

NYSED/PEEKSKILL CSD JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code:	66-15-00-01-0009
School Name:	Peekskill High School
School Address:	1072 Elm Street Peekskill, New York 10566
Principal:	Sherrill Murray-Lazarus
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring (year 2) Comprehensive English Language Arts - Students with Disabilities Mathematics - Students with Disabilities
Areas of Identification:	Graduation Rate - All Students; Students with Disabilities
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	November 28-30, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Community and School Background

Peekskill High School (PHS) serves 912 students in grades 9 through 12. The school enrollment is 1.6 percent Asian, 39.8 percent Hispanic, 43.4 percent Black and 14 percent White students. Of these students seven percent are English language learners (ELLs) and approximately 17 percent are students with disabilities. The administrative team consists of the Principal and two and one-half Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Assistant Principals (APs). The Principal has served the school for one year and APs have served between one to nine years. There are 68 teachers on staff, all of whom are highly qualified. Six percent of the teachers have been at the school for less than one year and 13 percent for fewer than three years. The rate of teacher turnover is one 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	
+	Positive trend data for all identified subject/areas and subgroups for the past two consecutive years, as demonstrated by an increase in the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 and/or a Performance Index increase of five or more points.	✓
+	Performance data for the school on NYSED Accountability Overview Reports (AOR) for the past two consecutive years show a reduction in the number of subgroups that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓
-	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.	✓
-	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	✓

B. School Strengths

Precursors for school improvement appear to be present, including:

- staff that is open, primed for learning how to improve and ready to collaborate with each other and Network partners. They demonstrate an attitude of willingness to be reflective and receive coaching and mentoring for school improvement; and
- common planning time is available for some core academic teams, as well as weekly department meetings.

C. Key Findings and Recommendations

Summary of the key issues (and 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:

- There is no evidence of a written curriculum in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, and there are no modifications of a written curriculum for special education or English as a second language (ESL) classes. Materials and resources in the areas of identification, ELA and mathematics, are not adequate to prepare the school for implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). There is no evidence that the school is ready to implement the Common Core State Standards.
- Although scope and sequence pacing guides are provided for mathematics, vertical or horizontal alignment of the curriculum is not evident in the areas of ELA and mathematics and, it is not evident in English as a second language (ESL) or special education classes.
- There was no evidence that lesson plans were systematically developed or reviewed to provide feedback about the quality and content of instruction.

Recommendations:

- The District should work with the school on the development of curriculum in all core areas and ensure that it is clearly aligned with the current New York State Learning Standards. Curriculum must be aligned to the new NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards in English language arts, literacy and mathematics 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 on delivery methods that are student-centered. The curriculum should be relied upon as the basis for assessing 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. Inventory of materials and resources as well as a need assessment should be conducted to enable the ELA and mathematics departments to adopt the Common Core standards.

- The school administration should lead an effort to use daily common planning time and regular school department meetings to align the curriculum horizontally and vertically. The school should develop a system for regularly reviewing and updating curriculum maps based on student achievement data.
- Lesson plans should be regularly developed and reviewed by the school leaders in order to provide formative feedback for the improvement of instruction.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- Academic expectations for students are generally low. Whole group and direct instruction predominates throughout the school, and students are generally disengaged. There was little evidence of flexible grouping or differentiation to address the diverse learning needs of all students, and little opportunity exists for students to work together or to share ideas.
- Processes to develop higher order thinking skills were not evident in tasks assigned to students. The acquisition of basic skills and test preparation predominated.
- Little evidence was observed that literacy strategies/skills are taught and assessed in the core content areas, i.e., ELA, mathematics, social studies, ESL or in special education classes.
- There is little evidence that faculty and staff have adequate understanding of effective techniques for supporting students with disabilities and ELLs in general education classrooms.
- There is little evidence that the integrated co-teaching program is implemented with fidelity. PD is not provided, and teacher assignments are inconsistent. There is little evidence of planning time for co-teachers, and the responsibilities of co-teachers are unclear and unbalanced.
- Student tardiness and lack of routines and procedures for bell-to-bell instruction result in significant loss of instructional time and reduced time on task.
- Grading practices do not demonstrate clear expectations for student academic performance across content or grade levels. Data reveals inconsistency between State assessment scores and local grades.

Recommendations:

- The District should establish goals for improving instruction, with high expectations related to classroom instruction and differentiation, flexible grouping, active learning, and co-teaching. An action plan for achieving these goals should be outlined in the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) and regularly monitored for progress.
- The overdependence on worksheets, workbook pages, whole class lessons and closed questioning techniques should be replaced with meaningful reading and writing experiences that promote application, analysis and synthesis across all curricular areas.
- The school should develop a vision and action plan for a targeted focus on literacy development across all content areas, subgroups and grade levels.

- A handbook of protocols and procedures for working with students with disabilities in general education classrooms should be developed and serve as the basis for PD, decision-making and monitoring for accountability.
- The District Director of Special Education should lead a collaborative effort to study the current co-teaching program, identify needed improvements and implement necessary changes, especially in terms of strengthening instruction for diverse student populations.
- School administrators should have clear expectations that students arrive on time for class and that instruction begins promptly. Routines should be developed and implementation monitored. Parents and guardians should be actively engaged in these discussions.
- The school leaders and teachers should develop and implement a schoolwide grading. Each department should then develop a policy that is consistent with these guidelines. These policies should be known to students and parents. The school leaders should monitor that these policies are consistently implemented.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- There is no evidence of a vision, mission or goals for the school.
- There is little evidence that the school administrators work as a collaborative team to establish and maintain systems, routines and procedures to effectively lead the school. This has resulted in a lack of accountability for teaching and learning as well as inconsistency of practice among departments.
- The current ad hoc committee, i.e., the Restructuring Team, has not been used fully to provide leadership for the school. Staff report lack of understanding of the school's accountability status and do not demonstrate a sense of urgency regarding the need to improve student performance.
- The current job expectations for department chairperson positions are ineffective in providing leadership, resources, and support for teaching and learning in the content areas.
- The relationships between school administrators and District administrators for special education and ELLs are inconsistent and undefined, resulting in overlapping responsibilities, duplication of effort or creation of gaps in such areas as curriculum, instruction and PD.
- The master schedule is neither efficient in deploying staff nor effective in supporting high quality instruction.
- Common planning time is provided each morning for faculty to meet. However, teams are not held accountable for use of their planning time, including any systematic monitoring of student achievement, improvement of instruction or efforts to horizontally and vertically align the curriculum.
- The Principal and the APs devote the majority of their time to school management, leaving little time for instructional supervision or program and policy development. There is little evidence that

administrators conduct classroom walkthroughs, resulting in a lack of formative feedback to bring about sustained improvement in classroom practice. The expectations for ensuring that teachers implement strategies learned in PD are low, and there is no formal follow-up to monitor implementation in the classroom.

Recommendations:

- The Principal should lead an effort to develop the vision and mission of the school. This should include a strategic plan with goals for school improvement, student achievement and behavior in order to provide the basis for practices, procedures and structures that convey high expectations for all staff and students. The implementation of the plan should be carefully monitored and its impact on student achievement measured.
- An effective leadership team should be created to develop a clear and consistent system for sharing leadership for school improvement. The administration should receive regular and ongoing high quality coaching/mentoring focused on effective school improvement.
- A culture of shared leadership should be developed in the school. The Restructuring Team should be expanded in order to lead the collaborative sharing of teacher practice, i.e., by teachers observing other teachers, teachers being observed by others and teachers participating in conversations about the quality/effectiveness of their teaching. The School Leadership Team (SLT) should then continue to develop as a professional learning community through data driven collective learning, comprehensive planning, documenting evidence and codifying practices for the school's improvement work, as well as implementing a system to monitor and adjust the school's progress.
- The roles and responsibilities of all District and school leaders, including department chairpersons, should be studied and reconfigured to provide needed curricular and motivational leadership.
- The District special education administrators should be active at the school in providing leadership support for improved curriculum/instruction and support for school administrators, staff and students. Decisions related to programs and services in the school to support students with disabilities should be made based on student need.
- School leaders should establish clear program and policy priorities for 2012-13 to drive the development of the master schedule.
- School leaders should develop and implement a plan for effective use of the morning common planning period. This plan should include protocols and expectations for the use of this time.
- The school leadership should implement a classroom observation schedule to monitor more closely the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Written feedback should be provided for all formal, informal and walkthrough observations, including clear targets for improvement. Follow-up observations should be included in the schedule to review progress. The school should seek support from the District in developing lesson observation protocols, including training for administrators in writing effective teacher feedback. The outcomes of lesson observations should provide a focus for the school PD plan. School leaders should then ensure that teachers are accountable for incorporating all the skills developed within PD activities into their instructional delivery.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- The school does not have a well-defined system for identifying at-risk students and providing appropriate staff, programs and materials to support the unique needs of students with disabilities, ELLs and other at-risk students.
- There is inconsistent implementation of special education services, resulting in students receiving limited instruction from highly qualified content teachers. There was limited evidence of planning among co-teachers, resulting in underutilization of special education teachers in co-teaching settings.
- The District Academic Intervention Services (AIS) Plan is not being implemented as required.
- Although activities are conducted to connect students to school and establish positive relationships between adults and students, a schoolwide system of behavioral supports and interventions does not exist. Currently, a process for using discipline referrals and suspension data to identify students needing further intervention does not exist.
- There is no evidence of a student attendance plan to address low student attendance rates and high rates of tardiness and truancy.
- Communication with parents is minimal and inconsistent, i.e., materials are not provided for families in native languages and collaborative decisions about student programming and interventions are not evident.
- Classrooms are not equipped with adequate instructional technology, resulting in students having limited opportunity to develop technological literacy skills.

Recommendations:

- The school should use student achievement data to properly classify students, identify needs and match program supports.
- Special education teachers should be required to attend daily team planning meetings and content departmental meetings in order to align planning efforts to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
- The District should update its AIS plan and work with the school leader to implement the plan, including the selection of content and instructional strategies to meet the individualized needs of all students. The Principal should implement the AIS plan with fidelity to support the unique intervention needs of each at-risk student.
- A schoolwide system of student support services (primary, secondary, and intensive supports) should be developed to build upon current school efforts to create a cohesive system of positive behavior strategies and supports.
- Since the school has an existing Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) initiative, a PBIS audit should be conducted with system deficiencies identified and addressed in order to reduce behavioral challenges. The school should create a system for collecting and analyzing attendance data and convene a core group of stakeholders to develop a plan and related policies

and procedures to improve student tardiness and attendance. These policies and procedures should be clearly outlined in the student Code of Conduct and annually distributed to parents and students.

- Administrators should create clear expectations for communicating with parents and families, including written materials in languages spoken by parents, a website, phone calls, conferences and protocols for the parent portal.
- School leaders should develop a technology plan that includes securing relevant equipment, providing PD, and developing technology related electives to enhance instruction and develop technological literacy among students.

V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data

Finding:

The school does not collect accurate data or use it to assess the effectiveness of current educational programs, identify schoolwide priorities for improving student achievement or inform the school's planning process.

Recommendation:

The Principal should convey a vision and collaborate with the School Leadership Team (SLT) to formulate an action plan that is included in the CEP to analyze schoolwide, grade-level data. Student performance, attendance, discipline, suspension and graduation rate data should be used to assess the effectiveness of current educational programs, identify schoolwide priorities for improving student achievement and inform the school's continuous improvement planning process. Implementing the Race to the Top (RTT) requirement to develop an Inquiry Team will support the efforts of the school.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- Due to the lack of a schoolwide PD plan, the intensity, duration, content and frequency of PD have not been adequately allocated to support school goals of continuous improvement.
- Teachers and administrators are not held accountable for incorporating strategies and evidence-based practices presented in PD into their daily instruction.

Recommendations:

- A comprehensive PD plan that includes all staff should be developed to address curriculum development, data analysis, instructional leadership, and master scheduling to meet the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs.
- School staff should be held accountable for carrying out strategies acquired in PD. The Principal should use the SLT, department and faculty meeting framework, as well as the PD program to establish research-based and data-driven Professional Learning Communities to plan, implement and evaluate changes in school and classroom practices.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- Inadequate District monitoring has resulted in a lack of expectations and support to guide the school toward improvement. There is insufficient collaborative planning between the District and school related to curriculum, instruction, management and resource distribution.
- There is a disconnect between District office and school administrators regarding the roles of each for school improvement leadership.
- Although the SLT has begun to meet to develop a Restructuring Plan, it does not yet have capacity to provide shared leadership in implementing and monitoring the CEP.
- There is no evidence of a comprehensive Districtwide PD plan to support school goals of continuous improvement.

Recommendations:

- District led strategic planning should be conducted in order to systematically place an accelerated focus on literacy and numeracy at all levels and to align curriculum, instruction and assessment.
- The newly formed District Office team should thoroughly review descriptions for all District and school administrator positions and modify these to empower school leaders with the authority to carry out their responsibilities. The District should undertake an active program to build the capacity of school leaders to discharge their responsibilities.
- The District should strengthen the capacity of the SLT so that it will have the will and ability to help guide the school’s improvement efforts in the future. The District should monitor and guide the development and implementation of the CEP by the SLT.
- The District should lead the development, implementation and systematic evaluation of a comprehensive District PD plan that is data-driven and allocates more time, resources and support for the school to implement the recommendations of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT).

PART 3: JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM OVERALL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Overall Finding

Reference	Review Team Finding for Restructuring (year 2) 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	Review Team Recommendation	✓
(c)	Develop and implement a School Restructuring Plan that includes significant <u>changes in staff, organizational structure, leadership and/or configuration</u> to address issues that continue to negatively impact student academic performance in identified areas. The School Restructuring Plan must also include one of the restructuring options required under NCLB and further defined by NYSED.	✓

C. Additional Information to Support the District in determining how the above recommendation should be accomplished.

- The District and school should prioritize the development of curriculum that is aligned vertically and horizontally with the CCSS. Embedded schoolwide literacy and numeracy strategies should be implemented in all curricular areas.
- On-going training and support to the SLT should be provided in fulfilling its role of shared leadership in guiding school improvement. This team should be structured to increase the school's capacity to analyze student performance data to make decisions and differentiate instruction for all students, particularly students with disabilities, ELLs and at-risk students.
- Leadership for the development of rigorous curriculum and improvement of instruction through student engagement should be the priority of the school administration. This should include the review and redesign of the administrative team and the department chairperson structure.
- District leaders should review their roles and modify current structures to provide support to school leaders in all areas of this JIT report.
- Time, staff, and space should be provided for a full continuum of student intervention and support programs to meet individual student needs, i.e., special education, related services, AIS, ELLs. Additional intensive supports to teachers and administrators to implement effective strategies to support at-risk populations should be provided.
- All staff should be trained and held accountable for regularly analyzing data to inform and improve their instruction within a research-based and systematic structure.
- Instructional staff and administrators should be provided with regular targeted PD to improve their capacity to implement improved instructional strategies as described in this JIT report.