

NYSED/MIDDLETOWN CSD JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code:	44-10-00-01-0015
School Name:	Maple Hill Elementary
School Address:	491 County Rt. 78 Middletown NY 10940
Principal:	Dominick Radogna
Phase/Category:	Restructuring (year- 1) - Comprehensive
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts- All Students, Black Students;, Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Other Area of Identification:	Mathematics- All Students, Black Students; Hispanic Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	February 27 – March 1, 2012

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Community and School Background

Maple Hill Elementary serves 1154 students in grades 2 through 5. The school enrollment is three percent Asian, 50 percent Hispanic, 25 percent Black and 22 percent White students. Of these students, 19 percent are English language learners (ELLs) and approximately 8.48 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 up to six months. There are 82 teachers on staff; one percent has been at the school for less than one year and eight percent for fewer than three years. Ninety-nine percent of teachers are highly qualified. The rate of teacher turnover is eight 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	
+	Positive trend data for all identified subject/areas and subgroups for the past two consecutive years, as demonstrated by an increase in the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 and/or a Performance Index increase of five or more points.	✓
-	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.	✓

B. School Strengths

The school leaders and staff are meeting with central office staff to plan for the new District's *Literacy Framework*. This framework focuses on learning, teaching and assessment aligned with the New York State (NYS) P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). There is an awareness of the use of data to drive instruction among some teachers, and the school leaders have begun the process of providing professional development (PD) for all teachers to learn how to effectively use a variety of data sources in the classroom that will ensure rigor.

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:

Although the school has a written curriculum for English language arts (ELA) and literacy, the depth of implementation varies across classrooms.

Recommendation:

School leaders should ensure that the written curriculum as listed in the "Literacy in Action" is followed and consistently used across all classes to drive instruction.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- Much of the observed instruction was teacher-directed, with little variety of instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of diverse students.
- Teacher knowledge of how to appropriately modify instruction for ELLs was inconsistent across the school.
- Students in most observed classrooms struggled with understanding the vocabulary used within the lesson. Teachers consistently introduced words that appeared to be unfamiliar to students. Scaffolding language techniques in ELL classrooms was limited and inconsistent. As a result, students struggled with understanding the content taught.
- There was limited use of data to match tasks to the differing ability levels for guided instruction in mathematics. Teachers did not meet group or individual needs of students in mathematics. Mathematics instruction was delivered with little student involvement. There was limited evidence of rigor to develop student higher order thinking or problem solving skills.
- Questioning skills varied greatly among teachers in all content areas. Students were rarely asked to explain their thinking or evaluate each other's work.

- Student work was limited and inconsistently displayed in classrooms and hallways. Staff is in the early stages of effective and consistent use of rubrics.
- Pacing and sequencing in some classrooms is weak, and learning time is not maximized. As a result, students have too much wait time due to the lack of understanding of how to begin or carry out a task.
- The co-teaching model was not effectively implemented in the classes visited. Students did not benefit from having two teachers in the room. It was evident that both teachers in each class did not collaborate in planning their lessons.
- Although learning goals were posted, students could not always verbally explain what they were learning and why.

Recommendations:

- 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. Teachers should be expected to implement these strategies while school leaders monitor their effectiveness. Additional PD should be provided for teachers when necessary.
- Modifications for ELLs and students with disabilities should begin with teachers clearly knowing each student's strengths, needs and learning style. Instruction should be modeled and taught with hands-on opportunities. Daily use of flexible grouping and learning centers could provide a different approach to reinforce learning. Teachers should regularly demonstrate for teaching assistants which instructional needs should be reinforced and what they should do to meet individual learning needs.
- PD should be provided to assist teachers with knowledge of how to continuously teach vocabulary in developmentally appropriate ways, i.e., providing opportunities for students to identify words with which they are not familiar. Strategies in effectively using word walls would strengthen this process. Teachers should visit classrooms within the school and observe strategies other teachers are using to successfully teach vocabulary. Collaborative discussion is another highly effective tool to share successful ideas among teachers. School leaders should expect vocabulary instruction to occur daily across all content areas and continuously monitor for improved student performance.
- Teachers should use data walls and keep running records of student needs in mathematics. School leaders should regularly monitor teacher planning and instructional practices. Ongoing PD should be provided to strengthen teacher understanding of how to differentiate and effectively teach mathematics while meeting the needs of all students.
- PD should be provided in improving questioning techniques for all content areas aimed at promoting critical thinking and problem solving skills that are appropriate to student development. Teacher lesson plans should reflect pre-created questions that require students to use critical thinking. Teachers should use wait time and not allow students to opt-out of class discussions. Teachers should use random selection when calling on students and not just call on the same few students. Having students respond in complete sentences could help ensure that students are able to communicate what they are thinking.
- Student work should be displayed in classrooms and hallways. Rubrics should be used as an integral tool in planning and assessing assignments. 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.

- PD should be provided in best practices for pacing in order to maximize and improve instructional time. This training should include how to keep all students involved when not working directly with a teacher and making sure students clearly understand assigned tasks and can work independently to complete assignments. School leaders should make the pacing of lessons a regular focus for walkthroughs and observations.
- Teachers should be provided with support, guidance, and appropriate PD to implement a more effective 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. School leaders should closely monitor co-teaching classroom practices and provide feedback.
- Teachers should begin each class by referring to the goal of the lesson. Instruction should be connected to the learning goal throughout the lesson. School leaders should ensure that this consistently occurs through regular monitoring of classrooms.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- There is a large gap in communicating with parents. No academic information, newsletter, phone messages, or flyers concerning school activities are sent home in Spanish.
- While school leaders have built a system to consistently set aside time for classroom visits, there is inconsistency in a schoolwide understanding of what constitutes effective instruction, especially in mathematics.

Recommendations:

- School leaders should establish connections with someone within the school or community who can begin translating and supporting the community in Spanish. School conferences should have translators available for parents to better understand the needs of their child. The parent coordinator should continue working closely with the community and explore more ideas to bring all parents into the school. The school leader should secure District help in translating progress reports, assessment data, and other school related literature into all the home languages.
- Leadership feedback should be consistent when conferencing with teachers and developing a common vision. Follow-up observations should ensure that recommendations in observation reports are consistently implemented. Successful teachers should be identified and inter-visitations used to improve targeted instructional strategies.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- The school has a PTA, but only about five parents consistently attend. All meetings are in English. The meetings do not involve children in performances to attract parents. There are no indications of a systemic parenting program, such as Title I workshops or grade level orientations.

- Although schoolwide behavior policies have been developed, they are not consistently implemented by staff members in classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, and playground.

Recommendations:

- The school leader should seek support from the District to develop a plan to improve parental involvement, including a range of communication strategies in both English and Spanish. Parent workshops should be developed, such as Homework Help, ESL classes for parents, Mathematics Night or Science Night. Events on the school marquee should be posted in both languages. Notice of events could also be included in the daily announcements.
- The school leaders should clearly articulate expectations for the behavior policies that have been put in place throughout the school. School leaders should constantly monitor for consistent implementation across the school and refer to specific rules when redirecting students and providing feedback to teachers. School leaders should ensure that the policies and rules are understood and distributed to students and parents. Translation of these policies and rules should be provided in the language of the parents. PD should be provided that is designed to help teachers gain knowledge and respect for cultural differences.

IV. Collection, Analysis and Utilization of Data

Finding:

Student academic progress is reviewed on an on-going basis. However, instructional intervention strategies have proven ineffective, especially for the students with disabilities.

Recommendation:

School leaders, with District support, should analyze academic and behavior data to develop appropriate intervention strategies, especially for the students with disabilities. School leaders should determine what should be changed or adjusted to develop a successful learning environment.

V. Professional Development

Findings:

- Although the District has provided training in ELA, data reflects a need to support teachers in the effective teaching of mathematics. Teachers have requested training in guided mathematics.
- Teachers should be provided regularly scheduled collaborative opportunities other than common planning time to learn from one another and raise their level of performance in ELA and mathematics. The focus of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) should be on teaching and learning to increase student achievement for all students.
- Teachers struggle with how to differentiate instruction for all groups of students in mathematics.

Recommendations:

- The school leaders should seek support from the District or an external specialist to provide training to assist all teachers in becoming strong mathematics teachers. Teachers should be surveyed on the type of additional support necessary. School leaders should monitor for implementation after trainings to identify any additional areas in which training may be needed.

- PLCs should be a priority in the school. Collaboration provides staff development opportunities within the school to meet the specific needs of the teachers and students. School leaders should ensure that agendas are always developed for each collaborative session. School leaders should attend as many of these meetings as possible to ensure the focus remains on teaching and learning.
- The school leaders should provide 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 teachers' 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 that meets the individual needs of students.

VI. District Support

Finding:

- The District does not translate academic reports into Spanish for parents.

Recommendations:

- The District should support the school the school in providing translation services, e.g. translating academic reports that are sent home in order for parents to better understand their child's academic performance. This should be a priority and all available options need to be clearly communicated to the Principal.
- The District should support the school 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 recommendation should be implemented.

- The Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) planning team should ensure that the CEP drives instructional decision-making and ensures consistent and accountable implementation of all systems across the school. The focus should include ELA and mathematics instruction, lesson differentiation, and vocabulary development. The District should monitor the implementation of the CEP.
- The District should continue the weekly walkthroughs of the school and classrooms to ensure consistent implementation of the behavior plan and instructional strategies for all students across the school. Specific feedback should be provided to the school leaders for improvement and continued growth.
- The District should continue to support ongoing PD especially in the areas of mathematics and vocabulary development. Additional training may need to be provided to assist staff with gaining an understanding of cultural differences.
- The District should support the school leader in translating materials that need to be shared with parents and families. The District and school should determine what actions need to be taken to bridge the communication gap with the community and increase parent involvement which results in improved student achievement.