NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DBN:	31R044
School Name:	Thomas C. Brown
School Address:	80 Maple Parkway Staten Island, NY 10303
Principal:	Joseph Miller
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring (year 1) - Focused
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts- White Students
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	December 13-14, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Community and School Background

PS 44 Thomas C. Brown serves 907 students in Pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school enrollment is two percent Asian, 39 percent Hispanic, 47 percent Black and 12 percent White students. Of these students, 10 percent are English language learners (ELLs) and approximately 27.1 percent are students with disabilities.

The administrative team consists of the Principal and two Assistant Principals (APs). The Principal has served the school for three years, and the APs have served between two to 14 years. There are 71 teachers on staff; 2.8 percent have been at the school for less than one year and 5.6 percent for fewer than three years. All teachers are highly qualified. The rate of teacher turnover is 0 percent.

PART 2: ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

A. Performance on Key Indicators of Student Achievement Trends and School Progress

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
	NYSED Quantitative Performance Measures	
-	Negative trend data for one or more identified subject/areas and subgroups for the past two consecutive years, as indicated by a decrease in the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 and/or a decrease in the Performance Index.	✓
-	School is ten or more points away from meeting its Effective Annual Measurable Objective (EAMO) for one or more identified subgroups in subject/area(s) of identification.	✓
	NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures	
-	Most recent NYC Progress Report Grade of C	✓
+	NYC Quality Review Score of Developing	✓

B. School Strengths

- The school environment is safe, welcoming and orderly. Students are respectful and well-behaved.

- The Pupil Personnel Team (PPT) supports students and their families within this diverse school community.

- The school's library is well-managed, resourced and is an excellent facility for the whole school community.

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

Finding:
A written curriculum is in place for English language arts (ELA), social studies and science. School leaders have selected a published ELA curriculum. However, it is not aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and lacks rigor. In addition, the ELA curriculum does not effectively support the teaching of writing.

Recommendation:
The Network should work with the school on the development of curriculum in all core areas (especially in ELA) and ensure that it is clearly aligned with the current New York State (NYS) Learning Standards. The curriculum must be aligned to the new P-12 CCLS in ELA and literacy to prepare for implementation in school year 2012-13. All curricula should be developed by knowledgeable and trained individuals (national, State or local) who understand the key elements of curriculum development.

All teachers and administrators should participate in professional development (PD) on how to plan and implement a curriculum with rigor, as well as on delivery methods that are student-centered. The curriculum should be relied upon as the basis for assessing individual student mastery and progress. Walkthroughs and formal evaluations should include how well the teacher knows and implements the curriculum for the subjects being taught.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- The use of varied instructional strategies is inconsistent across the school. However, there is evidence that across grade levels, some teachers are effectively planning to meet the needs of students. Many lessons observed were entirely teacher-directed and did not take account of students' preferred learning styles.

- Few examples of differentiated instruction were observed in classrooms. In many classes, some students found the work too easy, while others required further support. In classes with students

with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs), some teachers differentiate instruction, but it is not consistent across the school.

- There was limited evidence of the use of high order thinking skills and challenging instructional practices. Questions to students were often closed, and there were missed opportunities for students to offer opinions or arrive at conclusions. There was little evidence of reference to complex vocabulary, problem solving research, and decision-making in most lessons.

- There is no schoolwide grading policy and, consequently, rubrics and assessments are inconsistently applied. Rubrics are too complex or difficult for student understanding, and do not relate to student outcomes. This results in many students being unclear about how to improve their writing, as the teachers' comments often did not provide explicit next steps.

- The pacing and sequencing in many classrooms is weak, and instructional time is lost through transitions that lack structure and urgency. In addition, the transition to the after-school program was slow and poorly managed.

- Student engagement is variable because many instructional activities lack challenge. Some students, although seated in groups, were only passively engaged, and many students neither worked collaboratively nor interacted with one another.

- SMART Boards and laptops are underutilized in most classrooms. Few teachers used SMART Board technology. At best, teachers used this technology simply as a screen, with no student interactivity. There was minimal evidence of technology used by students in classrooms, or examples on bulletin boards in hallways or classrooms.

- In most Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) and 12:1:1 classes, the use of the collaborative teaching model is not effective and is not skillfully implemented. Often teachers work in isolation, without an effective strategy to combine elements of special education teaching and content area skills and concepts.

- Learning goals for lessons are not expressed in language that students can understand and assimilate. Consequently, many are not sure of what they are to learn or why.

Recommendations:

- The school leadership should rigorously monitor classroom instructional practices and give on-going quality feedback to teachers. School leaders should ensure that teachers are held accountable for implementing strategies to address identified areas for improvement. School leaders should ensure that teachers implement differentiation strategies learned through PD into their classroom practice.

- School leaders should regularly monitor teacher planning and instructional practice in the classroom to verify 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 that meets the individual needs of students.

- School leaders should, with Network support, move from teacher-posed questions that require one-word answers or are recall and comprehension based to questions that require students to support answers by citing text, by elaborating on the answers of other students, and by summarizing and rephrasing new information.

- School leaders and teachers should agree on a schoolwide grading policy. Rubrics should be used as an integral tool in planning and assessing assignments. Rubrics, to raise expectations for students, should be written in a language they understand. Teachers should participate in PD activities that model the use of rubrics to provide teacher feedback, peer-feedback and student self-assessment. School leaders should monitor student work in books 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.

- School leaders should ensure appropriate pacing and sequencing of instruction. The students should clearly understand expectations and should be encouraged to be self-directed and personally accountable. Teachers should plan effective final exits so that students summarize the day's lesson, the teacher is able to assess the degree to which students mastered the day's content, and students are able to efficiently transition to the next class.

- Through collaboration during common planning time and PD opportunities provided by the Network, teachers should ensure 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. The administrative team should carry out regular observations of lessons to monitor that this is consistently occurring.

- 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 should provide on-site training for the full implementation of co-teaching model strategies. Scheduled common planning time should be provided so that co-teachers can equally share in the planning and delivery of effective instruction. Administrators should monitor the implementation of effective co-teaching strategies through the formal and informal teacher observation process and ensure that best practices are shared throughout the school. Where teachers are not effective, further PD should be provided. School leaders should regularly monitor the incorporation of learning goals in direct instruction and should highlight good practices in sharing learning goals as the focus of an inter-visitation schedule.

- 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:

- The school leadership does not foster a culture of excellence that is shared by all of staff. A culture of high achievement is not fully embraced by all staff and the administration. Significantly, a number of staff is resistant to change or to improving their instructional practice.

- The school leader does not allocate sufficient financial, human and material resources to meet the needs of students in academic need, especially students achieving Level 1 and Level 2. There are ample human resources in the building, and many are underutilized.

- The school leader does not have an effective system for teacher and staff evaluation and teacher observation, both formal and informal. Evaluations tend to be generic in nature and do not focus upon student learning, despite moves towards embracing the teacher effectiveness model.

- School leaders, in conjunction with the Network, provide ample opportunities for all school staff to receive PD. However, the school leadership does not monitor and evaluate PD for effectiveness.

- The School Leadership Team (SLT) does not effectively review progress towards goals in the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). There are no interim benchmarks based upon data to determine how well the school is doing.

Recommendations:

- The Principal, with the support of the administrative team and the Network, should modify the CEP to create an effective schoolwide plan to improve achievement. The school leaders and staff should articulate a clear vision and strategic plan that drives the school towards high student achievement and clearly outlines the responsibilities of staff and leaders. The plan should include 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 leader should reassign staff resources to provide the appropriate student/teacher ratio in Academic Intervention Services (AIS) classes for all students scoring levels 1 and 2. Supplemental materials should be purchased to support these classes. The school leader should establish protocols to provide all eligible students with the appropriate AIS support. The school leader should carefully monitor these services to ensure maximum student attendance and effectiveness.

- 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. The school leadership should seek support from the Network in training for administrators in writing effective teacher feedback. The outcomes of lesson observations should provide a focus for the school PD plan.

- The school leadership should ensure that all PD is relevant, fully reflects needs identified to achieve school goals, takes place as agreed, and is monitored to assess its effectiveness.

- The school leadership should seek Network support in working with the SLT to develop understanding of their responsibility for setting goals for the CEP. The CEP should be a regular item on the agenda for SLT meetings so that all members of the team are fully aware of school goals and the progress being made towards them.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Finding:
The school does not have a well-defined system to identify at-risk students. While there are ample human resources within the building, the leadership of the school does not assign them appropriately or strategically.

Recommendation:
School leaders should establish a robust system for identifying at-risk students. They should ensure that all teachers are assigned appropriately to provide AIS and other intervention services and are trained and provided with different materials to supplement the materials used in the classroom daily. Supervision is imperative to positively impact student achievement. School leaders should monitor AIS implementation through observations and walkthroughs.

V. Collection, Analysis and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- Although the school collects a wide range of data, student data is not being rigorously analyzed to identify precisely what aspects of ELA need to be the focus for improvement in instruction and student achievement.

- Though the school is aware of their academic weaknesses in ELA, there is no concrete plan to strategically and rigorously address these shortcomings for all students. The school has implemented a Response To Intervention (RTI) program for grades 3 through 5 and is hosting Supplemental Education Services (SES) for others. Not all students in academic need are receiving supportive academic services such as AIS. The school lacks a sense of urgency to bring about improvement and meaningful change in student achievement in ELA for all students in academic need.

- Some teachers use a assessment strategies such as ARIS and ACUITY. However, as indicated in interviews with both the Principal and the data specialist, the information that was ascertained from the data collected is not consistently used to guide and inform instruction and behavioral management at the classroom level.

- There is limited evidence of teachers analyzing student work to generate data on students strengths and next steps. Few teachers use data to inform ELA instructional planning. Data binders were not observed during classroom observations. Data is not being consistently analyzed by all teachers to target and develop high quality ELA instructional supports and strategies for students.

- Interviews with the Principal and data specialist provided little indication that data is used to gauge teacher effectiveness, inform differentiated PD, or develop teacher professional growth plans.

Recommendations:

- The school leadership 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. All teachers should 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 student skills as they move from grade to grade to check for vertical alignment in curriculum programs in each content area.

- The school leadership should develop a system to use data to drive instruction. In developing this system, the school should consider the following:
  - establishing and/or redefining inquiry focused teacher teams and the benchmarked deliverables for each team;
  - dedicating time in teacher schedules for regular team meetings and developing an interim assessment calendar;
  - creating and administering the new P-12 Common Core Learning Standards aligned interim assessments;
  - completing an interim assessment analysis worksheet delineating the error and distractor analyses of the assessment data; and
  - developing, implementing, and monitoring action plans to instructionally address learning deficits as indicated by the analysis of the assessment data.

- The school leadership, with the support of the Network, should provide PD for teachers in how to use data to improve instruction. This should include the variety of methods that can be employed within the classroom to meet the individual learning needs of students. School leaders should identify this as a focus for observation.

- The school leadership should ensure that all teachers have data binders, keep accurate assessment data in the binders, and use the data to plan and guide instruction. Observation of lessons should include a review of how the outcomes of data analysis are used by teachers to inform instructional delivery and differentiated practice.

- Tests and assessment data should be used as a focal point for driving school improvement. Discussion about data should be used as the basis for meetings at every level and should be at the core of all school improvement efforts.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- The comprehensive professional development plan is not aligned to teacher competencies and student need. Instead, there has been an exclusive focus upon Domain 2 of the Danielson Teacher Effectiveness Framework that deals with classroom environment.

- All teachers are mandated to attend weekly grade Inquiry Team meetings to discuss student data, intervention support and instructional strategies. However, there is little impact of this in the classrooms because teacher use of this data is inconsistent across the school. While school leaders and the Network support team provide training according to teacher survey/needs assessment and data from classroom observation, there is a lack of focus on implementing specific instructional strategies and minimum expectations for all teachers. Teachers are not being held accountable for incorporating strategies learned from PD into classroom instruction.

- The implementation of differentiated instructional strategies following PD is inconsistent across the school. All teachers are offered PD to support the instruction of ELLs and students with disabilities. However, the quality and effectiveness of monitoring of instruction is weak.

Recommendations:

- The school leadership 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.

- The school leadership should conduct follow-up observations after PD sessions to ensure that teachers incorporate the strategies learned into the classroom instructional program. The school leadership should develop detailed recommendations based on the PD provided and specific next steps in their observation reports to focus their next observation.

- With the support of the Network, school leaders should review the PD program and include sessions on how teachers can more effectively meet the specific learning needs of students with disabilities and ELLs. The leadership team should monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning of classes with ELLs, students with disabilities and all at-risk students. Clear guidelines for all teachers of these groups of students should be developed.

VII. District Support

Finding:

Network PD opportunities have not had sufficient impact on instruction or student achievement or upon the effective use of data.

Recommendations:

- The Network should work in tandem with school leaders in observing instruction, developing strategies and identifying PD opportunities to bring about sustained improvements in teaching and learning. The Network should also evaluate the effectiveness of schoolwide PD in ELA.

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

Other Concern:

The school leadership has now realized the importance of re-engaging with parents to revisit the Student Ethnic and Race Identification form. According to SED accountability measures, the school has up to 80 white students who are not proficient. The school is unable to identify these students and attempts are only now being undertaken to recode these students through consultation with parents and care-givers.

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. The School Restructuring Plan must also include one of the restructuring options required under NCLB and further defined by the DOE.	✓

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

- The DOE, Network and school leadership should ensure that all students are correctly coded based upon the Student Ethnic and Race Identification Form. This will enable SED accountability measures, based upon AYP, to be accurate and for the school to effectively track the achievement of subgroups of students.

- The Principal should be assigned a mentor to provide support in instructional leadership, use of resources and the strategic use of data.

- A qualified and experienced literacy coach should be hired to support all staff through the provision of high quality PD, the modeling of lessons and the facilitation of intra- and inter-visitations to model classrooms throughout the city. The coach should be familiar with the standards and should be able to help revise the current curriculum.

- School leaders should observe the quality of instruction based upon the new teacher effectiveness rubric, through informal walkthroughs and formal observations, and provide quality feedback to teachers based upon student learning. School leaders should then, following consultation with all staff, set minimum expectations for effective classroom practice that puts student learning at the heart of pedagogy.

- School leaders, with the support of the Network, should analyze data rigorously and precisely identify what aspects of ELA need to be the focus for improvement in instruction and student achievement.

- All students working below grade level should receive academic support services, such as AIS.