

NYSED /BUFFALO CSD JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code:	140600010006
School Name:	PS 6 Buffalo Elementary School of Technology
School Address:	414 South Division Street Buffalo, NY 14204
Principal:	Debra Sevillian-Poles
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Persistently Lowest-Achieving School/School Under Registration Review (PLA/SURR)
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts and Mathematics
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	February 9-11, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Community and School Background

PS 6 Buffalo Elementary School of Technology serves 658 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school enrollment is approximately 65 percent Black, nine percent Hispanic, 12 percent Asian, 12 percent White, and two percent multiracial. Twenty-seven percent of the students are English language learners (ELLs) and 15 percent are students with disabilities with Individualized Education Plans (including speech). The average attendance rate for school year 2008-2009 was 87 percent.

The current Principal is her fourth year. There are two Assistant Principals (APs). One is in her fourth year; the other is in her second year. The administrative team includes the Principal, two APs, a literacy coach and a mathematics coach. The faculty is comprised of 56 teachers. In 2009-2010, two percent of the teachers had no valid teaching certificate, seven percent were teaching out of certification, and 29 percent have master's degrees plus 30 hours, or hold a doctorate. The turnover rate of teachers with fewer than five years of experience is 40 percent, and the turnover rate of all teachers is 26 percent. There is one first year teacher.

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, 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	✓

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
	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 <u>All Students</u> subgroup in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓
-	For 2010-11, the school was identified as a <u>Persistently Lowest- Achieving school.</u>	✓

B. School Strengths

- The school is welcoming and well-maintained. It is print rich, particularly in the pre-K to grade one wing. Routines are established and the students are respectful. The staff is helpful and cooperative; and there is a strong adult presence in the hallways. Additionally, the school was renovated and is in excellent condition.
- The District has provided a comprehensive curriculum that is standards based in all of the core subjects, along with appropriate pacing calendars and instructional guidelines. To provide additional support, the District has placed all of these resource documents online on the District website.

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 7 JIT Indicator Categories:

I. Curriculum

Findings:

- The literacy block is structured around several reading programs, including the Harcourt Reading Program, Direct Instruction and Voyager. The programs are aligned to the District's standards based curriculum. Interviewed teachers kept referring to the "script" they have to follow as the reason why they do not necessarily respond to the individual needs of their students.
- Although the District has provided a standard based curriculum and pacing calendars, there is little consistency in how well teachers use these resources in preparing lesson plans. In addition, the District has provided PD (PD) for teachers with training in the skills necessary to plan lessons for the literacy block. The training included strategies on how to teach a daily lesson using differentiated instruction. However, lesson plans show little evidence of rigor across the grades, as evidenced by school data that shows a decline in the number of students performing at or above proficiency.

Recommendations:

- The school administrators should hold teachers accountable by monitoring fidelity to the skills taught in PD sessions and use the literacy coach, teacher conferences, grade level meeting early release days, etc., to provide additional PD to ensure that teachers respond to the individual needs of their students.
- The school should consider using walkthroughs, grade level team meetings, and informal and formal observations as a basis for targeted PD. Teachers should be supported in developing lesson planning skills that include infusing higher order thinking, the use of rubrics, scaffolding, and a variety of strategies for student mastery in literacy.

II. Teaching and Learning**Findings:**

- Although the teachers received training in the use of explicit instruction methodology, they are not implementing the methodology. Lessons are not aligned with the needs of students, regardless of whether they are advanced, on grade level, or struggling students. As a result, there is no connection between what teachers teach and what students actually learn in the classroom as evidenced by classroom observations, review of lesson plans, and teacher interviews.
- There was little evidence of co-teaching in inclusive classrooms. Only one classroom was observed in which a general education teacher and a special education teacher shared the room. Co-teaching strategies were weak and ineffective.
- There was no evidence of a uniform grading policy. Teachers reported that each teacher creates their own grading criteria.
- Classroom observations and interviews with teachers across subjects and grade levels indicated that teachers should improve their knowledge and skills in the area of English as a second language (ESL) pedagogy.

Recommendations:

- Additional PD in the area of explicit instruction should be provided to teachers by the coaches and/or the District. The coaches should focus on modeling explicit instruction methodology, and informal/formal observations should include feedback on the implementation of explicit instruction as a way to provide academic rigor, high levels of student engagement, and higher order thinking skills to improve student performance.
- The school leadership should review co-teaching assignments to ensure that co-teachers are appropriately assigned. PD should be provided to ensure that teachers understand co-teaching strategies and work together following a coordinated lesson plan. The Principal should hold teachers accountable for teaching and learning that results in improved student performance.
- The school should create a coherent grading policy and use the opportunity to provide PD that connects instructional strategies and student formative assessments to student mastery. It should also be an opportunity for the school to build a professional learning community by ensuring the

participation of teachers, parents, and students in defining the policy and ensuring its implementation.

- Twenty-seven percent of the student body are ELLs who are enrolled in all subjects across grade levels. All teachers should participate in PD that strengthens ESL pedagogy.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- The administration has made some progress to create a more rigorous learning environment with high expectations for all students. However, classroom observations indicate that teachers are slow to adopt and include pedagogy such as differentiation, explicit instruction and co-teaching as part of their daily lesson plans.
- Although the school has provided materials and resources for hall bulletin boards and classrooms, there is little evidence of multicultural materials.
- The school leadership should continue to develop their skills as instructional leaders and should take a more aggressive role in supervising and mentoring teachers in order to improve teaching and learning.

Recommendations:

- On-going PD should be provided to address the need for a more rigorous learning environment. Additionally, administrators and coaches should focus on providing ongoing feedback and support to teachers to foster changes in classroom practice.
- The school should request and/or purchase additional resources to add appropriate multicultural resources both in the classrooms and the library.
- The school leadership should have a focused plan, in addition to the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP), to accomplish their goals. Additionally, an observation log that records pre-observations, observations, post-observations, and the date that written observations are shared with the teacher should be maintained. These items should be routinely handled in a timely fashion. Oral feedback and formal observations should include specific references to PD activities that build teacher accountability in using teaching strategies that respond to individual student needs.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- Parents are an important part of the infrastructure that supports rigorous academic work. They need support in understanding the school requirements, including the importance of homework and school policies such as grading.
- The school has been assigned a Student Support Team, which includes a psychologist, social worker, and a coordinator. Team members voiced concern and frustration over their limited ability to provide appropriate levels of intervention due to the large number of students needing support.

Recommendations:

- The District's Parent University offers classes to parents to help them support their children's efforts. Classes in English for the parents of ELLs and classes in the use of technology might serve to further attract parent participation. Additionally, the school might want to consider reaching out to the community-based organizations to create collaborative initiatives to support families and communicate the vision of high expectations for all students. Regularly scheduled parent meetings should also include similar topics.
- The District should review the composition of the Student Support Team to ensure that appropriate levels of service are being provided to students. The District should also consider whether the population of struggling students may benefit from the introduction of the Response to Intervention Program (RtI).

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

- In general, the administration and teachers comply with District and school mandates regarding summative assessments. However, many teachers do not use data to prepare their lesson plans as evidenced by the lack of differentiated instruction, particularly as it applies to subgroups.
- A review of the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) indicates that it is replete with data and school designed strategies to move the school forward. However, it appears that limited follow-up has occurred that would make the CEP a working document that drives schoolwide initiatives, PD, and leadership decisions.
- Teachers meet in grade level meetings facilitated by either the administration or coaches who lead discussions on a variety of topics, including the use of data. Few teachers use the data when planning their lessons, as evidenced by classroom observations and review of lesson plans.

Recommendations:

- The use of data should be ongoing and become an integral part of the school culture and used on a daily basis to drive instruction. Teachers should become adept at using data to improve instruction. The reorganization of teacher teams for discussions regarding data across subjects and grades should be considered. This strategy will provide the faculty with the opportunity to focus collaboratively on targeted student groups and specific academic results.
- The School Leadership Team should ensure that the review of the CEP takes place on a regular basis so that action plans incorporate the goals of the plan, as well as allowing for ongoing adjustments as required.
- The school administration should ensure that all teachers are engaged in structured support sessions around understanding how to use data to determine individual student needs, prepare lessons, and construct assessments.

VI. Professional Development

Finding:

The school supports PD (PD) and encourages teacher participation in opportunities provided by the District; however participation in District PD is voluntary. There is limited evidence to substantiate that participation in PD results in changing teaching and learning in the classroom.

Recommendations:

The school should create its own PD schedule based on teacher needs using grade team meeting time, faculty conferences, etc., to support initiatives and programs focused on improved student learning. The administrative team should hold teachers accountable for changing teaching and learning in the classroom by proactively using classroom observations, rubrics, and analysis of student work to provide feedback to teachers so that lesson plans reflect strategies that accelerate student learning.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- District support and efforts to move the school forward is evidenced by the availability of extensive curriculum materials in binders and online, as well as ongoing PD aligned to District programs and initiatives. However, additional support is needed in order for the school to meet ensure all students success.

- Districtwide, the ELL student population is 11 percent; the school’s ELL population is 27.2 percent.

Recommendations:

- The District should provide support in implementing the recommendations of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT).

- The 16.2 percent difference between the District and the school’s ELL population is excessive. Additional resources should be provided to the school specifically to support and accelerate student learning of this population. An area of need identified through interviews and classroom visits is the need for a master literacy coach. The current coach is inexperienced; the additional master coach would help accelerate student learning by providing additional support to teachers and would also provide mentoring for the current coach.

PART 3: OVERALL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Overall Finding

Reference	Review Team Finding	✓
(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	Review Team Recommendation	✓
(c)	Develop and implement a new plan that could include <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 recommendation should be accomplished.

The JIT Review Team recommends that PS 6 Buffalo Elementary School of Technology with the support of the District, develop and implement a new plan in order to break the cycle of low expectations and accelerate the learning of all students toward meeting and/or exceeding State Standards. This plan should include significant staff and organizational changes, should involve all the members of the school community and address:

- **District Support For ESL Students**
 The District should provide targeted support to the school administrative team and teachers to improve the academic performance of ESL students across all subjects and grade levels.
- **Teacher Expectations And Teacher Accountability**
 The Principal, with the support of the District, should present and review the schoolwide goals and objectives to the faculty on an ongoing basis to focus on continuous academic improvement. Meetings with individual faculty members and grade teams should follow with a focus on establishing goals for each teacher as well as grade teams. The administrative team should conduct walkthroughs and evaluations to document how teachers and grade teams are responding to individual action plans and grade team goals, and take decisive steps in cases where expectations are not being met. Actions to be taken by the leadership team include:

 - Develop a system to hold teachers more accountable in the area of explicit instruction methodology.
 - Review the co-teaching model to identify modifications, if required, and provide targeted PD in areas of weakness.
 - Provide accountability and targeted support for teachers in how to prepare lesson plans when using the identified literacy programs such as Direct Instruction, Harcourt, and Voyager.
 - Consider having grade teams create rubrics for all teachers to use when grading student work.
 - Create a schoolwide grading policy with input from teachers, parents and students and ensure that teachers are held accountable for using it appropriately.
- **Review CEP To Reflect Schoolwide Goals And Objectives**
 The Schoolwide Leadership Team should meet on a monthly basis to ensure that the objectives and strategies outlined in the CEP are incorporated into ongoing action plans. The team should routinely adjust action plans and identify specific tasks and activities that will need to take place in order to meet the schoolwide goals and objectives.

- **District Support and Professional Development**

The District should provide the necessary support to school leaders, teachers and parents toward meeting school goals. Among other actions, the District should:

- Provide training to the Principal focused on instructional leadership strategies in order for instruction to reflect the rigor and relevance required to make and surpass AYP across all subjects, grade levels and student subgroups.
- Consider adding a master literacy coach to the PS 6 team to strengthen frequent and ongoing support in ELA, as well as providing a mentor to the current literacy coach.
- Provide school leaders with coaching and training in the use of data for the purpose of improving and accelerating academic achievement.
- Support the overall implementation of the Restructuring Plan.