

NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DBN:	09X219
School Name:	New Venture Intermediate School
School Address:	3630 Third Avenue Bronx, NY 10456
Principal:	Dominic Cipollone
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring Advanced - Comprehensive
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts - All Students; Black Students, Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	December 13-14, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Community and School Background

New Venture Intermediate School serves 439 students in grades 6 through 8. The school enrollment is 57 percent Hispanic and 43 percent Black. Of these students, 17.5 percent are English language learners (ELLs) and 21.8 percent are students with disabilities.

The administrative team consists of the Principal and two Assistant Principals (APs). The Principal has served the school for seven years, and the APs have served between six to seven years. There are 37 teachers on staff; 14 percent have been at the school for less than one year and 36 percent for fewer than three years. Ninety-nine percent of teachers are highly qualified. The rate of teacher turnover is 13 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.	✓
-	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).	✓

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
-	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 All Students subgroup in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓
	NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures	
-	Most recent NYC Progress Report Grade of C	✓
+	NYC Quality Review Score of Proficient	✓

B. School Strengths

The school provides an enrichment program that enhances the lives of the students. Many different forms of sports, academic and arts-based programs are provided by various partnerships across the city. Some examples are the Manhattan-based Financial Literacy program; Lincoln Center Jazz affiliates; a specialized Arts program; the Beacon program and the City University of New York.

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:

- There is no clear overall alignment between the various elements of the English language arts (ELA) curriculum. The written curriculum for ELA is neither rigorous, coherent, nor clearly aligned with current New York State (NYS) Learning Standards. There are few examples of clear scope and sequence documents. There are no pacing calendars evident for reading or writing, and the curriculum neither is differentiated to meet the needs of students, nor includes explicit teaching points. The curriculum units do not support standards-based instruction.
- There is no consistent expectation for lesson planning content that contains information about the teaching strategies to be used. The focus of all teachers is to present the lesson aim and the 'Do Now,' but very few pay attention to strategies for learning.
- Most teachers provide students few opportunities to handle, look at and use things. There are insufficient books in classrooms. In those classrooms where there are libraries, the collection has insufficient non-fiction and native language books.

Recommendations:

- The District/Network 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. The curriculum must be aligned to the new P-12 Common Core Learning Standards in English language arts and literacy to prepare for full implementation. All curricula should be developed by knowledgeable and trained individuals (national, State or local) who understand the key elements of curriculum development. Supporting materials should include curriculum maps/scope and sequence documents and pacing guides or schedules.

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.

- School leaders should ensure that all teachers develop standards-based lesson plans that are consistently planned around specific learning points. School leaders should frequently assess teacher planning to ensure that all teachers include the required content.
- The school should provide appropriate resources that support standards-based high level teaching and promote rigorous critical thinking activities in ELA.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- Lesson planning is very basic and ineffective. There is no reference to the needs of different students or differentiated activities that indicates that teachers in Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) classes as well as general education classes are using students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). In nearly all cases where there were English language learners (ELLs) who speak very little English there were no materials provided for them in their native language.
- In most lessons observed by the team, there was no grouping of students by teachers for the purpose of promoting effective learning through pairs, groups or teams of students. When students sat together, it was always in student chosen groups; most frequently these were friendship groups, which often led to low-level noise disruption.
- Students were frequently unsure of what they were learning, why, and what to do. While most lessons showed aims on the board, some lessons revealed student skill deficits so they could not access the task. In most lessons, the tasks were undemanding and offered little for students to do except listen to their teacher then either copy or answer some questions. Questioning skills by most teachers did not assess student understanding or extend student thinking.
- Several classrooms have little student work displayed, other than pictures, information and process charts. Few standards-based rubrics are posted.
- Few rooms have class routines and behavior expectations posted. In most instances, student behavior inhibits learning because of noise and unsatisfactory learning behaviors. In several classes, although students were compliant, engagement in learning was low.
- In most classes the pace of lessons is too slow. In the majority of lessons, transitions are not effectively managed, and there is no scaffolding or use of any tool or resources to maximize and promote effective learning.
- In nearly all classes students rarely use current technology that is integrated into the lesson. Very few teachers used the available SMART Boards. Apart from one teacher using a document camera, there was no creative use of technology in teaching.

- There is little evidence of teachers' using Individual Education Programs (IEPs) to enhance student learning through differentiated activities. In nearly all classes, all students undertook exactly the same activity in the same way.
- Co-teaching is ineffective, with some teachers insufficiently supporting the work of the other.
- The school's grading policy is confusing. The Principal explained a grading policy that contradicts the written policy for the school. However, in practice, teachers respond to the grading policy independently without guidance or an agreed interpretation of what constitutes, for example, high, medium or low quality student responses.

Recommendations:

- The school leader should provide PD opportunities for teachers on a variety of instructional strategies to promote differentiation of instruction. The focus of the PD should be on the use of data to drive lesson planning and instruction. Strategies should focus on ensuring that tasks match the academic needs of identified subgroups. School leaders should regularly monitor teacher planning and instructional practice in the classroom to check that differentiated activities are in place throughout the school. Ongoing PD should be provided for teachers who continue to struggle with using data to match work to the individual needs of students.
- School leaders should provide PD on the implementation of flexible grouping based on formative, interim and summative data. All students should be provided with differentiated tasks and activities that address their specific learning needs in all lessons. School leaders should monitor teacher planning and instruction to ensure that the use of data to group students becomes common practice in all classrooms. Ongoing PD should be provided as necessary.
- Teachers should ensure that students know what they are expected to learn and why by the end of the lesson. PD should be provided in supporting teachers in sharing objectives for learning and developing a variety of questioning techniques so that teachers gauge student understanding and promote critical thinking and problem solving skills. Administrators should make questioning techniques a focus for observation.
- Rubrics should be used as an integral tool in planning and assessing assignments. Teachers should participate in PD activities that model the use of rubrics. Teachers should use current best practice in feedback arising from assessment of student work and begin to include peer feedback and student self-assessment that should also aid students with 'next steps' goal setting. School leaders should monitor student work on display to evaluate the quality of feedback that is provided to ensure that it helps students improve and move to the next level.
- The school leaders should ensure that all students are informed and understand the school's code of conduct. Behavior policies should be posted throughout the school, and school leaders should ensure a consistent implementation of high expectations, consequences and incentives. School leaders, through observations and walkthroughs should ensure that the staff consistently promotes the positive behavioral expectations that are set.
- School leaders should ensure appropriate pacing and sequencing of teaching. Students should clearly understand expectations. For example, students should start and complete the "Do Now" within the first few minutes of class, rather than the often overly long sessions that currently exist in many classrooms. Teachers should plan effective closures so that students summarize the day's

lesson. Teachers can use outcomes formatively. Classroom rules and consequences should be discussed and posted.

- The school leadership, with Network support, should provide training and support to targeted teachers to ensure that they have the skills and competencies to effectively use technology, including laptop computers and SMART Boards, in instruction. School leaders should ensure that strategies learned in PD are fully implemented in the classroom so that technology is routinely integrated into teaching and learning.
- The school leadership should ensure that teachers have access to at minimum abridged forms of IEPs so that teachers know the needs of individual students with disabilities and plan lessons to meet their specific needs.
- Teachers should be provided with support, guidance, and, where appropriate, PD to implement a more effective co-teaching model. Teachers should be given opportunities to visit successful co-teaching classrooms. The co-teachers should be given scheduled collaborative planning time to ensure best practices in co-teaching instruction to support students with disabilities. School leaders should monitor co-teaching and paraprofessional classroom practices and provide feedback to teachers and paraprofessionals.
- The school leaders and teachers should review and revise the school's grading policy across all grades. Each department should then develop a policy that is consistent with these guidelines. These policies should be known to students and parents and posted in each classroom. School leaders should monitor that these policies are consistently implemented.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- The systems in the school do not foster a culture of excellence. They are either not in place or are operating at an inconsistent level. There are few schoolwide systems, routines and procedures in place and understood by all teachers. There are many incidences of unacceptable behavior in classrooms that is detrimental to effective learning. At transition times, few teachers were in hallways.
- Teachers have an insufficient variety of material resources for teaching. Not all classrooms have a library. The School Leadership Team (SLT) has never reviewed the school budget to comment on the allocation of funds.
- The school lacks an expert in the field of data interpretation and analysis, and there are no key staff empowered to provide expertise to aid collaborative and distributive leadership. There is no AP with a certification in ELA.
- School leaders have neither a consistent system for staff evaluation nor do they make the observation of lessons a top priority. This term, although all teachers have been observed informally, not all teachers have been observed formally, and some have not yet received feedback. School leaders say that instruction is a top priority, but the lack of a system to change instructional practices indicates that the actions based on this priority are inconsistent.

- There is no formalized weekly common planning in any subject or grade. Most of the grade 6 ELA teachers are able to attend a meeting with the literacy coach daily, but attendance is sporadic.
- PD is provided by the Network and some outside organizations. However, few teachers can articulate with any sense of detail any PD they have received. There is no evidence of PD having a significant impact on influencing teachers or changing teaching practice. Although the 2010-11 Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) goal was for 80 percent of teachers to have a Personal Professional Development (PPD) plan in place by the end of that school year, no PPD plans exist.
- The school leadership team does not function as an SLT. There has been no evaluation of last year's goals, no needs identification for this year, no discussion on CEP goal setting, no review of the budget, and no consideration of student performance data. The team has not yet seen the 2011-12 CEP.
- There is no evidence of the involvement of parents/families in any decision-making of the school.

Recommendations:

- The school leadership and teachers, together with the Network, modify the CEP to create an effective schoolwide plan to improve achievement. The school leaders and staff should articulate a clear vision and an agreed strategic plan that drives the school towards high student achievement and clearly outlines the responsibilities of staff, lead teachers and school leaders. The plan should include personal professional goals, action plans, PD, and should use all resources available through the Network. The implementation of the plan should be carefully monitored and its impact on student achievement measured.
- The school leaders should ensure that teachers possess and use a wide variety of teaching and student learning resources.
- School leaders should identify all areas of skills deficit and content specific weaknesses of staff. Key staff should be empowered, together with Network support, to ensure these deficiencies are addressed.
- 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 check on progress. School leaders should ensure teachers are held accountable for incorporating all developmental points presented through lesson observations and formal PD sessions. The outcomes of lesson observations should ensure changes to teaching.
- School leaders should create a flexible common planning schedule in which teachers can meet across grade levels and content levels and establish protocols and expectations for the use of this time.
- School leaders, with a team of key staff, should design a comprehensive PD plan to address the needs of teachers to improve their teaching. Providers of PD should be identified and a program of training scheduled. School leaders should monitor teaching to ensure the implementation of strategies learned in PD.

- An SLT that meets the requirements for membership should be established. The team should be provided with training and the information and materials needed to effectively guide school improvement efforts. The SLT should be apprised of the outcomes arising from an evaluation of the previous year's CEP goals; school budget; and the reasons for the proposed CEP goals when in the drafting stage.
- The school leader should work with the parent coordinator to ensure that parents are partners in any shared-decision making of the school.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- The school has recently established a Response to Intervention (RtI) approach that only has three students currently in discussion. There is no schoolwide uniform referral system established for identifying at-risk students.
- Students are not aware of promotion/graduation requirements and where they stand individually regarding their next steps on academic achievement, college or career planning. There are very few examples across the school of differentiation for students with disabilities to meet their IEP needs.
- The library is shared with two other schools in the same building. The Early Morning Intervention (EMI) program for students prevents other students from accessing the library resources. Eighth grade students do not have access to the library during their lunch period because it is being used for teaching. The library is a modern facility that is well-stocked; however, teachers do not actively encourage students to use it.
- There is no history of a systematic process to involve parents and families in the life of the school. Recently the school has developed a parent's organization with an average of 12 families that regularly attend meetings each month.
- The school has adopted the District code of conduct on behavior. However, there is no schoolwide behavior policy that is consistently implemented at any level to address the specific needs of the school. Students reported that discipline is inconsistent and, in some cases, not timely.
- When interviewed, some teachers, parents and students expressed a concern with regard to the safety of the school building. Students are aware of different groups of students who often deter other students' positive behaviors towards learning.

Recommendations:

- School leadership should select and define the specific structure and components of its intervention program, including the criteria for determining the levels of intervention to be provided to students, the types of interventions, the amount and nature of student performance data to be collected and the manner and frequency for progress monitoring.
- The school leaders, in coordination with the teaching staff, should design a guidance program to prepare students to effectively participate in current and future educational programs. Support should be included to help students who exhibit any academic, behavioral or adjustment problems. These programs should also encourage parental involvement.

- School leaders should ensure that teachers promote student use of the library for study, use of computers and leisure reading to encourage lifelong use of libraries. The library should be accessible for student and class use throughout the day.
- The school leader should gain support from the Network to develop a plan to improve parental involvement, including a range of communication strategies and home visits as appropriate. The school leader should build on a recent successful school/parent event and, in addition, should visit schools where effective strategies are in place that promote parent participation and work with staff to implement similar strategies in the school.
- The school leaders should assemble a team to review student disciplinary data using a schoolwide evaluation tool and revise the disciplinary behavior policy to address the specific needs of the school including procedures consistent with the District code of conduct. The school leaders should work closely with the Network in developing schoolwide PD on the consistent implementation and adherence to positive behavior strategies and supports.
- School leaders should provide a learning environment in which the students feel safe. School leaders should contact the Network for assistance with the development and implementation of a safety and security plan and the provision of PD to school staff to support plan implementation.

V. Collection, Analysis and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- There is no system that requires teachers to frequently analyze student data. Test scores and question analysis is not systematically done. Teachers are neither fluent nor confident in the interpretation, analysis and use of data. The school Inquiry Team has not yet developed a plan or any teaching strategies arising from any in-depth analysis of student performance data to address the issues that impact student achievement.
- Teachers do not systematically collect, interpret, analyze and use a wide range of assessment data to identify student strengths and weaknesses, address the individual needs of students or plan effective instruction to impact student learning. School leaders do not routinely require teachers to analyze data or hold them accountable for the performance of their students.
- There is no formal time in which teachers and school leaders meet to analyze data. The school no longer has a data specialist. Teachers have not been empowered to use data to aid their planning and instruction. The Inquiry Team lacks focus and oversight for their work.
- There is limited evidence that the school's new data information system is being used consistently across the school to assist teachers in developing effective strategies for teaching.
- Parents do not receive detailed analyses arising from data that outlines their child's learning needs, and they are not involved in setting goals.
- There is no evidence of a robust staff PD plan that is differentiated based on individual teacher needs. Student performance data is not used to explore in detail the reasons for student performance, and where low, a detailed plan of action put in place.

Recommendations:

- The school should revise the current system for data disaggregation and analysis to focus more closely on the student-by-student, class-by-class and subgroup-by-subgroup deficiencies in addition to whole-school and grade level monitoring. Professional guidance should be provided to ensure that all teachers incorporate item skills analysis of Acuity and predictive results to inform their instruction in all testing grades. Particular attention should be given to monitoring the development of students' skills as they move from grade to grade to check for vertical alignment in curriculum programs in each content area.
- School leaders should request PD support from the Network in developing the teacher skills needed to implement a more rigorous and systematic analysis of data. The school should hone these skills to identify precisely the aspects of ELA that are causing greatest concern. Plans should then be put in place to address these issues on either a school, grade or class level and to ensure that these areas are a focus for teaching and learning. The school leadership should monitor classroom practice and hold staff accountable to ensure that improvements are made.
- School leadership and instructional coaches should ensure that interim assessments are conducted by all teachers of ELA and that the data outcomes are analyzed in detail so that effective and new strategies or interventions necessary for individual or groups of students can be put in place. Consideration should be given to the creation of interim assessments that are aligned with and well-paced to the standards and administered every six weeks.
- The school leader should ensure that all teachers review and use student performance data, formative, interim and summative to ensure instructional strategies always meet the needs of individuals and subgroups of students. In addition, such data reviews should be used to identify students requiring one or more intervention services.
- The school leader should expand parent-teacher contact opportunities by sharing high and low inference data analysis of student work and providing monthly opportunities for teachers to share learning goals with parents.
- School leaders should develop a comprehensive PD plan based on student and teacher needs that is also closely aligned with the goals identified in the CEP. The plan should have as its primary focus improving teaching, learning and student achievement.

VI. Professional Development**Findings:**

- PD is based on aspects of the school's CEP goals. The goals are to improve the effectiveness of small group work and differentiated teaching strategies, but there has been no PD on small group work, and minimal PD on differentiation, which to date, is having no impact on improving the effectiveness of teaching.
- Teachers, both general and special education, do not have formalized opportunities for regular and frequent collaborative meetings.
- Feedback from school leaders' lesson observations to teachers is not having an impact on instructional practice, and teachers are not held accountable for implementing their learning from

PD. The literacy coach is not empowered by school leaders to take a stronger ELA leadership role to effect positive change in teaching strategies. There is no detailed feedback from school leaders to individual teachers arising from a thorough analysis of each teacher's student performance data and no subsequent PD program which is agreed upon and planned.

Recommendations:

- The school should develop and implement a PD plan designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and ensure that teachers participate in substantial PD in order to remain current with their profession and meet the learning needs of their students. The PD plan should be aligned with the school's CEP goals and should take into account the differentiated needs of the staff and the students.
- School leaders should provide common planning time for collaborative meetings among teachers of ELA within and across grades. School leaders should attend such meetings and ensure that agreed upon strategies that have the potential for improving student achievement are implemented consistently in classrooms. School leaders should ensure that detailed protocols are developed for the Inquiry Team that include a clear aim and a set of research and implementation objectives. The work of the Inquiry Team should be assessed to ensure they are effectively using time. School leaders should ensure that the work of the Inquiry Team filters into the classroom and positively impacts student learning and achievement.
- The school leadership should be more rigorous in their classroom observations and should hold teachers accountable for implementing strategies and skills acquired through PD offerings into their teaching.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- The Principal uses the Network for a wide range of PD and school support for teachers. However, there is no strong infrastructure to support effective teaching and learning across the school, except for at-risk students.
- The Network supports the school in providing assessment data analysis. However, currently that support is not being translated through tools to support teachers' understanding of how to use data.
- The Network support for parental involvement is limited.

Recommendations:

- The school leader should increase the available PD offerings for administrators and staff to support staff in improving student achievement and assist administrators in improving their operational leadership skills.
- The school should use all expertise and support available through the Network to disaggregate and analyze data to inform school goal setting and teacher planning.
- The school leader should reach out to the Network for further support in developing school links with parents and in particular raising the level of parental involvement in their children's schooling.

- The Network should support the school in the implementation of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) recommendations.

Other Concerns:

- The 15-minute advisory period at the end of each school day is ineffective in relation to its objective. Most teachers either allow period 8 to run into the advisory time for 10 to 15 minutes or allow the students to sit and talk in groups. There is no effective monitoring of the quality of the program on student learning.
- The 37.5 minute remedial intervention program, known as EMI occurs each day before period 1. There are 180 students registered for the program across the entire school. The student absence rate is eighty-eight percent. Of the activities that occur, the one-to-one interaction between the teacher and student as a teacher listens to a student read is supportive of that student’s needs, but few students overall benefit from the program. There is no effective monitoring of the quality of the program on student learning.

PART 3: JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM 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 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.	✓

C. Information to support the District in determining how the above JIT recommendation should be implemented.

- Ensure that communication with staff effectively presents the mission, vision and goals for school development and improvement. Strategies should be outlined in detail and related clearly to the school’s goals so that teachers become stakeholders in the development of the school.
- Establish an effective and functioning SLT. The members of the SLT should be provided with information that allows them to discuss the needs of the school and therefore be able to ask questions and produce a CEP. The information they need includes:
 - previous year’s CEP goals and the evaluation of the outcomes made by school leaders;
 - student performance data showing such indicators as the AYP;

- trends in progress of student groups by grade;
 - access to the school budget reports; and
 - priorities identified for whole school PD and how this will impact on student learning.
- Increase the expertise of staff in specific areas. The school leaders should work with the Network to raise the skills of key staff so they may become team leaders with very specific areas of responsibility. For example:
 - being able to lead teams;
 - having strong depth and breadth of understanding of ELA standards and how to translate these into teaching units, not only of content, but process in relation to student needs at this school;
 - improving the APs' and literacy coach's knowledge, understanding and use of student performance data significantly so that in-school PD with support of the Network can be managed to ensure ELA teachers understand data and its implications for their teaching;
 - leading grade teams in the coordination of the advisory program.
- Ensure that observation of teaching and learning is a priority.
 - Schedule classes to allow for one subject specific common planning period per week in which all subject teachers for a specific grade meet with the purpose of improving curriculum planning, lesson planning, and the pedagogical skills of all teachers.
 - Identify the student skill deficits that cause the slow levels of learning by most students in ELA and ensure these issues are systematically and progressively addressed to aid future learning. For example, a large proportion of students have difficulty in reading because their understanding of phonics is weak and their fluency in reading, writing and speaking is also at a low level.
 - Use parent and student outreach resources to improve the attendance rates of students in the EMI program and ensure teachers understand the school leader's expectations with regard to instruction and progress. The school should also improve the effectiveness of the small group teaching and the advisory period.
 - Use attendance and punctuality data to determine the level of achievement and level of need of those students who are frequently absent or late. Use parent and student outreach resources to increase attendance and reduce lateness.