

**NYSED/ BUFFALO CSD JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

<b>BEDS Code:</b>	140600010130
<b>School Name:</b>	PS 30 Frank A. Sedita School
<b>School Address:</b>	21 Lowell Place Buffalo, New York 14213
<b>Principal:</b>	Wanda Schoenfeld
<b>Restructuring Phase/Category:</b>	Restructuring Advanced Comprehensive
<b>Area(s) of Identification:</b>	English Language Arts- All students; Hispanic students; and Economically Disadvantaged
<b>Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:</b>	February 8-11, 2011

**PART 1: INTRODUCTION**

**A. Community and School Background**

PS 30, the Frank A. Sedita School, serves 741 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school enrollment is 71 percent Hispanic, 19 percent Black, five percent White, three percent Asian, two percent American-Indian and one percent Multiracial. Of these students, 41 percent are English language learners (ELLs) and 22 percent students with disabilities. The District enrollment office places students based on parent choice with preference given to siblings of current students and students who live within the attendance boundary of the school.

The current Principal has a total of 11 years of experience as an administrator and was assigned to PS 30 three years ago to replace the retiring principal. The leadership team includes two Assistant Principals (APs), a literacy coach, a mathematics coach and a Response to Intervention (RTI) coach. There are 78 teachers, 15 teacher assistants and 23 teaching aides in the school. Over 43 percent of the teachers hold a master's degree or higher. On average, teachers have worked in the school more than five years; currently there is one new teacher in the school.

**PART 2: ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

**A. Performance on Key Indicators of Student Achievement Trends and School Progress**

<b>Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)</b>	<b>School Performance Indicators</b>	✓
	<b>NYSED Quantitative Performance Measures</b>	
-	Negative trend data for one or more identified subject/areas and subgroups for the past two consecutive years, 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	✓

<b>Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)</b>	<b>School Performance Indicators</b>	✓
	identification.	
-	Performance data for the school on NYSED Accountability Overview Reports (AOR) for the past two consecutive years show an increase in the number of subgroups that did not make Adequate Yearly progress (AYP) in identified area(s).	✓
-	Performance data for the school on NYSED Accountability Overview Reports (AOR) for the past two consecutive years indicate an increase in the achievement gap between identified subgroups and the <b><u>All Students</u></b> subgroup in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓

## B. School Strengths

- The District has provided the school with a standards-based curriculum in all core subjects, including English as a Second Language (ESL), Native Language Arts (NLA) and Spanish as-a-Second Language (SSL), with corresponding pacing calendars and instructional guidelines. The District has provided resources and made it possible for the school to offer two advanced grade 8 science and mathematics courses: Regents Living Environment and Regents Algebra.
- The school is one of the five sites selected by the New York State Department of Education to pilot the new RTI Model that the school has integrated into its literacy intervention plan to raise the achievement of struggling students.
- The school has a safe and welcoming environment and maintains a culture of discipline, respect and positive attitudes that validate student language and culture and is conducive to student academic learning and the arts. The tone of collegiality is the result of a collective effort of faculty, students and parents to implement the Positive Behavioral Interventions System (PBIS), now in its third year. It is also the outcome of the work of the cultural and community organizations that partner with the school in offering after school and Saturday programs to help students overcome those non-academic barriers that often prevent them from achieving success.

## 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:**

In English Language Arts (ELA), the school is managing several curricula — English, ESL, NLA and SSL. There is a need for better alignment among these curricula, and learning objectives, particularly as they impact the instruction of ELLs and potential Level 3 and 4 students.

**Recommendations:**

Use backward planning to develop units of study that share the same objectives across the English, NLA, ESL, and SSL programs, while incorporating instructional and learning strategies that support individual student needs. In addition, backward planning should be used to develop units of study tailored to the needs of Students with Interrupted Education (SIFE). Although the goals should be the same, these students benefit from an experiential approach to learning. Teacher attention to real-life experiences should be used as a source of knowledge in creating reading and writing material that they can use to develop literacy skills. These students also benefit from multimedia opportunities, including recording their own stories, writing from those stories, audio books and the translation options that are available through computer software such as web 2.0.

**II. Teaching and Learning****Findings:**

- In general, classroom teachers demonstrated familiarity with the curriculum, and pacing calendar. Lessons had elements of differentiation and elements of explicit instruction. These practices, however, were not consistent from classroom to classroom and from grade to grade, as evidenced by teacher feedback not always being corrective or effective. There was an apparent narrow scope of ESL strategies and a lack of extension activities for advanced students.
- While instructional grouping was observed within the kindergarten through grade 6 classrooms, there was little differentiation and small group instruction in ELA, social studies, science and mathematics in grades 7 and 8, where only whole group lessons were observed. In addition, students in grade 8 who enroll in the Regents science and mathematics courses travel together all day after first period ELA. Observations in bilingual classrooms where instruction was in Spanish found that groupings and differentiation was unselective, spontaneous and not appropriately planned.
- There is some evidence that teachers use rubrics to guide student written work, as evidenced by writing displayed on bulletin boards. However, the evidence also reflects inconsistencies in the quality of this work. Qualitative differences in rigor, relevance and complexity across classrooms, programs and grades were observed.
- There was no evidence of a uniform grading policy, although teachers interviewed reported that there are grade-specific guidelines.

**Recommendations:**

- Provide teachers with ongoing PD in the use of explicit instruction methodology. Enhance teacher instructional strategy repertoire and increase academic rigor in the classroom through focused learning walks of teacher groups, in addition to feedback from daily walkthroughs conducted by the administrators.
- Provide teachers with the necessary support to ensure that ELLs learn content through ESL strategies that promote the development of English and the acquisition of content knowledge, as well as the acquisition of learning strategies to further their study and independent learning skills.

Develop teacher planning time around well structured observations and follow up discussions in classrooms designated as 'lab sites.' Planning teams could be across grades and even across

subjects, but observations should have one single focus, such as the use of context clues in reading.

- Assign the literacy and RTI coaches responsibility for identifying and sharing best practices in the school to enrich teacher expertise and build capacity.
- Review the current literacy curriculum to ensure that the writing component is supported by student exemplars from within the school and elsewhere. Use these exemplars to develop task specific rubrics and to promote student independence as learners.
- Develop a coherent, schoolwide grading policy to add rigor to lesson plans, homework, and formative assessments. Ensure the participation of students, teachers, and parents in the definition of the grading policy, its adoption, and its effective implementation.

### **III. School Leadership**

#### **Findings:**

- The use of teacher time and student time in the middle school is inconsistently structured and does not respond to the needs of bilingual students in receiving content area instruction in their native language and ESL. Daily announcements are made during the first period of the day causing loss of critical instructional time.
- Bilingual classrooms have fewer instructional resources, textbooks, library books, and teaching materials than regular education classrooms.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Review and improve the middle school schedule based on student needs. Ensure that all teachers implement the new schedule so that the all students can consistently receive content area instruction in their native language as well as in English as a Second Language.
- Make daily announcements during the breakfast or during homeroom, but not during instructional time.
- Ensure that all bilingual classrooms are appropriately equipped with student textbooks, teaching guides, student materials and instructional resources.
- Provide each student with the necessary core content textbooks in Spanish, where necessary.

### **IV. Infrastructure for Student Success**

#### **Findings:**

- High expectations and academic rigor were evident in the elementary classrooms, but not in the middle school. In the middle school, students were observed being distracted and/or engaged in low- level work. Similarly, some teachers delivered lessons that did not respond to the needs of the students and/or did not follow the curriculum. Student journals showed that students write regularly, but teachers do not review them or provide written feedback.

- Students were observed using the library media center (LMC) in small groups as well as individually, and the librarian was directly instructing students. However, interviews indicated that the resources in the LMC are underutilized due to lack of a full-time staff and student schedules.
- The Principal and her team have implemented varied strategies to improve parent participation in the school, including providing a parent facilitator. The school also uses a phone system to keep parents informed of school activities and events that are planned to attract more parents. Evidence indicates a gradual increase in parent participation, except in cases of newly arrived families that constitute a growing percentage of the enrollment.

**Recommendations:**

- Take the necessary steps to ensure that teachers are held accountable for lessons that are academically rigorous and relevant. In addition, lessons should be aligned to the curriculum and based on student needs. Student work should also be relevant, challenging and appropriate. Consider establishing an advisory program for students in grades 6 through 8 to give students a time and a place when they can find the support of the advisee to discuss academic and non-academic needs.
- Review the library collection to determine if there are sufficient Spanish language texts and resources.
- Use the library resources to further develop student's independence as learners through activities that promote academic rigor and study habits.
- Expand the partnership with Closing the Gap, the Northwest Buffalo Community Center, the University of Buffalo and other organizations

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

**Findings:**

In general, the school analyzes schoolwide and grade-level student performance trend data that is shared and discussed at the elementary teacher grade level meetings. This data is used to systematically place or remove students from reading interventions. Despite these efforts, there was little evidence that teachers systematically collect, record, and analyze formative assessment data for each student to inform lesson planning. In addition, neither students nor teachers offered evidence that student data is systematically discussed with students to develop student goals, and/or keep a student portfolio to hold students accountable and develop independent learners.

**Recommendation:**

Provide ongoing PD to improve teacher skill in data analysis and then support teachers in using the results of the data analysis to plan instructional lessons.

**VI. Professional Development**

**Findings:**

The school administration is supportive of teachers' PD and there are ample opportunities to attend training outside the school, but the school has not promoted distributed leadership to further build capacity.

**Recommendations:**

- Engage teachers in structured professional collaborations to promote shared leadership and knowledge. The school should consider this approach to further teachers’ skills in co-teaching and to identify student strategies that promote the achievement of potential Level 3 and 4 students.
- Promote professional study groups and book groups among faculty. For example, teachers of Spanish Native Language Arts would benefit from a study group on Spanish novels to enrich their proficiency in the language and vocabulary skills to improve their teaching.
- Provide additional training to all teachers in sheltered instruction and/or teaching content areas instruction through English to ELLs to improve instructional strategies of classroom teachers as well as ESL teachers.

**VII. District Support**

**Findings:**

- In the middle school, bilingual students receive social studies and science instruction from teachers without bilingual licenses. Students in the Regents classes are homogeneously grouped for most of the day, and there are no set times for teacher planning and collaboration in the middle school.
- The number of newly registered SIFE students appears to indicate that the District placement office is placing many of these students at PS 30. Currently, 41 percent of the students are ELLs and an increasing number of these students are also SIFE. There are concerns about the capacity of the school to adequately meet the needs of all the students.

**Recommendations:**

- Provide the Principal and her team with the appropriate tools and expertise to develop a schedule that allows for appropriate instruction to all students, and also includes time for weekly advisories and teacher meetings.
- Review student placement policies at the District level to ensure that PS 30 does not enroll a disproportionate percentage of high need students for which it does not have adequate resources to meet their needs.
- Provide PS 30 with the human capital and funding resources necessary to be able to effectively respond to the needs of the ELL and SIFE students currently enrolled at the site.
- Provide support to the school in implementing the recommendations of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT).

**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)	Continue implementation of the current Restructuring Plan with <u>modifications</u> recommended as a result of the review.	✓

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

Evidence indicates that the school has made progress in ELA in all identified sub-groups, and that it may make AYP with further modification to the current Restructuring Plan. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) that the school continue implementing its current Restructuring Plan with the following modifications:

- **Review 2010-2011 School’s Comprehensive Educational Plan /Action Plan**  
 The school priority for 2010-11 is to improve ELA performance in 2011 based on “a schoolwide focus on vocabulary to help struggling students with literary elements, critical analysis and evaluation.” As a result of the JIT review, the following recommendations are made:

  - Expand the objectives of the action plan to include specific vocabulary strategies that promote reading habits in all students, particularly those students who have been targeted as potential Level 3 and 4 in the 2011 ELA test, including those students who achieved at the Advanced and Proficiency levels in the 2010 NYSESLAT.
  - Consider a schoolwide *Readathon* to promote reading habits across grades, languages and programs. The *Readathon* should be channeled through the Student Council and organized in collaboration with some school partners; such as Reading is Fundamental (RIF), the Northwest Buffalo Community Center, and/or the University. The participation of all classroom teachers is critical to the success of this schoolwide reading event. With the support of classroom teachers, students may want to have a reading portfolio to keep reading logs, vocabulary words and expressions, book reviews, lists of reading strategies, reflections and related activities. This portfolio may be instrumental to support students reading across subject areas, in more than one language, and reading at home.
  
- **Student Advisories For Students In Grades 6 through 8**  
 Consider establishing an advisory program for students in grades 6 to 8. This is an instructional component that can take various formats, but the purpose should be to give students a time and a place where they find the support of the advisee to discuss academic and non-academic needs that often result in the development of habits of mind that carry them throughout day. The organization of advisories usually requires the involvement of classroom and out of classroom teachers. In many schools with successful advisories, the Principal and the APs are also advisees to a small group of students. It is an instructional component of a student schedule and should be integrated into the regular school day.
  
- **Teacher Expectations And Teacher Accountability**  
 The Principal and administrative team should share the revised CEP goal and objectives with the faculty and partners and together develop a timeline for its implementation. The administrative team will follow-up with small group meetings to ascertain teacher interests and organize

collaborative teacher teams around potential Level 3 and 4 students and *Readathon* objectives. For example, there may be a team of 4-5 teachers identifying effective strategies to advance the reading and literacy skills of a target group of former bilingual students in grades 4 to 6 who have demonstrated the potential to achieve at Level 3 and 4 in the 2011 ELA test.

The Principal and her team will conduct focused walkthroughs and evaluations to document how teachers are responding to the action plan, provide the necessary on-site PD through the school coaches, and take decisive action, if necessary.

- **Full-Service School**

The Principal and administrative team have established effective partnerships with cultural and community organizations. Through these partnerships, the school is offering extensive on-site support to students in need during the day, and after school and Saturday activities, but there is a need to extend these supports to the families of these students. The school should consider expanding its partnership with a full-service partner organization, Closing the Gap, to develop a plan to gradually become a full-service school. As such, the school would offer on-site support and training to adults during the day, as well as adult education after school and/or during weekends.

- **District Support And Professional Development**

The District should provide the necessary support to the school leaders, teachers, parents and students toward meeting their schoolwide goals. To that purpose, the District should:

- provide the school leaders with expertise and resources in instructional scheduling;
- support the organization and implementation of Student Advisories in grades 6 to 8;
- provide training in sheltered instruction and/or teaching content areas instruction to all classroom and ESL teachers;
- support the development of a plan to make PS 30 a full-service school building; and
- support the review of the District's placement policies regarding ELL and SIFE students.