

**NYSED/BUFFALO CSD JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

<b>BEDS Code:</b>	14-06-00-01-0018
<b>School Name:</b>	PS 18 Dr. Antonia Pantoja Community School of Academic Excellence
<b>School Address:</b>	370 Normal Ave. Buffalo, NY 14213
<b>Principal:</b>	Valarie Kent
<b>Restructuring Phase/Category:</b>	Restructuring (year-1) - Comprehensive
<b>Area(s) of Identification:</b>	English Language Arts - All Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged Students
<b>Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:</b>	February 27, 2012 – March 2, 2012

**PART 1: INTRODUCTION**

**Community and School Background**

School 18 serves 502 students in pre-Kindergarten through grade 8. The school enrollment is one percent American Indian, 33 percent Black, 34 percent Hispanic, 21 percent Asian, nine percent White and two percent multiracial. Of these students 40.5 percent are English language learners (ELLs) and 14.9 percent are students with disabilities.

The administrative team consists of the Principal and one Assistant Principal (AP). The Principal has served the school for ten years, and the AP has served five years. There are 52 teachers on staff; 13 percent have been at the school for less than one year and 31.5 percent for fewer than three years. All of the 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 (+/-)	<b>School Performance Indicators</b>	✓
	<b>NYSED Quantitative Performance Measures</b>	
-	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 indicate an increase in the achievement gap between identified subgroups and the <b><u>All Students</u></b> subgroup in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓

## **B. School Strengths**

The school is working to address the needs of its diverse student population and create a supportive, safe and healthy environment. This was evidenced by the following:

- Staff members expressed that they care deeply about the students. This was corroborated by parents and community members in focus groups.
- Students appear to be happy and enjoy being in the school. This is evident in an increased attendance rate and a decreased suspension rate over the past year.
- The school makes use of community partners based on their expressed commitment and participation in the school.

## **C. Key Findings and Recommendations**

### **I. Curriculum**

#### **Findings:**

- The school does not have a formal written English language arts (ELA) curriculum.
- The ELA curriculum program does not foster rigorous and engaging instruction. In the lessons observed, there was insufficient application of higher order thinking skills, problem solving and project-based learning to stimulate and engage the students
- Teachers and administrators use the terms “standards,” “program” and “curriculum” inconsistently. The standards are sometimes equated with the curriculum rather than becoming the foundation for the operational curriculum, i.e., units and lessons. Confusion is also evident in the references to Response to Intervention (RtI), which is sometimes referred to as a program instead of a framework for decision-making and interventions.

#### **Recommendations:**

- The District should work with the school on the development of curriculum in all core areas and ensure that it is clearly aligned with the current New York State Learning Standards. The curriculum must be aligned to the new P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in ELA and literacy and mathematics to prepare for implementation in school year 2012-13. All curricula should be developed by knowledgeable and trained individuals (national, State or local) who understand the key elements of curriculum development.
- All teachers and administrators should participate in professional development (PD) on how to plan and implement a curriculum with rigor, as well as on delivery methods that are student-centered. A wide range of instructional strategies should be used to promote students’ higher level thinking, problem solving and research skills in all content areas. 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.
- The school should clarify, define and share key terms related to curriculum and programs and then reconcile their definitions with District usage of these terms.

## II. Teaching and Learning

### Findings:

- There is a lack of effective formative feedback to improve student learning in ELA and systematic closing of the loop among planning, implementation and evaluation of actions. Student ELA work shows more evidence of teacher praise and corrections than of formative descriptive feedback. There is inconsistent use of student goal setting.
- Although there is an expressed commitment to differentiation among staff, many ELA classes rely on whole class instruction. Few examples of differentiated instruction were observed in ELA classrooms. The forms of differentiation included individualized assignments for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and small student groups working on their own.
- The co-teaching model in ELA was not effectively implemented in classrooms that were visited. There was usually one teacher doing all the instruction and the other acting in a subordinate position.

### Recommendations:

- School leaders should provide teachers with PD in using constructive and timely feedback and goal-setting/monitoring, including the use of task-specific rubrics to support learning and self-monitoring. This PD should be followed by a commitment on the part of teachers to incorporate the use of timely, respectful, and constructive feedback whenever assessment occurs and to support students' assessment of their own learning.
- The District should provide PD in differentiation of content, process and assessment. Such PD should be complimentary but articulated with the school's current attention to Sheltered Instruction and Observation Protocol (SIOP) strategies and data-driven decision-making. Best practices should be shared throughout the school.
- Teachers should be provided with support, guidance, and, where appropriate, PD to implement a more effective ELA 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 and to implement balanced literacy to support students with disabilities. The administration should closely monitor co-teaching classroom practices and provide constructive feedback to teachers.

## III. School Leadership

### Findings:

- The staff and school leadership are not collaborative in their approaches to improving student academic attainment. The school does not have a unified and shared vision. The current mission and vision have not been revisited since their initial development. Staff members work in a variety of committees and groups based upon the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) needs assessment findings, but they operate as individual entities. There are insufficient opportunities for school leaders, teachers, staff and students to articulate and reflect upon the different aspects of their work.

- School administrators do not monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in a systematic manner to bring about effective, sustained improvement in classroom practice. Observations are at times inaccurate, feedback is not specific, and teacher shortcomings do not improve.
- There is a lack of the development of existing teacher leaders and insufficient leadership capacity development for teachers and for students. The same building teachers and coaches are selected for multiple functions and tasks, including dissemination and turn-keying existing content, which compromises their ability to engage in the actual work of coaching, while limiting the opportunity for other staff to become teacher leaders.
- The school leader has not communicated to the staff that schoolwide standards are to be upheld. Core content teachers and school leaders express that their students just cannot meet high academic expectations.

**Recommendations:**

- The District should identify an external mediator/coach to assist staff and school leadership in developing a shared vision and goals, appropriate protocols and processes to build a trusting, collaborative working relationship.
- The school leadership should seek support from the District in developing lesson observation protocols, including training for administrators in writing constructive, respectful, timely and effective teacher feedback. The school leaders should be able to support staff in the setting and monitoring of goals as well as reflective practice, which the school leaders should incorporate into their conversations with staff about teaching and learning. The outcomes of lesson observations should provide a focus for the school PD plan.
- The school should be canvassed to identify individual expertise and provide more opportunities for different teachers to develop and share their expertise in curriculum, instruction and assessment with other members of the school community. Student leaders should be identified to represent the school through its governance structures.
- The school should establish high schoolwide expectations and ensure that all staff consistently implement school rules and policies to encourage students to reach their full potential.

**IV. Infrastructure for Student Success**

**Findings:**

- Not all special education students are appropriately identified or appropriately placed in the school, and there is inconsistent access and use of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) by staff.
- The school has many students who are recent immigrants and who speak up to 20 different languages. It is difficult to find translators for the students, and the school lacks teachers or aides that speak the language of many of these students.
- There are inconsistencies in the implementation of schoolwide behavior policy. The school has adopted and is using the Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) model to address behavioral issues; however, classroom visits and interviews revealed an inconsistent use of procedures associated with the model and with the District code of conduct. Such inconsistency has led to varying expectations on the part of teachers relative to the consequences that are to be

applied to different infractions and to their perception that the school leadership is not enforcing consequences in a consistent fashion.

- Technology is accessed and used inconsistently by teachers throughout the school.
- Despite the school's efforts to involve parents in the school community through surveys and events, parental involvement is still limited.

**Recommendations:**

- The District should improve student placement procedures for students with disabilities, including ELLs who are also students with disabilities. The District should also provide and monitor procedures for ensuring that the student IEPs reach school staff in a timely manner and that they are used to guide the identified support to be provided.
- The District should provide the school with support, e.g., aides for those students who speak Burmese, Arabic, Karen, and Nepali.
- The school leaders and PBIS subcommittee should review the requirements of PBIS with teachers and students and hold them accountable for implementing the PBIS model. Parents should be made aware of these expectations on a regular basis.
- The District should provide advanced training for teachers who have a SMART Board and awareness level PD for teachers who have not yet participated in PD in the use of the SMART Board. It should also offer all teachers awareness level experiences related to Web 2.0 tools.
- The school leader should work with its community partners, District Parent Coordinator and school based parent involvement subcommittee to elicit increased parental involvement via events and activities that enable parents to witness student success or work.

**V. Collection, Analysis and Utilization of Data**

**Finding:**

There is inconsistent use of existing structures such as grade level meetings and planning time for the analysis and use of data and student work, as well as insufficient monitoring of actions taken in response to the data that is analyzed.

**Recommendation:**

The school should deepen and expand its work on the data inquiry team by implementing a clear and timely set of dissemination activities for each grade level to ensure that all teachers benefit from and can use the protocols from the training. The school should also revisit the criteria for the effective use of District data training and use it to include specific decisions and actions, set agendas, monitor actions, and identify next steps. The school leaders should monitor teacher use of student and other data that is analyzed at grade level meetings to modify instruction and address specific student needs.

**V. Professional Development**

**Findings:**

- The school has not developed and implemented a comprehensive PD plan based on the and needs of teachers and students.

- Even though the school has made a concerted effort to adopt SIOP strategies in every classroom, current PD activities do not sufficiently enable teachers to develop a deep understanding of SIOP and other differentiation strategies.

**Recommendations**

- The school leaders and staff should develop a comprehensive PD plan that is grounded in the school vision, based on student and teacher needs, inclusive of the District offerings, and aligned with the goals identified in the CEP. The plan should have as its primary focus improving teaching, learning and student achievement.
- The District should, as resources allow, provide a full-time ESL coach to assist teachers in all grade levels in their implementation of ELL strategies.

**VI. District Support**

**Finding:**

There is some confusion and misinformation on the part of teachers related to their use of the pacing guide and the programs that support the curriculum.

**Recommendations:**

- The District should establish and communicate clear guidelines to the school related to the requirements for teachers in using the pacing guide and District-supported programs.
- The District should provide support in implementing the recommendations of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT).

**PART 3: JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM OVERALL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION**

**A. Overall Finding**

Reference	Review Team Finding	✓
(b)	The school has made some progress in identified areas, and may make AYP with the implementation of additional focused interventions to accelerate improved student achievement.	✓

**B. Overall Recommendation**

Reference	Review Team Recommendation	✓
(b)	Develop and implement a School Restructuring Plan that clearly identifies root causes and/or contributing factors for low student performance in identified areas, and incorporates focused interventions to address identified issues and accelerate improved student achievement. The School Restructuring Plan must include one of the restructuring options required under NCLB and further defined by the District.	✓

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

- While there is a commitment on the part of teachers and school leaders to address student needs and to improve teaching and learning, the school should be guided by an effective schoolwide plan and unified vision that operationalizes its work, i.e., the CEP. The plan should integrate all the different initiatives that the school is implementing to improve student achievement.
- An external mediator or coach should assist the school staff in improving communication between and among staff members. Such assistance should include the development and implementation of non-negotiable norms for effective discourse and feedback, along with the use of targeted protocols for communication and decision-making.
- The school leadership should work with its School-Based Management (SBM) team to consider ways of maximizing the use of existing structures, i.e., grade level meetings, faculty meetings, and common planning time so that these structures are used more effectively to disseminate and deepen the initiatives that are being implemented. Included in their deliberation should be an ongoing attention to the use of existing protocols.
- Teachers and aides should have access to more in-depth coaching around the use of differentiated instruction and SIOP strategies. In addition to having the District provide such coaching for all staff members, the Principal and AP should identify teachers who effectively use differentiation and enable other teachers in the school to observe them via inter-visitations.
- The District, with the support from its Office of Special Education and Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Center (RSE-TASC), should provide job-embedded coaching, demonstration lessons, and support for their use of student data, including student IEPs, so that teachers can work seamlessly as a team and better address student needs.