NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DBN:	29Q192
School Name:	IS 192 The Linden
School Address:	109-89 204 Street Queens, NY 11412
Principal:	Harriett Diaz
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring (year 2) - Comprehensive
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts - All Students; Black Students; Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities; and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	January 10-11, 2012

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Community and School Background

IS 192 The Linden Middle School serves 645 students in grades 6 through 8. The school enrollment is one percent Asian, four percent Hispanic and 94 percent Black students. Of these students, five percent are English language learners (ELLs) and approximately 22 percent are students with disabilities.

The administrative team consists of the Principal and three Assistant Principals (APs). The Principal has served the school for 9.5 years and the APs have served from two to 11 years. There are 44 teachers on staff; 9.6 percent have been at the school for less than one year and 29 percent for fewer than three years. All teachers are highly qualified. The rate of teacher turnover is 13.4 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	✓
	NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures	
-	Most recent NYC Progress Report Grade of C	✓
+	NYC Quality Review Score of Proficient	✓

B. School Strengths

- A sense of community exists in the school so that relationships are positive and the care of the students is a high priority.

- Parents and students appreciate the before, after and Saturday school programs.

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:

- A written curriculum is in place for English Language Arts (ELA), based largely on a published curriculum, but with little rigor in implementation and use of performance indicators. The curriculum is generally aligned to New York State (NYS) Learning Standards. The school is implementing the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) tasks per the NYCDOE expectation.

- The curriculum planning calendar does not list in-depth strategies aligned to NYS Standards and scope and sequence documents. Pacing calendars are not used consistently well by teachers to support their teaching so the quality of instruction across the school is inconsistent.

- Materials, resources and technology are not uniformly evident in all classrooms, and barely adequate in some. Some gaps exist, for example in technology and texts. As a result, students cannot fully access stimulating and engaging materials in all classrooms.

Recommendations:

- The Network should support the school leaders to raise awareness of the key elements of effective curriculum development, including how performance indicators can be effectively used to determine the impact of curricula on student achievement.

- The Network should work with the school to provide teachers with documents and calendars that specify in-depth strategies that are aligned with the curriculum while showing more substantive progress across units of study.

- The school should develop an interim strategic plan with timelines to increase the provision of resources, particularly in technology and texts.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- Few examples of differentiated instruction were observed in classrooms. The use of varied instructional strategies, particularly to meet the needs of the identified subgroups, is inconsistent across the school. Nearly all lessons observed were teacher-directed and did not take into account student learning styles. As a result, students were not always able to complete the assigned task.

- In the majority of observed lessons, teachers did not use students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in modifying lesson plans or making decisions. As a result, identified student needs were not consistently met, and nearly all lessons were taught using a "one size fits all" approach. The linguistic and academic needs of ELLs are insufficiently understood by teachers to modify, augment or differentiate instructional practices. Consequently, these students struggled to participate in the lessons and, in some cases, did not participate at all.

- Classroom grouping for instruction is almost entirely whole-group direct instruction. Students sit in groups, but do not function as a group. Consequently, few opportunities exist for students to work together, cooperate and discuss their learning.

- Questioning skills varied greatly among teachers, with a majority of questions requiring factual recall and one-word answers. In a limited number of classes observed by the team, lessons incorporated open ended questions that led to useful student discussion and the achievement of learning objectives. In these lessons, students were more engaged and interested.

- There was limited evidence of the development of higher order thinking skills in instructional practices. Students are not given frequent opportunities for reflection or self-evaluation. The use of content specific vocabulary is inconsistent, and few teachers challenge students to use this vocabulary themselves.

- While some high quality academic student work is displayed with standards-based rubrics, feedback to students is inconsistent across the school. Some teachers provide students with specific next steps, but it is not a universal practice. As a result, students are unclear as to how to improve their performance.

- Pacing and sequencing of instruction in ELA classes varies greatly. The amount of time spent on specific writing tasks is often disproportionate to the task requirements. Poor pacing also contributed to students becoming bored and disengaged.

- Student engagement in meaningful activities is rare in the majority of classes because the work given did not meet their needs. In ELA classes, few were motivated by the activities, as the teachers did not use strategies to engage the students. Student concentration was not sustained because the work was not always at the appropriate level of difficulty. Generally, students were passive learners.

- Use of appropriate technology in the delivery of lessons is inconsistent and often insufficient. When available, SMART Boards were often used only for projection, and not interactively. Limited technology and linked resources are available to teachers and students. Teachers talk of "barely enough" resources, a view shared by students and parents.

- Many students are not able to articulate learning goals because teachers do not clearly explain them. As a result, students are not clear about what is expected from the lesson, or what they should be seeking to achieve. However, learning goals are displayed in classrooms.

- The grading policy is inconsistent from class to class. This confuses students. The grading policy does not place the greatest emphasis on academic elements and so does not sufficiently reflect high expectations for student performance.

Recommendations:

- The school leader should provide professional development (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 monitor and evaluate lesson plans to ensure that all general and special education teachers use information from IEPs to modify instruction for students with disabilities and ELLs who are students with disabilities. School leaders should then monitor and evaluate instruction and provide feedback to ensure that these lesson plans are used.

- School leaders should provide PD on the implementation of flexible grouping based on formative, interim and summative data, so that all students receive 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. On-going PD should be provided for teachers as necessary.

- The school leaders, with Network support, should provide PD so that teachers move from questions that are predominantly closed and require one-word answers or only recall/ comprehension to more open-ended questions that challenge students more. Other skills, including the use of wait time and random selection, should be included in the PD.

- The school leaders should ensure instruction routinely includes opportunities for students to reflect and self-evaluate. Subject specific language should be pre-taught to ensure limited proficiency does not impede student learning. Opportunities should be provided for all students to develop higher order thinking skills, for example by summarizing and rephrasing new information.

- The school leadership should provide teachers with PD activities that model the use of rubrics to provide quality teacher feedback, peer feedback and student self-assessment. Emphasis should be given to providing students with clear, challenging and realistic “next steps” in their learning. School leaders should monitor student work in notebooks and on display to evaluate the quality and consistency of feedback that is provided.

- PD in best practices in pacing, 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. Best practices in the school should be identified by school leader observations

and walkthroughs and then disseminated to ensure better impact on instruction and student outcomes.

- School leaders should ensure that teachers collaborate and share best practices so that all student work is appropriately challenging and demanding. Teachers should provide regular opportunities for students to work cooperatively and to discuss issues so that they become more proactive learners. School leadership should carry out regular, focussed observations of lessons to monitor that this practice is consistently occurring. If necessary, targeted teachers should be provided with further PD.

- The school leadership should work with the Network to provide training and support to targeted teachers to ensure that they have the skills and competencies to effectively use technology in instruction. School leaders should ensure that there is sufficient equipment for technology to be fully implemented in the classroom when appropriate to the content. School leaders should also ensure that strategies learned in PD are fully implemented in the classroom so that technology is routinely integrated into teaching and learning.

- 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 guided 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 consistent.

- The school leaders and teachers should review and revise the school's grading policy and ensure consistency of approach for academic rigor. This policy should be known to students and parents and posted in each classroom. School leaders should monitor that the policy is consistently and fully implemented.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- Systems in place to monitor and review school/student performance are basic and lack rigor or sufficient accountability. Although goals are set, there is no clear or coherent pathway to how and when they will be achieved. There is no strategic plan that clearly and specifically outlines how the roles that key staff are to play or how progress towards challenging and achievable goals is to be measured. School leaders do not set consistent expectations for the performance of all students and staff. While all staff members want students to do well, implementation is weak and high achievement remains an aspiration.

- School leaders have not ensured that resources are sufficient for all student needs. Resources to support the instructional program are broadly sufficient, but student learning could benefit from additional resources, for example technology and current texts.

- The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent because of a lack of rigor and accountability in the monitoring, supervision and support of instruction, although school leaders say supervision and support is a priority in the school. Observations have unclear focus, with variable quality of feedback and little follow-up undertaken. School leaders do not have a consistent, common approach. While the school incorporates student data and teacher observations among multiple

measures, these are inconsistently and ineffectively used, so the impact is very limited and feedback does not sufficiently drive instructional improvement.

Recommendations:

- School leaders should develop a shared vision for the school. They should modify the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) to create an effective schoolwide plan to improve achievement and articulate the school goals more consistently to all staff. The plan should drive the school towards high student achievement and clearly outline the responsibilities of all staff and leaders. The plan should include goals, action plans, PD and should use all appropriate resources available through the Network. The implementation of the plan should be monitored carefully and its impact on student achievement measured. Leaders and staff should be held accountable for meeting timelines.

- A strategic plan with timelines should be drawn up to ensure there are sufficient resources, particularly technology and current texts, to fully support instruction and create a more effective learning environment.

- The school leadership should implement a consistent and effective classroom observation schedule to monitor 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. Feedback should also cite how the instruction has impacted subgroups such as students with disabilities. 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 and individual PD plans.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- There is a system in place for identifying at-risk students upon entry and sufficient programs and materials to support them; however, regular monitoring of their placement is not performed to ensure that their instructional needs are sufficiently met.

- Although students have access to technology before, during and after school hours, students indicated computer access is not sufficient for their needs.

- There was no evidence of material in any language other than English.

- Monitoring of hallways between classes is insufficient, so transition between classes is slow and students arrive late to class. S=A lesson starting on time is often dependent upon the individual teacher, and there is no consistency across the school. In addition, late logs are used inconsistently for late arrivals. Student lateness sometimes leads to disrupted lesson beginnings.

Recommendations:

- The school leaders, with Network support, should improve the monitoring of at-risk student placement to ensure student needs are fully met.

- The school should develop a technology plan to increase resources in the school so that students have regular access to instructional technology in the classroom. Students should be given access

to enable them to master technological literacy skills. Where necessary, PD should be provided to enable successful implementation. School leaders should monitor technology usage through observations and walkthroughs.

- The school should provide materials in languages that reflect the school population so that all parents can be full and effective partners in their children's education.

- The school should develop a more effective plan to improve student punctuality. During transitions, key staff should supervise hallways regularly to eliminate tardiness. This should be clearly outlined in the student Code of Conduct and distributed to parents and students annually. All teachers should use late logs consistently to document late student arrival.

V. Collection, Analysis and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- Although there is a system in place for the collection of schoolwide data, there is little evidence that data is analyzed sufficiently to determine student strengths and weaknesses, the effectiveness of current educational programs, or to inform the school CEP.

- All school administrators and teachers collect a range of assessment data, for example from State examinations and school pre-assessments, to determine student performance levels. However, data collected is rarely used adequately to inform instructional planning sufficiently for it to impact positively on student progress. Although regular review of each student's progress based on the analysis of interim assessment results are conducted, they have had little impact on instruction and student achievement because they lack rigor.

- Information in Teachers' Anecdotal Notebooks (TAN) is used inconsistently, for example to identify student strengths and needs. Interviews indicated that assessment data is not sufficiently used to develop action plans to meet the needs of students. However, teachers do maintain a notebook with student goals, test average, homework grades, assessment summary and current classes.

- Data is used inconsistently and largely ineffectively to gauge teacher effectiveness or to inform differentiated professional growth. Additionally, teacher PD growth plans are not based on collected student or teacher data.

Recommendations:

- The school should revisit the current system for data disaggregation and analysis to focus more closely on student-by-student, class-by-class and subgroup-by-subgroup deficiencies in addition to the whole school and grade monitoring.

- Teachers should use student performance data, summative, interim, and formative, 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 should agree on a consistent approach to the use of teacher notebooks that enables all teachers to use data collected to fully meet the needs of all students.

- School leaders should develop a cohesive PD plan based on student and teacher data to gauge teacher effectiveness and to guide their individual professional growth plans.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- Generally, most staff members do not fully understand how the analysis of data can be used to improve student learning outcomes and the specific needs of the school. Although all teachers are provided opportunities to regularly collaborate on the use of data-driven instructional techniques, and some staff can articulate examples of these activities in their instructional practice, they are a minority.

- The limited range of feedback mechanisms in place means that the design of PD is not closely matched to the changing needs of the students and teachers.

- Systems to hold staff accountable for incorporating strategies learned in PD into their daily teaching are ineffective because they lack sufficient consistency, clarity and accountability.

- Many but not all staff has been provided with PD intended to meet the needs of ELLs. Additionally, school leaders have not recently revisited PD priorities given the school's participation in the Phase 1 initiative for students with disabilities.

Recommendations:

- The school leaders should work with the Network to arrange PD for all staff to help them fully understand how data can be used to improve student learning outcomes, including differentiated instruction, and the specific needs of the school.

- The school should develop more thorough and comprehensive feedback methods to determine and analyze the PD needs of staff so that the PD provided better meets the needs of the identified subgroups.

- The school leader should establish a formal and an informal observation process that includes oral and written components focused on improving instruction and the identified needs of teachers. The school leader should hold APs accountable for providing documentation of follow-up for all teacher evaluations and for establishing a program of differentiated PD that meets the needs of teachers and students.

- The school leaders should ensure that all members of the staff who work with ELL students and students with disabilities receive PD in effective instructional practices that meet their needs. Additionally, the school leaders should monitor the schoolwide implementation of PD opportunities made available and evaluate their impact on better meeting the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities.

VII. District Support

Finding:

The Network supports the school in identifying priorities that will improve its academic program across all subgroups. However, the Network's monitoring role is more limited, particularly in the area of ELA,

and specifically the performance of students with disabilities. As a result, the school has not received targeted support as an identified school in need of improvement.

Recommendations:

- The school should work closely with the Network to monitor performance of all students, particularly those subgroups and subjects identified, to better target support in the areas most required.

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

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 changes in staff, organizational structure, leadership and/or configuration to address issues that continue to negatively impact student academic performance in identified areas.	√

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

- School leaders should develop a revised CEP with specific objectives and timeframes. This plan should include the following:
  - development of a strong monitoring system;
  - a highly effective observational system; and
  - effective use of all data to inform and modify the plan.

  In order to do this, the professional capacity of the APs should be further developed. The plan specifically needs to address the following groups of students, by including programs to address their needs: over-age students, students with interrupted formal education and new immigrants. Defining staff roles should include re-evaluation of the school structure. The present structure is complicated and does not support either effective instruction or student learning.

- Staff roles and responsibilities should be clarified and redefined. The school leader should prioritize her time to take the lead role in instructional leadership. Clearer lines of supervision and accountability should be put in place for all staff, including APs. They should develop a common and shared understanding of the school goals, and how those goals are to be achieved. School leaders should

begin to hold each other accountable, particularly for timely completion of tasks. All initiatives undertaken must fit into the goals of the CEP, and the number undertaken at any one time should be limited to what can realistically be achieved in a stated time frame.

- As a priority, school leaders should lead the staff to develop a shared view of the features of effective teaching. There should be an emphasis on meeting the needs of all students and subgroups through differentiated instruction and better use of grouping. Students should be more active: they should understand the lesson objective in order to focus on its achievement. Instruction should promote their thinking skills, and they should develop better understanding of themselves as students, particularly how well they are doing and what they need to focus on next in order to achieve more.

- School leaders should develop a system to monitor teaching and learning more effectively. Expectations should be clear, the system should be consistent, and follow-up should measure impact on student learning. The general expectation should include a focus on subgroups.

- When meeting with staff, school leaders should make sure that faculty, department and inquiry meetings are productive, with outcomes that are of benefit to the school and its students. All staff should work toward the objectives of the CEP and school mission. Raising student achievement for all subgroups and particularly in ELA should be a clear focus of any initiative introduced. All goals should have set timelines and objectives to be achieved.