

NYSED/BUFFALO CSD JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code:	14-06-00-01-0043
School Name:	Lovejoy Discovery School # 43
School Address:	161 Benzinger Street Buffalo, NY 14206
Principal:	Colleen Carota
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring Advanced English Language Arts - All Students, African American Students; Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Area of Identification:	
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	March 26, 2012 – March 29, 2102

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Community and School Background

Lovejoy Discovery School # 43 serves 577 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school enrollment is 26 percent Black, eight percent Hispanic, one percent Asian, 61 percent White and four percent Multiracial students. Less than one percent of the students are English language learners (ELLs), all of whom are students with disabilities. Approximately 21 percent of all the students are students with disabilities.

The administrative team consists of the Principal and one Assistant Principal (AP). The Principal has served the school for less than six months, and the AP has been at the school between four and five years. There are 37 teachers on staff; eight percent have been at the school for less than one year and 16 percent for fewer than three years. All teachers are highly qualified.

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	✓

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
	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 <i>All Students</i> subgroup in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓

B. School Strengths

- Staff view themselves as a cohesive, collaborative and mutually supportive group.
- The physical plant is clean and well maintained, providing a safe learning environment for all students.

C. Key Findings and Recommendations

Summary of the key issues (and 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 review of the English language arts (ELA) curriculum documents indicated that not all of the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) are included, leaving gaps in the curriculum.

Recommendation:

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 in English language arts, 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. 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 most prevalent form of ELA instruction observed was whole-group instruction, with few instances of student engagement. Staff appeared to have a limited understanding of differentiating instruction. With the exception of the differentiated literacy block, whole-group instruction was still the norm.
- There is little or no co-planning between special education and general education teachers, yet many have common planning time. General education teachers assigned to Integrated Co-teaching (ICT) classrooms often do not believe they are responsible for students with disabilities in their classrooms.
- Recommended programs and services in students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are not consistently implemented.
- There is a lack of rigor in questioning strategies; the use of higher order thinking and problem solving strategies is absent from ELA classes. Students are asked to recall facts and details. Students are not challenged to analyze, evaluate or synthesize information.
- Students have not been informed about and do not fully understand the school's behavior expectations. Some students seem unaware of appropriate classroom routines, and others are resistant to following the rules and completing the assigned tasks.
- Little evidence was available that indicated that teachers provided high quality feedback that made it clear to students what they needed to do to improve.

Recommendations:

- Instructional planning and practice should consistently include differentiated instruction in ELA and differentiated tasks for all students, at all grade levels. This rigorous, explicit, and consistent delivery of instruction should:
 - address specific needs based on summative and interim assessments;
 - focus on improving academic achievement for each student; and
 - be regularly monitored by school leaders and through teacher self-assessment.

The District and school leaders should ensure further in-depth PD on differentiated instruction is provided as needed.

- School leadership should ensure that special education and general education teachers assigned to ICT classrooms have, and make use of, scheduled common planning time, using a planning tool to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the planned lessons. All teachers in a co-teaching class should understand that they have full responsibility for the academic success of all the students. The District and school leaders should ensure that teachers receive further in-depth PD on the co-teaching model if necessary.

- School leaders should develop a monitoring system to ensure that IEPs are implemented by both special education and general education teachers assigned to ICT classrooms and by special education teachers assigned to a special class (12:1:1).
- Teachers should 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. Teacher lesson plans should include pre-created questions that require critical thinking and discussion. Teachers should use wait time and not allow students to opt-out of class discussions. Teachers should use random selection and/or avoid calling exclusively on willing student volunteers. Teachers should require students to answer in complete sentences.
- 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 should conduct observations and walkthroughs to ensure that staff consistently promote the high behavioral expectations that are set.
- Teachers should receive PD on how to provide high quality feedback on student work and then school leaders should ensure that this becomes embedded in instructional practice. School leaders should regularly review student work to ensure that high quality feedback is the norm.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- There is no well-defined school vision that gives direction to the entire staff and guides strategic actions concerning the needs of both students and teachers in the building.
- Communication among staff, school leadership, and community partners is often ineffective and/or inconsistent, at times resulting in confusion about the day-to-day work of the building. There is no clarity of roles and responsibilities of community partners as they relate to closing the achievement gap and classroom management/student behavior policies.
- The school has not established an effective and functioning School Leadership Team (SLT). The school leaders have not provided the team with the appropriate representation, necessary information, and leadership for the team to produce and implement a Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP).
- The school leadership does not set priorities for the effective management of resources provided to the school.

- School leaders do not ensure that PD is planned and effectively used to bring about improvement in student achievement.

Recommendations:

- The school leadership, staff and District should develop the CEP and 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 District. The implementation of the plan should be carefully monitored and its impact on student achievement measured.
- Effective communication structures and systems should be created to ensure that all staff, school leaders and community partners have clarity around the work of the school. The initial dialogue should be conducted by an external facilitator and include all staff, school leaders, and community partners. The Site-Based Management Team should actively monitor the effectiveness of this communication system using established protocols.
- The school leader should convene an effective and functioning SLT that meets regularly and is charged with and held accountable for developing and supporting a meaningful, rigorous and viable CEP that should:
 - drive the day-to-day work of the school;
 - contain strategies to effectively manage resources;
 - include accountability for continuous monitoring and revisiting of the strategic action plan determined by the CEP; and
 - include measurable outcomes as well as the means of monitoring the short- and long-term goals of the CEP action plan.
- School leaders, with support from the District, should design a comprehensive PD plan to address the needs of teachers to improve their delivery of instruction. School leaders should closely monitor the delivery of instruction by reviewing lesson plans weekly, providing feedback on lesson plans and conducting informal and formal observations with written feedback that includes recommendations for improvement. School leaders should conduct follow-up observations in a timely manner to ensure that these recommendations are being implemented.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- While the school has access to multiple resources, the roles and responsibilities of providers are not aligned. Also, these resources are neither well defined nor understood by all staff members so as to maximize their impact on student achievement. In addition, the communication between staff and school leadership lack clarity in terms of policies around classroom management and expectations for student learning.
- Students have not been informed about and do not fully understand the school's behavior expectations. There are a large number of office disciplinary referrals (ODR) that result in

loss of instructional time for students, and confusion around the responsibility for management of student behavior and classroom management in the school.

- Students were not fully aware of the expectations in terms of consistently improving their learning. Goal setting processes were not in place for all content areas to guide student progress and achievement.

Recommendations:

- The SLT should use a well-defined process to communicate the structure and purpose of all supports and resources to all stakeholders, facilitate the access and usage of supports and resources, and regularly monitor outcomes. Policies and expectations regarding student learning and behavior should be clarified for all members of the staff.
- The school leaders should ensure that all students are informed and understand the school's code of conduct. Behavioral policies should be posted throughout the school and supported by consistent implementation of expectations, consequences and incentives. Accountability and ownership of student behavior should be well defined, consistent, and understood by all. All staff should revisit their Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies (PBIS) training and structures to assess depth of understanding and actual practices, and to align the problems they observe in student behavior to what they know about PBIS. If PD on the implementation of PBIS is necessary, the school leaders should ensure that it is provided. School leaders, through observations and walkthroughs, should ensure that staff consistently promote the high behavioral expectations that are set.
- The school leadership should develop goal setting processes for all students in all content areas. PD should be organized for all teachers so that they can create clear improvement goals to move all students forward in their learning.

V. Collection, Analysis and Utilization of Data

Finding:

The understanding and uses by staff of both qualitative and quantitative data appears to be limited, as evidenced by the common practice of looking at data for ranking student performance rather than as the basis for framing a cohesive and coherent plan for instruction.

Recommendation:

Staff should consistently employ the use of explicit, qualitative criteria and formative and interim assessment to inform and promote learning. Staff should use rubrics and checklists during instruction, provide meaningful feedback to students, promote student self-assessment, provide opportunities for peer-assessment, and use goal-setting and self-monitoring strategies for academic achievement and behavior. Immediate and ongoing coaching and PD may be necessary to foster this significant change in systemic practice.

VI. Professional Development

Finding:

Staff members have few strategies to identify and address what they perceive as root causes of the problems they face in the classroom.

Recommendation:

The school and District should provide intense PD in the following areas: classroom management, CCLS and differentiated instruction. The professional learning opportunities should include input sessions, demonstration lessons, and coaching. The depth and length of the PD should be commensurate with the individual needs of the teacher.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- 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 and implementation of the standards. In addition, “Differentiated Instruction” has come to be confused with the differentiated block of literacy instruction.
- The ICT model is being inconsistently implemented and at a novice level across classrooms.

Recommendations:

- The District should establish and communicate clear guidelines to the school related to the flexibility that teachers have in using the pacing guide and District-supported programs, and the distinction between differentiating instruction and the differentiated block of literacy instruction.
- The District should investigate the resources that are available to provide support for the ICT Model and leverage them for ongoing support and training.
- The District 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	
(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)	Continue implementation of the current Restructuring Plan with <u>modifications</u> recommended as a result of the review.	✓

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

- A shared vision for the school should be developed by all staff members and stakeholders. The process should be initially facilitated by an external facilitator and should continue to be revisited, formally and informally, at regularly scheduled times as well as via informal self-assessments.
- The revised CEP for the school should be carefully constructed, as well as aligned with the vision for the school, with meaningful and measurable strategies and clearly outlined steps for identified areas. The CEP should:
 - drive the day-to-day work of the building;
 - include accountability processes to ensure continuous monitoring and revisiting of the strategic action plan determined by the CEP;
 - include measurable outcomes as well as the means of monitoring the short- and long-term goals of the CEP action plan; and
 - frame the agenda of faculty meetings, parent meetings, etc.
- School leaders should convene a meeting of all professional staff, assisted by an external facilitator, for the purposes of improving professional communication in the building. As a result of this meeting, all professional staff in the building should understand the non-negotiable policies in the building, as well as the norms for professional communication. Together, the professional staff should discuss and activate a policy for student behavior that meets the needs and demands of all.
- The school leadership should convene articulation sessions between community partners and school personnel so that all parties understand what they and others contribute to the improvement of student achievement.