

NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DBN:	09X232
School Name:	IS 232
School Address:	1700 Macombs Road Bronx, NY 10453
Principal:	Neifi Acosta
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring Advanced - Comprehensive English Language Arts- All Students; Black Students; Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners, Economically Disadvantaged Students
Area of Identification:	
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	January 10-11, 2012

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Community and School Background

IS232 serves 496 students in grades 6 through 8. The school enrollment is 0.2 percent Asian, 19 percent Black and 80.8 percent Hispanic students. Of these students, 46 percent are English language learners (ELLs) and approximately 21.6 percent are students with disabilities.

The administrative team consists of the Principal and two Assistant Principals (APs). The Principal has served the school for six years and the APs have served between six to ten years. There are 29 teachers on staff; seven percent have been at the school for less than one year and 17 percent for fewer than three years. Ninety-seven percent of teachers are highly qualified. The rate of teacher turnover is four 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).	✓
-	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	✓

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
	subject/area(s).	
	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 enrichment program provides frequent cultural experiences, such as theatre and museum visits, to centers of excellence in Manhattan.
- The school has an on-site health clinic operated by Morris Heights Hospital that provides medical, dental and counseling to students.

C. Key Findings and Recommendations

Summary of the key issues (causal factors), and other areas of concern, identified during the on-site diagnostic review that are negatively impacting student achievement in identified areas, as well as recommendations, as related to the seven JIT Indicator Categories:

I. Curriculum

Findings:

- There are no modifications to the curriculum outlining differentiation for the school's English language learner (ELL) and students with disabilities. However, for the rest of the school there is a suitable curriculum in place that is rigorous and aligned to New York State (NYS) Standards.
- ELLs and students with disabilities have limited access to high-quality and current instructional resources that are aligned to the curriculum and the NYS Standards. There are too few resources in Spanish for ELLs, and the resources for students with disabilities are insufficient and not always of high quality.

Recommendations:

- The school leaders should work collaboratively with staff and Network personnel to incorporate modifications to the curriculum that outline differentiation for ELLs and students with disabilities. School leaders should monitor curriculum planning and observe classrooms to ensure that a rigorous curriculum is implemented that meets the needs of its students with disabilities and ELL students.
- Instructional and student learning resources should be available to support and enhance the learning of students with disabilities and ELL students.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- In most cases, teacher planning is ineffective because no lesson plan was in evidence or little more than an outline of what content is to be covered was available. Most teachers do not use a variety of instructional strategies. The norm is mostly direct instruction, and there is almost no planning for differentiated instruction. Not all teachers have Individualize Education Programs (IEPs) for all their students with disabilities; therefore specific needs are not being met.
- Classroom grouping is often inappropriate for the learning needs of students. For example, one Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) class has become a temporary repository for poorly behaved general education students. On Fridays, for several years, all classes are organized on the basis of the school's own 'Peer Teaching/Accountable Talk Fridays' planned program. The activities are designed to promote peer discussion, conferencing and collaborative learning; however, class observations and NY State student performance data suggests that the program is having no effect on improvement in teaching or learning.
- Questioning is nearly always closed and very rarely provides a check of student understanding.
- Students are mostly passive learners and, therefore, are not actively engaged in meaningful instructional activities that sustain good levels of concentration. Teachers do not routinely promote higher order thinking skills, inquiry or problem solving. They rely on direct instruction and give students very few opportunities to engage in any form of active learning and teamwork.
- Quality academic work is displayed in classrooms and the hallways, but most often without reference to standards-based rubrics. Student work frequently lacks written feedback with next learning steps. There is evidence of a uniform grading policy, but it does not provide guidelines for teachers to modify their curriculum in light of the students' specific needs.
- In many lessons observed by the team, classroom management was unsatisfactory.
- The pacing of teaching varies between slow and confusing and excellent. Therefore, learning is not always maximized.
- Instructional time at the start of each day is lost because a large number of students are late to school. During the day, some students are tardy.
- In most lessons, technology is not integrated into instruction or used to meet the needs of all students. While SMART Boards are used by teachers, they are generally used as a projector of questions students are required to answer. Student use of technology is rare.
- Co-teachers are not consistently planning or delivering instruction together, which negatively impacts the effectiveness of the co-teaching model. There is no team teaching strategy to benefit students' learning. Students are not fully benefiting from having two certified teachers in the classroom. The teachers are not effectively distributing their time or attention to provide additional support to students.
- Although goals are based on NYS Standards, learning goals for the lessons are not known or understood by students.

Recommendations:

- The school leaders should provide professional development (PD) opportunities for teachers on a variety of instructional strategies to promote differentiation of instruction. Strategies should focus on ensuring that tasks match the academic needs of identified subgroups; therefore teachers need to analyze student achievement data. School leaders should regularly monitor teacher planning and effectiveness.
- Teachers should be provided with support, guidance, and, where appropriate, PD to implement a more effective classroom arrangement to support active learning. A rigorous evaluation of the impact of the Friday Peer Teaching program on student learning and its value in contributing to the narrowing of the achievement gap should occur.
- School leaders should make questioning techniques a focus for observation. They should ensure that more PD is undertaken on questioning skills. Teacher lesson plans should include pre-created questions that require critical thinking and discussion. Teachers should target students and use wait time and not allow students to opt-out.
- School leaders should provide PD to introduce teachers to a wider range of instructional strategies that can be used in the classroom to promote greater student participation in the learning process and higher order thinking skills. Teachers should be expected to implement these strategies, and school leaders should monitor the effectiveness and provide additional PD for teachers when necessary.
- School leaders should monitor student work in notebooks and on display and evaluate the quality of feedback that is provided to ensure that it helps students improve and move to the next level. Rubrics should be routinely used as an integral tool in planning and assessing assignments and making students fully aware of NYS Learning Standards.
- The school leaders should ensure that all students are informed and understand the school's code of conduct. The school leaders and staff should develop a student handbook that includes the code; post the policies throughout the school; and ensure a consistent implementation of expectations, consequences and incentives. School leaders, through observations and walkthroughs, should ensure that staff consistently promote the high behavioral expectations that are set.
- PD in best practices in pacing instruction, including questioning techniques and responding to the learning styles of students in order to maximize and improve instructional time, should be offered with Network support for those teachers whose pacing is ineffective.
- The school leaders and teachers should develop a plan and related policies and procedures to improve student lateness and tardiness. These policies and procedures should be clearly outlined in the student Code of Conduct and annually distributed to parents and students.
- 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 incorporated into classroom practice so that technology is routinely integrated into teaching and learning.

- Co-teachers should work together in classrooms to jointly support student learning. They should be given scheduled collaborative planning time and given opportunities to visit successful co-teaching classrooms. The school leaders should closely monitor co-teaching classroom practices and provide constructive feedback to teachers.
- Teachers should ensure that lesson objectives are shared with students so that they have a good understanding of what it is they are learning. Lessons should include explicit teaching points and provide practice sessions for independent work to assess student learning before teachers proceed to the next teaching point. Teachers should make sure that teaching points are related within the same lesson and should be standards based. School leaders should ensure through the observation process that this practice is uniform.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- There is no evidence of a culture of excellence conveyed across the school to raise student achievement in such a way that will close the achievement gap. School goals are not effectively evaluated. There is no School Leadership Team (SLT). The Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) for 2011-12 remains in an unfinished draft stage, and the school leader indicates that this is not a priority.
- Some systems and routines are in place that would allow for the effective operation of the school as a safe and potentially effective learning environment. However, students indicate that they feel unsafe in hallways, especially after lunch and at the end of school. The cafeteria at lunchtime is a rowdy, undisciplined environment.
- There are insufficient Spanish language books in the library and gaps in learning resources for students with disabilities, especially for specialist programs. This includes resources for differentiation. There are insufficient English as second language (ESL) teachers for the size of the ELL population.
- There is no schoolwide evaluation of teaching, except through lesson observations. The school leader conducts very few lesson observations; this activity is delegated to the school's two APs. The APs do not work through a common lesson observation rubric.
- There is currently no common planning time for most teachers.
- The school leader provides some PD for staff. Most PD is provided through the AP with responsibility for English Language Arts (ELA) and turn-keyed. However, there is currently no systematic PD plan for the whole staff based on the needs of each teacher.
- There is no Parent Association. There is evidence to show that parents are willing to be involved in school life, but they are not encouraged to be included in any decisions that impact the education of their children. The Title I set aside for parents has not been spent through a formal process involving a Parents' Association. The Title I meeting has not occurred. Parents do receive all communications in their home language.

Recommendations:

- The school leaders and staff should develop a Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) to create a schoolwide plan to improve achievement. The school leaders and staff should articulate a clear vision and plan that drives the school towards high student achievement and clearly outlines the responsibilities of staff and leaders. The plan should include goals, action plans, PD and should use all resources available through the Network. The school leader should ensure that the school has a functioning SLT. The SLT should be provided with training and the information and materials needed to make decisions and effectively monitor the CEP and its impact on student achievement measured.
- School leaders should review the implementation of the code of conduct since a significant proportion of students indicate that they do not feel safe at certain times of the school day.
- The school leaders should ensure that more Spanish language books are available in the library and that no gaps exist in the learning resource for students with disabilities. A review by school leaders is required to determine whether there are enough ESL teachers in school to provide the required time for such teaching.
- The school leadership should collectively implement a classroom observation schedule to monitor more closely the quality of teaching and learning across the school and draw on analyses of student data to inform their evaluations. 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. The school should seek support from the Network 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 create a flexible common planning schedule in which teachers, especially teachers of ELA, can meet and collaborate to improve teaching and learning. Protocols and expectations for the use of this time should be set.
- School leaders, with support from the Network, should design a comprehensive PD plan based on student and teacher needs that is closely aligned with goals identified in the CEP. The plan should have as its primary focus improving teaching, learning and student achievement.
- The school leader should hire a parent coordinator to assign someone the task of ensuring that parents are regularly involved in support their children's education and the school, including in shared decision making.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success**Findings:**

- The school's system for identifying at-risk students and providing Academic Intervention Services (AIS) is not effective as no student improvement in performance is being made. Intervention programs have not been evaluated.
- Access to the library is highly controlled and restrictive. It is confined to scheduled class visits and pre-approved visits by individual students. The library has an insufficient collection of Spanish language books. It is a shared resource between three schools.

- School leaders have distributed the Department of Education’s (DOE) code of conduct to parents, students and staff as required. However, there is inconsistency in the implementation.
- Two special education classrooms on the ground floor are isolated from the rest of the school because they are located close to the main public entrance. These students are marginalized because they and their teachers have no easy access to administrative support or essential resources.
- Transition to classes is not always smooth and seamless. In particular, lateness to the first teaching period each day is high, causing the loss of a significant amount of instructional time. At other times of the day, a small proportion of students are late to class.

Recommendations:

- The school leader should obtain assistance from the Network to ensure that student data collected is used to develop an effective small group system to evaluate the program for at-risk students, including Students with Disabilities and ELLs.
- School leaders should devise ways in which the library can be a more accessible and relevant resource to students. School leaders should also ensure that the library becomes a multi-media center and provide many more Spanish language books, as 80 percent of students are Hispanic.
- School leaders and staff should review student disciplinary data, ensure that the code of conduct is consistently implemented schoolwide and evaluate its impact on improving student behavior. The policy should be posted throughout the school, including classrooms, to promote expectation and understanding. School leaders should be highly visible in the school and regularly make implementation of the code a focus of observations and walkthroughs.
- School leaders should review the security, equality of opportunity and sense of inclusion within the school community felt by the students and staff arising from the location and use of two rooms for special education classes near the school entrance on the first floor.
- The school leaders should review the start of the school day and develop policies and procedures to take action to eliminate the high levels of lateness and loss of instructional time across the school. These policies and procedures should be clearly outlined in the student Code of Conduct and distributed to parents and students annually.

V. Collection, Analysis and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- There is little evidence that the school conducts any systematic data analysis by subgroup to create schoolwide priorities for improvement. Data information is posted in the building and school leaders and teachers indicate that some item analysis is discussed at faculty meetings. However there is no evidence that this information is used for lesson planning or an improvement in teaching.
- School administrators have access to a wide range of data, but there is no comprehensive analysis that is used with teachers to focus on key areas for improvements in student performance.

Teachers use a limited amount of data, most arising from non-uniform formative systems to identify and then re-teach specific student skill deficits. The internally created quizzes are not shared or based on an agreed rubric among teachers; therefore, achievement benchmarks are inconsistent within the school.

- Teachers do not have data binders, although the school leadership is in the process of preparing such binders for distribution to staff.
- There is no systematic process for the school leaders or teachers to analyze and discuss their data findings. There is no full-time staff member responsible for data collection, analysis and outcomes monitoring. The Network, at the school's request, provides the school with an F status data specialist who periodically visits the school and has produced charts showing student performance.
- There is no effective system in place for on-going evaluation of at-risk students.
- Other than through report cards, there is no evidence that there is a system in place to share information among support staff, parents and students concerning student progress data. Grade 6 and 7 students when interviewed indicated that they do not have 'next step' goals, but grade 8 students do. No information was provided to substantiate if parents receive IEP progress reports.
- School leaders use information based on classroom observations without reference to other data sources, i.e., such as formative and summative student assessments, grade level trends, rubrics or PD needs assessments to provide teachers with evaluative information concerning their teaching. This absence of data alignment results in a lack of clearly defined individual teacher professional growth plans and an absence of differentiated PD designed to improve specific skills and areas of instruction.

Recommendations:

- The school should use the Network to conduct a thorough item analysis and subgroup analysis to determine the causes of underperformance. The NYS data should be reviewed from year-to-year across grades and within subgroups with instructional needs accordingly adjusted.
- Teachers should use student performance data, summative, interim and formative, in a rigorous way to create instructional groups, design skill-based activities for small groups of students with similar needs, and adjust the planned curriculum, with a special focus on at-risk students and identified subgroups.
- The school leaders should ensure that all teachers have data binders, keep accurate assessment data in the binders, and use the data to plan and guide instruction.
- The school should revisit the current system for formative and summative data disaggregation and analysis to focus more closely on student-by-student, class-by-class and subgroup-by-subgroup deficiencies, in addition to the current whole school and grade monitoring. Teachers should have rigorous training in the ways to analyze, interpret and subsequently use data to improve their planning and teaching.
- School leadership, with support from the Network, should ensure that an effective schoolwide interim assessment is conducted in each of the content areas to clearly identify specific needs of students requiring AIS.

- The school leader should expand parent-teacher contact opportunities by sharing data analysis of student work and providing opportunities for teachers to share learning goals with parents.
- School leaders should ensure that student performance data together with rubric-based lesson observation information is used to promote discussion between school leaders and teachers about their PD needs and professional growth plans.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- There is no schoolwide comprehensive PD plan that is aligned with school goals to improve teacher competencies. PD for ELA is limited to a program with consultants to improve their teaching.
- Special education teachers have no formal opportunities to meet or work collaboratively. There is no common planning time for ELA teachers. There are no collaborative sessions that explore the meaning of data in relation to the school, grade or subject. There is no data analysis and, therefore, no information based on data analysis to drive improvements in instruction. The school has no Inquiry Team.
- There are no formal mechanisms for ensuring that teacher learning from PD is implemented, although staff is questioned about the implementation of recommendations arising from AP school leader observations. There is no system of teacher accountability that ensures school leaders discuss teaching quality, student performance and teachers' professional needs.
- There is no staff development to address the needs of ELLs, students with disabilities or students at-risk within the context of ELA.

Recommendations:

- The school leaders should develop and implement a PD plan designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to ensure that teachers participate in substantial PD to 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.
- The school leader should schedule dedicated planning time and establish inquiry focused teacher teams and the benchmarked deliverables for each team. Teachers should share best practices and collaboratively assess student work. School leaders should monitor teaching and learning to ensure that strategies learned in PD offerings have an impact on improving student achievement.
- The school leaders should be more rigorous in their classroom observations and should hold teachers accountable for implementing strategies and skills acquired through PD offerings into their instructional practice.
- With the support of the Network, school leaders should include PD sessions for specialist and general education teachers on how they can more effectively meet the specific learning needs of students with disabilities and ELLs. In addition, school leaders should ensure that opportunities for turnkey training are consistently offered to teachers.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- There is evidence to show that the Network provides input concerning the development of the school CEP goals; however, the school has not made modifications based on the Network input.
- The Network provides assistance to increase parental involvement that includes systems for contacting parents. However, the school has limited commitment to extending its reach to parents and, therefore, the Network has had little involvement beyond assisting in the setting up of systems to make contact with parents.
- The current CEP is an incomplete draft. The Network has been unable to ensure its completion.

Recommendations:

- The Network should provide additional training to school leaders in establishing an SLT, CEP development, SMART goal setting, implementation, and monitoring. 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.
- School leaders should request more support from the Network to promote greater parental involvement in school, at the very least through the Parent Association and SLT.
- The Principal should request that the Network works with the school to ensure that the CEP becomes a working document and is recognized as a tool for school improvement.
- The Network should support the school in the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT).

Other Concern

The security at the main entrance should be strengthened to ensure that all visitors are asked for identification and the purpose of their visit when signing in.

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.

- The school leadership team should produce a CEP with SMART goals that is owned by the school community, including all staff and parents that allows for a highly focused, committed and speedy implementation of many strategies to secure active and effective student learning. Some of the strategies should include:
 - ensuring that all teachers set personal professional goals related to their class and subject development;
 - a stronger collaborative culture of learning among teachers, for example, the establishment of common planning time during the teaching day for teachers of ELA to meet frequently and share, talk, explore, agree, and plan teaching. These meetings should be structured and have a planned focus;
 - ensuring that teachers, when common planning time is established, produce units of work that are differentiated and subsequently discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these units as they are taught;
 - inter-visitations so teachers develop and grow from sharing experiences;
 - strategies to evaluate, discuss and moderate each teachers' quizzes arising from the Friday Peer Support Program so that there is a standards-based rubric used by all ELA teachers;
 - attendance at PD sessions leading to teachers' full understanding that students have preferred and often different learning styles;
 - all teachers receiving the IEP for all special education students they teach;
 - increasing teachers knowledge and understanding of how to analyze and use student performance and progress data to aid their lesson planning, teaching and students' learning;
 - using the good practice of the school's most effective teachers.
- In view of the high proportion of students with disabilities, the school leader should ensure that a high quality specialist leads and monitors the planning and teaching of students with disabilities.
- Teachers of students with disabilities require PD on the use and interpretation of the new IEP system, the Special Education Students Information System (SEIS). In addition special education teachers also need PD on classroom management strategies, differentiation of instruction and administrative support. This is required to ensure that all teachers with students who have IEPs have a copy of the student's IEP showing the students' goals and specific needs and use them as a focus to plan their lesson. Special education teachers should have common planning time to aid their PD and ensure that student learning is enhanced.
- In view of the very high proportion of students whose first language is Spanish, the school leader should consider increasing the number of ESL teachers and certified bilingual teachers in order to provide the required number of minutes for ESL instruction.
- The school leaders should adopt a rigorous and systematic approach to the evaluation of its work. For example, the school's own 'Peer Teaching/Accountable Talk Fridays' program should be evaluated immediately to determine the contribution of the program in its current form in promoting effective active learning and student understanding and contributing significantly to closing the achievement gap based on NY State tests.

- School leaders should conduct formal and informal observations that result in written feedback a few days after the observation.
- There is an urgent need for the school to involve parents in all elements of school life. The school should appoint a parent coordinator and establish a fully functioning School Leadership Team and Parents' Association.