techniques and strategies so that student achievement increases and the suspension rate decreases. School leaders should observe lessons to gauge if student behavior improves as a direct result of the PD.

VII. Network Support

Findings:

- The overall support provided by the Network has not focused sufficiently on improving ELA student achievement as its main priority.
- The Network has not adequately monitored the school allocation of funds used to support school improvement, as evidenced by the school's lack of AIS services.
- The Network has not provided adequate guidance to support the school's academic program. The budget listed a push-in reading teacher. This position was not on the school's organization sheet. One teacher teaches a reduced schedule and does administrative work for more than half the time. The first year ELA Coach was a bilingual teacher and does not have English or reading certification.

Recommendations:

- The Network should provide a greater focus and assistance on improving student performance in ELA by analyzing the ELA data and helping the school design a comprehensive PD program that addresses the needs of students and staff. This plan should focus on successful instructional strategies for accelerating the growth of Level 1 and 2 students. The PD program should be research-based and be implemented as soon as possible.
- The Network Leader should review the school's budget with the Principal and work with him to reallocate funds so that students receive the needed AIS services in ELA during the school day in small group settings. The Network Leader should help the Principal make budgetary decisions that reduce the number of non-teaching staff members and increase teaching periods so that students receive the necessary ELA instructional support.
- The Network should provide assistance in helping the Principal allocate funds in a way that addresses the needs of all students.
- The Network should support the school in the implementation of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) recommendations.

Other Concerns:

- The Principal, two APs and the ELA coach do not have a background in ELA.
- The two APs do not have a background in students with disabilities.
- No school leader is directly responsible for ELLs or students with disabilities.
- The ESL teacher is an F-status teacher filling a vacancy. There is a vacancy for a Crisis Management paraprofessional position. There is also a speech vacancy.

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 school should develop a comprehensive academic plan to provide AIS services to the identified students.
- The school should hire an ELA coach with certification in reading or ELA. School leaders should undertake training in ELA to give them a better understanding of the school’s weaknesses in this key area of learning.
- An AP should be given the responsibility for supervising the students with disabilities program and be provided with initial and ongoing PD to enable the role to be carried out in an effective manner.
- An AP should be given the responsibility for supervising the ELL program and provided with initial and ongoing PD to enable the role to be carried out in an effective manner.
- The school should hire an experienced reading teacher, and the work of the teacher should be closely evaluated for its impact on improving student achievement in ELA.
- The Principal should assess the school funding and develop a budget that seeks to reinstate the dean position.
- The Principal should schedule laboratory hours during the school day to enable students to earn enough laboratory minutes to sit the Regents.
- The school should establish a SAVE room.
- School leaders should create a structured PD plan that meets the needs of all students and staff.

- The Network should provide a mentor to assist the Principal in assessing the instructional needs of all students, improving his lesson observational skills, making more effective use of data, making best use of financial and human resources, all with the intention of improving instruction, learning and student achievement.
- The Principal should ensure that SSAs properly monitor student behavior during passing.