

NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code/DBN:	06M004
School Name:	PS 4 Duke Ellington
School Address:	500 West 160 th Street New York, NY 10032
Principal:	Delois White
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring Advanced Comprehensive
Areas of Identification:	English Language Arts- All Students; Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners; and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	February 15-16, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Community and School Background

PS 4 Duke Ellington School serves 703 students in pre-Kindergarten through grade 5. The student enrollment is ten percent Black and 90 percent Hispanic students. Of these students, 11 percent are students with disabilities and 45 percent are English language learners (ELLs).

The administrative team includes the Principal and three Assistant Principals (APs). The Principal has served the school for 13 years and the APs have served between five to eight years. There are 75 teachers on staff, only a few of whom are new. One teacher has been at the school for less than one year, and three teachers have been at the school between one and three years. The percentage of teachers reported as highly qualified is 95 percent. Teacher turnover rate is one 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 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.	✓

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 Adequate Yearly Progress (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 B	✓
+	NYC Quality Review Score of Proficient	✓

B. School Strengths

In teacher interviews and through direct classroom observation, teachers demonstrated strong commitment to the school and to their students.

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 written English language arts (ELA) curriculum is under developed and is not consistently aligned to the New York State (NYS) Standards in some grades and has no vertical alignment. There is no written curriculum for science and social studies. The school's approach to instruction is packaged and program-based and is not currently producing necessary improvements in teaching and learning.
- There are no agreed criteria for lesson plan components and expectations. Lesson plans do not consistently reference State Standards, thus they do not serve as an adequate guide for rigorous, standards-based instruction.
- The school's instructional resources are textbook series and, as they currently serve as the main curriculum, they restrict the students' mastery of State Standards.

Recommendations:

- The Network should work with the school on the development of curriculum in all core areas and ensure that it is aligned clearly with the current NYS Standards. The curriculum should be aligned to the new NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards in English language arts (ELA) and literacy and mathematics with a strong emphasis on supporting developing English Language Learners (ELL) 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 professional development (PD) on how to plan and implement a curriculum with rigor, as well as delivery methods that are student-centered. The curriculum should be relied upon as the basis for assessing the individual student mastery and progress. Walkthroughs and formal evaluations should include how well the teacher knows and implements the curriculum for the subjects being taught.

- The school leader should develop, share and monitor expected components for lesson planning that serve as a rigorous and coherent plan for instruction, align to State Standards, and meet identified student needs.
- Instructional materials should be evaluated and selected to ensure appropriate alignment to the newly redesigned curriculum and to meet the language and academic needs of all students. Textbooks should serve as one instructional tool, along with other print and electronic resources.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- There is a limited array of instructional strategies in use by teachers. The strategy most often used by teachers is differentiated groupings with skill-based packet work. Students are grouped regularly, based on weekly skill test analysis. This assessment is not aligned to State standard performance indicators and, therefore, the current basis for grouping and follow up instruction is ineffective.
- Although small group instruction is used throughout the grades, cooperative learning and conferencing is not occurring frequently enough to increase student engagement and academic rigor.
- School leaders do not effectively use goals to motivate students and staff or create a sense of urgency in addressing underachievement. Neither learning goals nor language goals were evident in observed classrooms, and students are unaware of NYS performance indicators in the core subjects.
- Students are not sufficiently engaged in meaningful activities to develop their critical thinking skills, and are most often engaged in drill and completion of packets.
- The predominant method of questioning students is question-answer. Students are not consistently encouraged to elaborate or to support their answers with evidence.
- The NYS English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) modality report data is not used to inform instructional planning. Forty-five percent of the students are ELLs and the underutilization of this data contributes to stagnant student growth and/or decline in student achievement.
- Rubrics examined revealed minimal alignment with State Standards and performance indicators. This does not sufficiently support the creation of high quality student work. Students are not using the rubrics to self-assess and thus are not building independence and an increased awareness of their own skill development.

Recommendations:

- A review of the school's current assessment instruments should be conducted to select alternate assessments that are more closely aligned to State Standards and performance indicators to better support the continuous progress of all students. Teachers should base their instruction on a variety of assessments, including NYSESLAT, ELA and mathematics State tests, and not just use *Accelerated Reader* results. Once these assessments have been analyzed, a range of instructional strategies should be implemented in all classrooms. These strategies should include teacher think alouds, co-constructions, the use of visuals, speech to print, effective scaffolding techniques, modeling, bridging, schema building, visualization, metacognition, and student self-assessment, leading to the creation of rigorous independent and collaborative student work.
- Ongoing, imbedded, and monitored PD should be provided for all teachers on grouping and assisted learning techniques, such as cooperative learning groups, flexible groupings, paired and partner groupings and conferencing.
- Teacher goals and student learning goals should be reflective of the State Standards. Teacher goals should match student achievement targets, and student goals should be a natural product of identified student learning needs.
- Interactive activities that enable students to build on their own prior knowledge should be introduced, thus enabling them to make connections between their own experiences and the wider world. Students should be challenged more to employ their creativity and develop critical thinking.
- Teachers should be trained to employ a variety of questioning techniques. Lesson plans should include higher order questions and related probes to ensure that rigorous higher order thinking occurs and discussions are meaningful, challenging, focused and engaging.
- NYSESLAT disaggregated data should be consistently used by classroom teachers as well as ELL support teachers for grouping and instructional focus.
- The school leaders and Network staff should provide training to support teachers in the development of standards-based rubrics, written in student friendly language and based on State Standards performance indicators for all core subjects. Students should use these rubrics to assess their own work and the work of their peers, thereby understanding what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve.

III. School Leadership**Findings:**

- The Principal has not clearly established high expectations for student performance, as evidenced by low Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) goals. School leaders state that small incremental growth is not only acceptable but also a reasonable expectation for the school's students.
- The school leader has not effectively developed the skills of parents to participate fully in the School Leadership Team (SLT) as equal partners in the school improvement process. Parents

are willing to be involved and are cooperative participants but do not actively engage in the development of the CEP.

- The Principal has not managed the allocation of human and financial resources efficiently, which has resulted in shortages in Academic Intervention Services (AIS), crowded classrooms, and inefficiently deployed instructional staff. The current staffing pattern includes eight non-teaching positions in addition to four administrators and one Dean.
- The school leader has not provided a well-focused PD plan that is targeted specifically to address the needs of students performing below Level 3 on the State tests.
- The school leaders have not fully comprehended and managed the school's challenges and have not provided effective academic leadership to ensure that all students achieve proficiency.
- School leaders have not communicated a belief that all students have the capacity to make improvements in their achievement.
- School leaders have not designed an engaging academic program that effectively produces improved student achievement. The majority of all programming and instruction is based on purchased textbook and workbook series and is not producing results.
- School leaders have not used current research and scientifically validated methods to effectively teach students who are ELLs or former ELLs. The entire staff is encouraged to teach vocabulary through words in isolation and emphasize grammar, poetry and idioms at all grade levels. Although this approach has been in place for several years and is not producing dramatic results, it continues to be perceived as effective.
- School leaders have established a schedule for the teaching of science and social studies that results in students receiving science and social studies content one week per month within in the literacy block. This does not allow for continuity and deep development of themes or long-range projects or experiments that can be completed in the five-day cycle.

Recommendations:

- The Principal should set high academic achievement goals for all students that are measurable and aim for all students to reach or exceed the proficient level.
- The school leader should request Network support in providing more information sessions and workshops for parents in the SLT so that they are better informed about their role in the SLT process and how they can fully support the school.
- The school leader should review the effectiveness of student programming and the current staffing structure on student achievement. The allocation of funds to human resources should be redesigned to produce high academic achievement for all students.
- With Network support, the school leaders should develop a comprehensive PD plan, based on student achievement trends, teacher observations, and expressed teacher needs. The plan should be focused on no more than three major initiatives that are provided in-house, revisited frequently, and monitored for effective implementation and desired results.

- Administrators should closely examine longitudinal student progress trends to develop a clear understanding of the school's historic under-performance and create a response plan that is focused on dramatically improving student progress, regardless of the challenges faced by the students.
- A 'no excuses' attitude should be clearly communicated by school leaders to the entire school community, and should reframe the school perceptions of the barriers to student success. Low expectations should be viewed as one of the biggest contributors to underperformance.
- School leaders should capitalize on the firmly established learning environment and implement an instructional and academic program that allows all students to fully engage in challenging work.
- School leaders should seek professional support in redesigning the instructional approach to ELL instruction throughout the school. The Network should identify peer schools with similar students where successful strategies and practices are improving student outcomes and work with the school to effectively implement them. This should include an evaluation of programs, focused PD and inter/ intravisitations.
- School leaders should critically examine the teaching of science and social studies and closely evaluate results. After revising the programs, evidence of future effectiveness should include dramatic improvement in ELA State test scores and high student performance on standardized and criterion referenced science and social studies exams.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- Teachers and leaders are instructing all students as if they are ELLs (a "one size fits all" approach) when, in fact, only 45 percent of the school is identified as ELLs.
- The school presents ample opportunities for grade level articulation but provides no opportunities for vertical articulation. Consequently, there is no continuity in implementation of the curriculum to assure continuous improvements and increased student achievement.
- The school has a working research library; however resource materials were not suitable for all students. Not all teachers regularly schedule their classes into the library.
- There is a small science laboratory in the building. The room was neither adequately supplied nor regularly used by all classroom teachers for inquiry-based, hands on science instruction.
- Parents are not sufficiently empowered by school leadership in the SLT decision-making process. Their function on the team is merely to advise and affirm leadership initiatives.
- The school leadership has not established a process for the regular dissemination of interim progress reports to parents. This contributes to marginalization of parents as active participants in the education of their own children.

- Although there are parent communications in English and Spanish, translated information is not consistently made available to parents who speak other languages.
- The parental response to the Learning Environment Survey is below the citywide average. The school leadership has not systematically and effectively gathered parent feedback from a representative pool of parents to ensure their views are heard, reported, evaluated and valued.

Recommendations:

- The school along with the Network should work to establish data protocols to identify student performance trends and set appropriate, rigorous goals to maximize student achievement for all students.
- The Principal should regularly schedule meetings to facilitate both horizontal and vertical articulation by teacher and support staff groups to ensure the needs of students at all levels are being met.
- The school leader should schedule regular library time for all classes to ensure that all students are engaged in research, reading for enjoyment, and reading to learn topics of interest. Additional resources should be allocated to expand the collection and provide open access to quality materials for all students.
- The school leader should schedule classroom use of the science laboratory to encourage hands-on inquiry based learning and allocate appropriate resources to support good quality science instruction.
- The school and the Network should provide workshops for parents and the SLT to outline the importance of parent involvement and collaboration in the school's decision-making process.
- The Principal should immediately develop a system to monitor and share all student progress through interim reporting with the parents.
- The school leader should identify a staff member with responsibility for using the Translation and Interpretation Unit of the NYC Department of Education (DOE) to provide appropriate outreach and translations in the home languages of all students.
- The school leaders and the Network should set ambitious goals for high response rates on administered parent surveys and analyze responses to ensure that the school is addressing expressed parent and student needs.

V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- The assessment data regularly collected and analyzed by many teachers comes from a small sample of student work. The work is not reflective of the State Standards. There is no effort to conduct a comprehensive analysis of student work based on State assessments, including the NYSESLAT.

- School leaders are ineffectively administering predictive tests and are not getting an accurate picture of student achievement. The ineffective administration of the predictive test reflects the school leaders' lack of awareness of the State's accountability system and the importance of student writing. Additionally, students are not adequately prepared for the written portion of the NYS ELA assessment.
- Teachers use data to group students according to discrete skills analysis. Focusing on isolated skills that are not directly tied to the NYS Standards has not yielded significant academic improvement; however the school leaders remain committed to this approach.

Recommendations:

- The school should establish data protocols, based on the NYS Standards, in order to facilitate an effective data analysis of the work being done in the school. This analysis should inform instructional practice and allow for further alignment of the curriculum with NYS Standards.
- The school and Network should establish an effective approach to data gathering using assessments aligned with the NYS Standards and use the results to inform all instruction.
- The school and the Network should identify assessments to inform a comprehensive portfolio of data to address all the components of effective ELA instruction. The use of *Accelerated Reader* should be minimized, as it is not part of a comprehensive approach to effective ELA instruction.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- The school does not have a comprehensive PD plan based on the needs of the identified subgroups and the analysis of trends in student performance. There are a variety of PD opportunities available to staff members but these opportunities are neither focused nor specific to the needs identified in the school.
- The school leader has identified adequate time for PD, but these opportunities are not aligned with school goals. Teachers report that they are receiving PD based on self-identified areas of need. These PD opportunities are not planned well enough to address the needs of the students as determined by disaggregation of State test performance.
- There is a narrowly focused system in place to evaluate student work in grade level teams. This system does not include a mechanism to examine schoolwide trends and, as a result, is not used to design PD to address the patterns observed. The school does not evaluate student work in a schoolwide context. Instead, it is focused on designing instructional approaches to address a narrow range of skills from class to class and within grade levels. The lack of a vertical analysis is a missed opportunity to refine the curriculum and coordinate PD.
- There is no systemic plan for mentoring in the school. The informal opportunities for mentoring are initiated primarily by teachers who choose to work with each other on a voluntary basis.

- The school has identified the performance of ELL students as a priority, yet teachers working under Common Branch licenses are not systematically trained to provide specific instruction to ELLs.

Recommendations:

- The school and Network should establish a PD plan informed by the analysis of the students in the subgroups and a needs assessment of the staff based on classroom observations. The plan should reflect a variety of offerings and be closely aligned with the goals of the school.
- The PD opportunities that are available to teachers should be restructured to maximize time and should be based on essential activities that align with whole school goals of improving student performance.
- The school and the Network should develop protocols to evaluate student work and plan next steps for student improvement. These protocols should drive curriculum and schoolwide improvement.
- School leaders should incorporate formalized mentoring opportunities into the comprehensive PD plan to support individual teacher needs.
- The Network and the school should plan and implement a PD program focused on the development of teaching strategies specifically designed to support English as a Second Language (ESL) students.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- There is no evidence of Network oversight to address school academic needs.
- The Network has not provided the school with a clear menu of service options.
- The walkthroughs conducted by the Network are valued by teachers; however, the walkthroughs are not focused on the most urgent needs of the school, i.e., the lack of academic progress to make AYP. The tool used for walkthroughs focuses too much on environmental factors and does not focus sufficiently on student engagement and academic rigor.
- The CEP goals listed were not measurable or appropriately focused on the school's greatest academic challenges and low academic achievement on State tests. The current goal of a three percent increase will not improve the low achievement status of the school.

Recommendations:

- The school should actively seek the sustained involvement of the Network to support the school's efforts to improve academic achievement through curriculum development, effective staffing patterns and the selection of assessments and effective data analysis.
- The Network should deliver a comprehensive list of appropriate supports for the school and a menu of appropriate customized PD options to meet the school's unique needs.

- The walkthroughs conducted by the Network should be based on collaboratively identified instructional areas that will improve student outcomes.
- The Network should play an active role in ensuring that the school goals are ambitious, measurable, clear, and focused on high academic achievement for all students.
- 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.

- The school with the support of the Network should procure the services of an experienced curriculum expert who has previously assisted underperforming schools to revamp and update the school's ELA written curriculum, with resource and material selection to meet the needs of ELLs and native English speakers. The revamped curriculum should address all aspects of ELA, including reading, writing, speaking and research. The revised curriculum should address the school's current practice of teaching science and social studies through literacy and move instruction away from purchased textbook and workbook series.
- Financial and human resources should be reallocated to decrease class size in early childhood and provide increased direct instructional support to students. The school should consider reducing the number of academies to two, with the new academies serving pre-K -2 and grades 3-5. This will eliminate one unnecessary AP position.
- Ongoing PD should be provided so that the new ELA curriculum quickly becomes embedded. This change should be managed through robust monitoring and evaluation focused on lesson planning and implementation.

- An ELL expert with proven success at closing the achievement gap for Hispanic students should be assigned to the school to oversee the implementation of an ELA curriculum that addresses the needs of ELLs and former ELLs, structure the ELL program, and provide training for leaders and teachers on current ELL best practices. The ELL expert should oversee the school leaders' implementation of the new ELL curriculum and program.
- The Network and DOE should closely monitor the degree to which school leadership works collaboratively with the curriculum and ELL experts to ensure that necessary changes are occurring and are supported by the school's leadership.