NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DBN:	08X093
School Name:	Albert G. Oliver Elementary School
School Address:	1535 Story Ave. Bronx, NY 10473
Principal:	Donald Mattson
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring (year 1) Focused
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts – Hispanic Students and Students with Disabilities
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	November 29 – 30, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Community and School Background

Albert G. Oliver Elementary School serves 405 students in Pre-Kindergarten through grade 5. The school enrollment is one percent Asian, 41 percent Hispanic and 56 percent Black students. Of these students, 20 percent are English language learners (ELLs) and approximately 27 percent are students with disabilities.

The administrative team consists of the Principal and two Assistant Principals (APs). The Principal has served the school for 11 years and the APs have served between nine to 11 years. There are 36 teachers on staff; none has been at the school for less than one year and none for fewer than three years. All of the teachers are highly qualified. The rate of teacher turnover is zero percent.

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 identification.	✓
	NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures	
+	Most recent NYC Progress Report Grade of A	✓
+	NYC Quality Review Score of Proficient	✓

B. School Strengths

- The school has a positive culture in which students, parents and teachers feel safe, secure and welcome. Students are respectful and well behaved in classrooms, hallways and in the lunchroom.

- Community Based Organizations (CBO) provide after school recreational and academic programs.

- The school support staff engages in community outreach programs that assist families in obtaining needed services. There are many opportunities for parental involvement.

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 curriculum is based on State Standards but lacks rigor. As a result, students are not being challenged.

- There is no evidence of pacing calendars or scope and sequence documents for English language arts (ELA). As a result, teachers independently determine which parts of the curriculum to teach and when to teach it. Additionally, there is no evidence that all students in each grade are exposed to the entire curriculum; this results in students entering the next grade without a uniform skill set.

- Due to the lack of a scope and sequence and pacing calendars, lesson plans are dependent on an individual teacher's focus. As a result, horizontal curriculum alignment is not in place.

Recommendations:

- The school leadership should ensure that additional rigor is infused into the existing curriculum, consistent with the New York State (NYS) Standards and the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).

- The Network should be used to assist the teachers in creating a pacing calendar for each grade's ELA curriculum, as well as an ELA scope and sequence.

- School leaders should frequently review lesson plans to ensure that teachers are teaching the ELA curriculum and using the pacing calendars at the prescribed intervals.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- Some teachers use a limited number of instructional strategies; as a result, the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs are not being met. Plan books rarely included differentiated instructional activities that meet the needs of the identified subgroups. In some classrooms, the ELA lesson observed was not indicated in the lesson plan. Content area instruction was mostly non-differentiated direct instruction that did not meet the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities.

- Some teachers use the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) goals to inform instruction; however, other teachers' lesson plans and instructional strategies showed no evidence that the IEP goals were taken into account.

- Instructional strategies for ELLs are not modified or differentiated so that the needs of this subgroup are met. The pull-out English as a Second Language (ESL) lessons that were observed were delivered to whole groups of students and had no connection to the ELA curriculum.

- Grouping was evident in most of the classrooms; however, some of the groups did not meet the needs of the diverse population. In some classrooms, students did not receive consistent monitoring by the teacher. As a result, students had no knowledge whether or not they were working toward the lesson's objective.

- There was no evidence of scaffolding of ELL instruction in content areas to ensure that language and content acquisition occurs. Consequently, some students are not acquiring appropriate academic content area language.

- Low-level questioning that did not produce higher order thinking was observed in most classrooms. When whole group instruction was observed, it was teacher dominated and resulted in insufficient student engagement. Students were rarely asked to explain their thinking. Problem solving and inquiry were not evident in most tasks assigned to students.

- The Principal indicated that all teachers used rubrics and posted them in their classrooms; however, the review team saw evidence of a writing rubric in only one classroom. Student work, graded on a rubric, was observed only in this classroom as well. The lack of rubrics limits the ability of students to know what is expected and what they need to do to improve. In addition, student work was not displayed in a majority of classrooms.

- Despite the presence of a recognized technology expert, little technology was observed in ELA classes. Some teachers are using commercial software during the Academic Intervention Services (AIS) period and during group work. However, there was little evidence that students were using computers for research, writing or for other applications. While the AIS software is capable of producing reports on student progress, teachers have not been trained on how to access these reports. As a result, teachers do not have current data and have to wait for a monthly report to use to drive instruction.

- Although review team observations revealed a positive co-teaching model in the Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) classes, students are not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on the ELA test. Additionally, data trends in ICT classes are unknown by the teachers and school leaders. As a result targeted professional development (PD) for amended lesson planning cannot be developed.

- Learning standards are not posted in any classrooms; they were indicated in the lesson plans of only one teacher. Most students were unable to articulate what they were learning.

- Although a schoolwide grading policy is posted in most classrooms, there was no evidence that it was modified to account for students with disabilities.

Recommendations:

- All teachers should receive PD in order to increase their ability to provide a variety of instructional strategies that meet the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs in order to improve performance. Content area instruction should be differentiated with a variety of instructional strategies and modalities that meet the needs of all subgroups. School leaders should ensure that

lesson plans include evidence of differentiated instruction through frequent formal and informal observation.

- School leaders should carefully review the lesson plans of teachers of students with disabilities to ensure that they reflect student IEP goals in order to make certain that these goals are being met.

- School leaders should review the lessons plans of the per diem ESL teacher to ensure that the lessons are connected to the ELA curriculum. In addition, PD should be provided that focuses on differentiated ESL teaching strategies.

- Teachers should monitor the work of all groups so that students receive immediate feedback about their work.

- The school should provide PD for all teachers with ELLs so that they can provide scaffolded instruction to ensure that appropriate content area language acquisition takes place.

- The school should provide PD so that teachers learn how to plan for and use questions that challenge students and encourage higher order thinking. School leaders should focus on questioning, teacher talk and student engagement when observing instruction in order to assist teachers in developing skills to enhance student performance.

- School leaders should ensure that student work is displayed in all classrooms and that teachers develop and post assessment rubrics and State Standards so that students have exemplars and know what they need to do to improve their performance.

- School leaders should investigate the use of appropriate technology that can be integrated into the curriculum and lesson planning as part of a comprehensive technology plan. Teachers should receive PD in accessing data from the instructional software that is being used daily by students in most classes so that the most current data drives future instruction to meet student needs.

- The Network should provide PD for the school leaders about data disaggregation and ways to use data to inform instruction for the identified subgroups, i.e., Hispanic students and students with disabilities. This PD should also be extended to include teachers in the ICT classes so that the needs of these students can be met and student-learning outcomes improved.

- School leaders should ensure that lesson plans reflect learning standards and that plan books include learning standards in them. When observing teaching, school leaders should ensure that lesson objectives are clearly stated so that students have an understanding of the expected learning in each lesson.

- School leaders should work with teachers of students with disabilities to modify the grading policy and rubric so that they are reflective of students' IEPs.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- School administrators do not set high enough academic expectations for staff or students, specifically the students with disabilities and ELLs. The low academic performance of these students with disabilities is attributed to the lack of parental involvement as well as student bus

schedules. There is no strategic plan that clearly and specifically outlines the roles of key staff or how progress towards challenging and achievable goals is to be measured. A culture of high achievement is not fully embraced by all staff and administration. School leaders and teachers repeatedly referred to the overall "A" rating that the school received on the 2010-11 New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) School Report as a measure of their success, despite the rating of C in Student Performance.

- The Principal does not effectively use available resources within the school and from the Network to maximize instructional opportunities. Rather than assign the four cluster teachers (art, technology, physical education and science) that could teach six periods per day each (24 periods per week) to cover all 18 teachers daily, the two staff developers provide prep coverage for six classes each week unnecessarily and have four Drama Club periods that are not related to their job description. This limits their available time to model best practice and provide staff development for teachers. Additionally, the part time (two-day a week) librarian only teaches seven out of a possible 12 teaching periods. This limits students' opportunities to learn library/research skills and develop a further appreciation of literature. It was also determined that the Principal does not avail himself of many of the services and PD opportunities for staff that the Network offers.

- Neither of the two APs has a background in working with students with disabilities or ELLs. This severely hinders the school's ability to provide instructional support to the teachers of these students. In addition, neither AP has direct responsibility for overseeing students with disabilities or ELL teachers because their roles are Pre-k to grade 2 for one AP and grades 3 to 5 for the other AP. The APs do not work in a mutually consistent way when observing classes in terms of frequency or support, and the differences are substantial.

- Despite the fact the school has been cited for not making AYP for the ELL subgroup in ELA for the past two years, a full-time ESL teacher has not been hired. Instead, the ESL teacher works four days per week per diem. A review of the ESL teacher's schedule indicated that she provides two non-ESL coverages each week. This reduces the amount of contact time with students who need ESL services.

- The school leaders do not have supervision of instruction and pedagogical support as priorities as indicated by the limited number of formal observations. No schedule for formal observations was in evidence. During the first 12 weeks of school, there have been only two formal observations conducted by the three school leaders (one by each AP and none by the Principal). The Principal delegates most instructional responsibilities to the APs. There have been informal observations. A review of these and the two formal observations revealed that the feedback was not data-based or instructionally oriented. In one case, the same observation report verbatim was recorded for two teachers. The Learning Environment Survey (LES) revealed that 40 percent of the teachers who responded felt that the PD provided did not help them in their subject area.

- A review of formal observations from last year revealed positive reviews for all but one teacher. The teacher with the negative observation report was observed in December. The feedback report indicated that a follow-up observation would be made in May but this did not occur. This lack of timely follow-up does not help the teacher to improve her practice nor does it lead to a positive impact on student learning.

- Although each grade as well as teachers of students with disabilities has a weekly Common Planning Time (CPT) period, these are not supported or consistently monitored by school leaders. School leaders were unable to articulate if all the teachers were effectively using the time.

Agendas for all CPTs were not available. Interviews with teachers indicated that the teachers decided the topics for discussion. While data was sometimes discussed at CPT meetings, teachers indicated that many of them do not understand how to use disaggregated data to inform instruction.

- While the Principal publicizes Network PD opportunities, few teachers are sent to participate in after school PD sessions given by the Network. Teachers of ICT classes recently attended outside PD on co-teaching; however, teachers of self-contained classes have not taken advantage of PD opportunities. The Principal does not have a sense of urgency in providing PD for all teachers of students with disabilities. This is despite the fact the this population did not make AYP in ELA for the past two years and almost all grade 3 - 5 students with disabilities scored at Levels 1 or 2 on the 2011 ELA assessment.

- The Principal has been unable to get a full complement of people on the School Leadership Team (SLT); there are only four teachers and four parents on the SLT. The Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) goals are related to the Fountas and Pinell assessment for students with disabilities and the State ELA exam for grade 3 - 5 students; however, the goals are not responsive to the assessed needs of all students. Members of the SLT and some school leaders were unable to articulate the CEP goals. There was no evidence that the CEP goals were being monitored by the Principal, SLT or the Network.

- The Principal stated that parents of ELLs and students with disabilities are not involved in decision-making. There is no evidence that the school is addressing the needs of an emerging African immigrant population that is non-English speaking or culturally different.

Recommendations:

- The Principal, with the support of the administrative team and the Network, should create a schoolwide plan to improve achievement. The school leaders and staff should articulate a clear vision and strategic plan that drives the school towards high student achievement and clearly outlines the responsibilities of staff and school leaders. The plan should include goals, action plans, PD and use all resources available through the Network. The implementation of the plan should be monitored carefully, including by the Network, and the impact on student achievement should be measured.

- The Network should assist the Principal in creating a schedule that uses available cluster teachers to cover all prep periods while allowing the staff developers to perform their work modeling best practices and working with teachers to improve instruction. The Network should also assist the Principal in employing a full-time librarian so that students can learn library/research skills and have more access to quality literature. The Network Leader should encourage the Principal to use its services to support instruction, PD and the budget in order to make better use of the school's resources and impact instruction for the identified subgroups.

- The Principal should ensure that school leadership includes a person with a background in special education to oversee and provide support for the growing population of students with disabilities in the school. Teachers of students with disabilities in all grades should receive uniform supervision, support and PD from someone knowledgeable in the field.

- The Principal should hire a full-time ESL teacher to meet the needs of the ELLs. The Principal should revamp the prep schedule so that the ESL teacher spends all of her time teaching ESL in order to maximize student contact time.

- The school leaders should ensure that supervision of instruction with an emphasis on ELA in all classrooms should be a priority. A formal observation schedule is central to this work. The Network should make it a priority to provide support for the administrative team in observing instruction and providing feedback. Observation feedback should be data based and meaningful. School leaders should attend PD to sharpen their lens in observing instruction so that teachers receive meaningful, consistent feedback that will improve their pedagogy and lead to better student performance.

- School leaders should conduct follow-up observations in a timely manner so that the administrators can determine if the teacher is able to implement the suggestions for improvement and positively impact student learning.

- The Principal and administrative team should attend all CPT meetings to evaluate how effectively teachers are using this planning time. Agendas should also be reviewed by school leaders. The upper grade AP, who is also the data specialist, should provide PD to all teacher teams so that they can learn how to use data to inform instruction, differentiate and accelerate student progress.

- The Principal should make it a priority to provide PD for all teachers on strategies to use for students with disabilities and ELLs to improve teacher practice and impact student performance. The Network should work with the Principal to develop a PD schedule to meet the needs of all teachers and students.

- The Principal should continue efforts to get the required number of members for the SLT. The Principal should articulate the CEP goals to the entire school community so that all constituencies are aware of them. The Network should provide meaningful feedback to the Principal on the CEP, provide assistance in writing data-based goals that will affect the identified subgroups and monitor the school's progress toward achieving them.

- The School leader should work with the parent coordinator to regularly canvas the needs, views and opinions of parents so that the school can better meet the needs of all students and their families.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- The school has a state of the art library created through a grant ten years ago. The up-to-date collection is extensive, and the library has a bank of computers for research. The Principal has opted to employ the former librarian as a two-day per week F status teacher instead of hiring a full-time librarian. This severely limits student opportunities to learn research skills, conduct research and learn to enjoy literature. The part-time librarian only teaches seven out of a possible 12 teaching period. As a result, each class visits the library every two to three weeks. The Principal does not permit most teachers to use the library during the three days per week when the librarian is not present. None of the staff has been trained to use the software that permits students to check out and return books.

- Teachers and parents are unaware of the mission and vision of the school, and the team was not able to locate the school's mission and vision in any of the documentation given to the review team.

Recommendations:

- The Principal should hire a full-time librarian so that students and teachers can take advantage of the state-of-the art facility. The Principal should seek Network operations support to assist in determining how to fund a full-time librarian.

- The SLT should collaborate with parents and teachers to create a mission and a vision, and publicize the mission and vision within the school community so that they become part of the school's culture.

V. Collection, Analysis and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- The analysis of data is not consistently used as a tool for driving forward school improvement, and no plan has been made for improving the achievement of ELLs and students with disabilities, based on data analysis.

- There was no evidence that data was used as the source for schoolwide PD or as a basis for classroom observation.

- Interim assessments are not frequently conducted in ELA.

- There is no evidence that school leaders and teachers meet regularly to analyze interim assessment data and develop plans to adjust instruction based on this analysis. The school has not provided appropriate PD on the use of data and has not monitored the use of data analysis by teachers at CPT meetings.

- Although teachers refer at-risk students to the Child Study Team (CST), the strategies recommended are not having an impact on student performance.

Recommendations:

- The school should develop a system to use data to drive instruction. In developing this system, the school should consider the following:

    - establishing and/or redefining inquiry focused teacher teams and the benchmarked deliverables for each team;

    - dedicating time in teacher schedules for regular team meetings; developing an interim assessment calendar;

    - creating and administering the new P-12 CCLS aligned interim assessments;

    - completing an interim assessment analysis worksheet delineating the error and distractor analyses of the assessment data; and

    - developing, implementing and monitoring action plans to instructionally address learning deficits as indicated by the analysis of the assessment data.

- School leaders should use data to structure a differentiated PD program that meets the needs of teachers.

- School leadership and instructional coaches should ensure that interim assessments are conducted in ELA. Consideration should be given to the creation of interim assessments that are aligned with and well-paced to the P-12 CLSS and administered every six weeks.

- School leaders should develop a schedule of meetings during CPT to sit with teachers and analyze data and develop instructional strategies based on this data.

- School leaders should participate in CST meetings and monitor the strategies suggested to ensure that they are having a positive impact on student performance. School leaders should research strategies used by other schools that have proven successful in accelerating learning for at-risk students.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- The school has not developed and implemented a comprehensive PD plan, nor are there systematic feedback mechanisms to guide the adjustment of such a plan.

- The PD plan does not include PD for all teachers and staff who work with students with disabilities and ELLs.

- Teachers are not held accountable for incorporating PD practices into their instructional practice. There is no mention of the PD found in the observation reports.

- An observation of a grade level Inquiry Team meeting revealed that teachers were unfamiliar with the inquiry process. The first Inquiry Team meeting for the year took place November 2011, the day before the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) review. Administrators and teachers were unable to articulate examples of the impact of inquiry on instructional practice.

- There was no evidence that the school has a PD plan that focuses on the needs of ELLs, students with disabilities or at-risk students. The Principal collected a PD survey from the teachers in mid-November and has not yet developed a PD plan.

Recommendations:

- The school should develop and implement a PD plan designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers participate in substantial PD in order to remain professionally current and meet the learning needs of their students. The PD plan should be aligned with the school's CEP goals and take into account the differentiated needs of staff and students.

- The school's PD plan should include a description of the PD activities for all professional staff and school personnel who work with students with disabilities and ELLs to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the needs of these students.

- The school leaders should conduct follow-up observations after PD sessions to ensure that teachers implement the strategies learned in the classroom instructional program. The

administration should develop detailed recommendations and specific next steps in their observation reports and focus on these in their next observation.

- The Network should provide the necessary PD for teachers and school leaders to ensure that teachers understand the inquiry process and the Citywide Instructional Expectations for 2011-12, where at a minimum teachers are expected in teams to look closely at current student work to understand the steps needed to reach the level of performance that the Common Core demands (spring/fall 2011). Inquiry teams should further be supported to look closely at resulting student work to continue the cycle of inquiry, making future instructional adjustments and communicating lessons learned to other school staff during spring 2012. The Network should provide the necessary PD for school leaders to monitor the effectiveness of the Inquiry Teams throughout the year.

- School leaders should create a PD plan that includes support for teachers of ELLS, students with disabilities and at-risk students so that these students receive instruction better suited to their needs.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- While the Network provides a range of services to support teaching and learning, operations, human resources and parental involvement, the Network has not proactively supported the identified needs of ELLs and students with disabilities or their teachers in the school. The Network is not monitoring the progress of these identified subgroups.

- The Network has provided limited feedback on the school's CEP. There was no evidence of any follow-up or continuous monitoring of the plan.

Recommendations:

- The Network should provide support in developing instructional strategies to improve the pedagogy of all teachers in relation to the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs.

- Protocols and procedures should be established to obtain feedback on the CEP with school staff, parents and students. The Network should provide additional training to the administration and the SLT concerning CEP development and implementation. A schedule for follow-up sessions and ongoing consultations should be developed to carefully evaluate the plan's effectiveness and progress towards achieving AYP goals.

- The Network should provide support in implementing the recommendations of the JIT.

PART 3: JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM OVERALL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Overall Finding

Reference	Review Team Finding	✓
(b)	The school has made some progress in identified areas, and may make AYP with the implementation of additional focused interventions to accelerate improved student achievement.	✓

B. Overall Recommendation

Reference	Review Team Recommendation	✓
(b)	***For Restructuring (year 1) School:*** Develop and implement a School Restructuring Plan that clearly identifies root causes and/or contributing factors for low student performance in identified areas, and incorporates focused interventions to address identified issues and accelerate improved student achievement. The School Restructuring Plan must include one of the restructuring options required under NCLB and further defined by the District.	✓

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

- An AP with a background in special education should be assigned the responsibility of overseeing all teachers of students with disabilities and all students with disabilities in the school, in addition to other responsibilities.

- School leaders should increase the number of formal observations in ELA. Frequent observations should be based on data and feedback given in a timely manner. Follow-up observations should be made to determine if recommendations are implemented.

- The school should develop a differentiated PD plan that targets the needs of teachers of students with disabilities and ELLs.

- The Network should provide extensive support for the school so that the identified subgroups, i.e., Hispanic students and students with disabilities are made a priority and the school leaders use their financial resources more efficiently and more effectively.

- School leaders and teachers should receive PD to become sensitized to diverse student needs.