

NYSED/HUDSON CSD JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code:	10-13-00-01-0003
School Name:	Montgomery C Smith Intermediate School
School Address:	102 Harry Howard Avenue Hudson, New York 12534
Principal:	Mark Brenneman
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring (year 1) - Focused
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts- Black Students; Hispanic Students and Students with Disabilities
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	January 23-25, 2012

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Community and School Background

Montgomery C. Intermediate School serves 584 students in grades 3 through 6. The school enrollment is 10 percent Asian, 10 percent Hispanic, 32 percent Black and 48 percent White students. Of these students nine percent are English language learners (ELLs) and approximately 18 percent are students with disabilities.

The Principal has served the school for three years. There are 56 teachers on staff; no teacher has been at the school for less than one year, and 16 percent have been at the school for fewer than three years. Ninety-six percent of teachers are highly qualified. The rate of teacher turnover is 66 percent, due to 2009-10 grade level reconfiguration of the school to include grades three and four.

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	
-	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).	✓

B. School Strengths

Precursors for school improvement are present including:

- Relationships with Community Based Organizations are in place and growing to meet the needs of students and families, e.g., Hudson Reads Program; Mentoring and extensive afterschool/extended school day opportunities are also in place.

- The current school leader, with District support, has expertise to provide leadership for the improvement of this school.
- The faculty demonstrates positive relationships with their students and families, and the literacy coach has provided leadership and instructional support consistent with research-based best practice.
- A School Leadership Team (SLT) is in place for the purpose of developing the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) and monitoring school progress, including bi-annual review of strategic plans.

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

Findings:

- The written curriculum is primarily comprised of the scope and sequence of the reading textbook series, and the taught English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics curricula are not fully aligned to the New York State (NYS) Learning Standards.
- Although curriculum mapping efforts have begun using the Rubicon ATLAS mapping software, the ELA and mathematics curricula currently lack horizontal and vertical alignment within and across grade levels.
- Unit and lesson plans are not regularly developed.
- Access to high quality and current instructional resources, i.e., Academic Intervention Services (AIS), special education and English as a second language (ESL) providers is inconsistent.

Recommendations:

- The District should continue the work with the school on the initial development of curriculum maps in all core areas and ensure they are clearly aligned with the P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in ELA 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.

- The school leader should require that common planning time and grade level/department meetings are devoted to aligning the curriculum horizontally and vertically in order to meet the needs of all students, especially those in identified subgroups, i.e., Black students, Hispanic students and students with disabilities. Teachers should be held accountable for implementing the aligned curriculum with fidelity.

- The development of unit lesson plans and pacing calendars aligned with the CCLS should be prioritized. Instructional plans should be regularly shared with providers of instructional interventions for struggling learners.
- Materials to support the implementation of the curriculum and provide differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students should be provided for all instructional staff.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- Academic expectations for students are generally low. Overall, general education teachers do not fully accept responsibility for ensuring that all students assigned to them meet NYS proficiency standards.
- Whole group, direct instruction predominates throughout the school. There was little evidence of data-driven flexible grouping or differentiation to address the diverse learning needs of all students and little opportunity for students to engage with peers in sharing ideas.
- Strategies such as cultural responsiveness, diverse learning styles, differentiation, and specially designed instruction were rarely used by teachers in general education classrooms to support students in the identified subgroups.
- The design of instruction is not driven by student performance data or individual student learning needs.
- Lesson objectives and expected learning outcomes were not evident to students or reviewers.
- Processes to develop higher order thinking skills were not evident in most tasks assigned to students.
- The implementation of the integrated co-teaching model is inconsistent; underutilization of support staff is widely evident and providers of intervention do not have regular opportunities to plan with staff providing the first instruction.
- Student work is generally not displayed, and standards-based rubrics are not evident for providing formative feedback or guiding the assessment of learning.
- There is no evidence of a uniform grading policy in the school. Grading practices do not demonstrate clear expectations for student academic performance across content or grade levels. Data analysis reveals inconsistency between State assessment scores and local grades.
- Limited instructional leadership and limited substantive feedback for the improvement of instruction is evident in the school.

Recommendations:

- The District should establish non-negotiable goals for improving instruction for all students across the District, with specific teacher and student performance goals for each school. These teacher and student performance goals should be the basis for the school CEP and monitored by the District.
- The school leader and teacher leaders should establish expectations for improved classroom instruction, implementation of data-driven differentiation, flexible grouping, and active

engagement of all students in a culturally responsive school. Evidence of progress toward these expectations should be included as activities in the CEP and frequently monitored by the school and District.

- Instructional activities and strategies selected for achieving the lesson objective should be customized and based on learner characteristics, e.g., learning styles, performance on interim assessments or developmental levels.
- PD should be provided 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 and individual student learning needs. The school leader should regularly monitor teacher planning and instructional practice to ensure 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.
- All learning opportunities and assessments should have a clearly identified and articulated objective that is aligned with the District curriculum and State standards and shared with the students on a daily basis.
- The overdependence on worksheets, workbook pages, whole class lessons and closed questioning techniques should be replaced with relevant and meaningful experiences that promote application, analysis and synthesis across curriculum areas for all student ability levels.
- A review of the co-teaching model should be conducted and the results used to revise the implementation of the model. Each teacher and staff member assigned to this model should receive appropriate training, and both co-teachers should be held accountable for an effective contribution to student learning.
- A wide range of student work should be posted in the school, along with rubrics that reflect NYS proficiency requirements. Rubrics should be used as an integral tool in planning and assessing assignments. Teachers should participate in PD activities that model the use of rubrics to provide teacher feedback, peer feedback and student self-assessment. The 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.
- The school leader and staff should develop a comprehensive grading policy and procedures that provide feedback about the degree to which all students are meeting the NYS Standards. This policy should be made known to students and parents. The school leader should ensure the consistent implementation of the grading policy.
- The school leader and staff should prioritize the improvement of instruction. Regular and focused walkthroughs should be conducted by the school leader and District level administrators to provide regular formative feedback to teachers. Peer observation/feedback and job-embedded models of teacher- to-teacher coaching could be effective models for this school.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- Recent school reconfiguration, staff mobility and reductions in staff have resulted in deterioration of the sense of community at the school. A lack of shared vision and mission for student success and comprehensive school improvement is evident.

- Although the Principal works diligently to provide leadership, the intensive demands of instructional improvement surpass the amount of human resource available to the school.
- Current teacher evaluation procedures are rudimentary and do not demonstrate adequate feedback to support the improvement of instruction for all students.
- Although common planning time exists for some teachers, not all instructional staff have this resource. Teachers are not systematically held accountable for conducting activities focused on improvement of student achievement during this planning time.
- The role of grade level chairperson, including grades 3 to 6 and K-6 coordinator for special education is unclear, inconsistent, and therefore ineffective in improving instruction and student performance.
- Although the District has committed to providing a coach dedicated to embedding literacy skills across the content areas, teachers have inconsistently embraced this resource to improve instructional quality and student performance.
- The master schedule is not fully accurate or uniformly followed. This contributes to service coordination challenges and lack of collaboration between intervention/support providers and classroom teachers.

Recommendations:

- The Principal should lead a broad-based effort to develop the vision and mission for the school. This should include goals for school improvement and student achievement.
- The District should increase the amount of administrative time available in the school to focus on high quality instructional improvement.
- The District should lead the development of a revised Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) model for teachers, consistent with NYS guidelines for teacher evaluation. Those administrators responsible for conducting teacher evaluation should be adequately trained to assess teacher effectiveness in providing high quality instruction for all students.
- Teachers who have students in common should be regularly provided with common planning time. The school leader should ensure that teachers are held accountable for using this time for aligning curriculum, instruction, assessment, and interventions to improve student achievement.
- Job descriptions should be developed for the position of grade level chairperson. Duties should include leadership activities that support school improvement goals of increased student achievement.
- The school leader should establish and implement formal procedures to ensure that literacy strategies across the content areas are embedded in all curricula and assessment. Teachers should be regularly held accountable for implementing, assessing, and providing interventions to assist students in attaining literacy skills.
- The master schedule should be regularly reviewed for accuracy and effectiveness. Modifications should be reflected in the written version, and all staff should be held accountable for implementing the master schedule with fidelity. Individual teacher schedules should be posted inside or outside of classrooms to support implementation and monitoring goals.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- A limited continuum of services and few program supports are offered in the school to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELLs), and the economically disadvantaged.
- Although Response to Intervention (RtI) efforts have begun, there are limited options for meeting the needs of at-risk students in identified subgroups. Intensive, research-based interventions are limited to the Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) and Wilson Reading programs. AIS services do not appear to provide focused intervention based on ongoing assessment of individual student performance, as whole class push-in instruction predominated.
- Although evidence exists that Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) has been implemented in the school, a system of schoolwide behavior practices have not been implemented consistently or with fidelity.
- Opportunity for students to meet the learning standards for technological literacy is not embedded in the general education classroom.

Recommendations:

- The District Director of Student Services should lead an effort to revise the continuum of services to reflect the needs of the students with disabilities in the school. As a part of this revision, a review of the deployment of staff should be conducted to support student Individual Education Program (IEP) implementation. In addition, the school and District should also research which supports might be made available to meet the needs of ELLs and economically disadvantaged students.
- A comprehensive review of the RtI and AIS systems should be conducted. Based on the findings of the review, program services should be identified and realigned in order to meet the diverse needs of students at each tier of intervention.
- Using the Special Education Quality Assurance (SEQA) quality indicators for positive behavior supports, an audit of the implemented PBIS system should be conducted. Revisions should be systematically implemented to address the gaps identified in the audit, including the code of conduct, classroom behavior interventions and bullying prevention efforts.
- The curriculum and classroom procedures should be revised to provide students with the opportunity to develop technological literacy in daily content learning, i.e., student use of SMART Boards, project based learning with Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) computer software, social communication tools.

V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data

Finding:

Although student data is available and reported to staff at the school level, use of the data to modify instruction to meet individual student needs on an ongoing basis is not evident.

Recommendation:

The school should develop an inquiry-rich environment for the improvement of student achievement. Teachers should be held accountable for aligning student performance data with instructional design

decisions at the individual, team, grade level and committee levels through such techniques as data walls, data walks, progress reporting, and action research.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- Due to the absence of a schoolwide PD plan, the intensity, duration, content and frequency of PD has been inadequate to support continuous school improvement. Little evidence is present that staff demonstrates appropriate strategies to meet the needs of students in identified subgroups, i.e., Black students, Hispanic students and students with disabilities, in such areas as integrated co-teaching, differentiated instruction, cultural responsiveness, positive behavior supports, data driven instruction, and CCLS.
- Staff is not regularly held accountable for incorporating strategies learned in PD into their daily practice.

Recommendations:

- Guided by student performance data, the school should develop a comprehensive schoolwide PD plan that includes all staff to address the recommendations in the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) report, i.e., curriculum development, data analysis, instructional leadership, meeting the needs of students in the identified subgroups. This plan should be systematically reviewed, updated, and realigned to equip teachers to meet the needs of all students.
- PD efforts in the school should be job-embedded. School leadership should lead efforts to "de-privatize" individual teacher classroom practice. After presentations, teachers should have opportunities to implement the introduced practice in their classroom and to collaborate with others as they incorporate the changes. School administrators should implement a system of focused walkthroughs to formatively assess the degree to which PD efforts are being implemented.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- Planning for the transition of students from primary to intermediate school is inadequate and leads to unnecessary organizational challenges, especially in grade 3.
- Although the District created the grades 3-6 building configuration in 2009-10, faculty and staff lack a common sense of purpose and collaboration as a school community.

Recommendations:

- The District should lead a review of student outcomes and articulation of benchmarks at each level of the P-12 continuum. The benchmarks should be used to guide development of curriculum and selection of instructional materials for each level. Procedures for supporting student transition between programs and schools within the District should be prioritized. All school leaders should be held accountable for implementation of these transition procedures for all students.
- The District should meet with the entire school staff to explore the findings and recommendations contained in this JIT report, and thereafter develop a purposeful CEP for the coming years.
- The District should provide support in implementing the recommendations of the JIT.

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 <u>changes in staff, organizational structure, leadership and/or configuration</u> 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.	✓

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

The new restructuring plan should include:

- Additional leadership should be prioritized at this school to support improvement of instruction and provide staff accountability for the recommendations of this JIT report.
- The formal structure of teacher leadership (grade level chairperson) should be reviewed for effectiveness and revised to implement the goals and objectives in the JIT report.
- The school leadership should lead an effort to formalize the vision and mission of the school as well as identify goals for student performance and school improvement.
- The master schedule should be revised to provide for common planning time and purposeful teacher leadership of curricular and instructional improvement.
- The continuum of services to meet the needs of at-risk students should be reviewed, revised, implemented, and monitored as soon as possible. Program services include: AIS, Rtl, special education, ELLs, etc.
- Development of horizontally and vertically aligned curriculum maps for all content areas based on the CCLS should be prioritized.
- An inquiry driven, data rich environment should be developed through high quality and job-embedded PD and support. Accountability for using data to design instruction and develop interim and summative assessment should be provided for school leadership and teachers.