

NYSED/SYRACUSE CSD JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code:	42-18-00-01-0022
School Name:	Frazer K-8 School
School Address:	741 Park Avenue Syracuse, NY 13204
Principal:	Deborah Mastropaolo
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring Advanced - Comprehensive English Language Arts - All Students; Black Students; Hispanic Students; Asian Students; White Students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged
Area of Identification:	
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	February 14-17, 2012

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Community and School Background

Frazer K-8 School serves 827 students. The school enrollment is one percent American Indian, 36 percent Black, 11 percent Hispanic, 26 percent Asian and 26 percent White students. Of these students 26 percent are English language learners (ELLs) and approximately 20 percent are students with disabilities.

The middle school teaching staff has undergone significant change for the 2011 - 2012 school year. At the end of the 2010 - 2011 school year, the Principal was assigned to Frazer from a Persistently Lowest Achieving (PLA) high school. Most of that high school's teachers were reassigned to Frazer. As a result of these moves, almost all middle school teachers are new to the school this year. Six of these new-to-the-building middle level teachers have been or are currently on medical leave. Ten of the middle level teachers plan to retire at the end of this school year. The new District administrative team will be determining the best solution for the next year.

The administrative team consists of the Principal and two Vice-Principals. The Principal has served the school for less than one year as has one of the VPs; the other VP is in her second year. There are 75 teachers; 25 percent have been at the school for less than one year and 13 percent for fewer than three years. Ninety-eight percent of 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	

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
	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 show an increase in the number of subgroups that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in identified area(s).	✓
-	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 <u>All Students</u> subgroup in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓

B. School Strengths

- The building is well-lit with natural lighting and is designed to allow for safe and orderly transitions. Classroom sizes are ample and support flexible use of space.
- The library environment is welcoming to children, with numerous areas for quiet reading and other activities. It is well-stocked with a wide range of books and material to promote a love of reading and serves as the center for tasks requiring computer use. The library media specialist meets weekly with each class and provides a wide range of high quality supports for students.
- The consultant teacher program provides student supports from both general education and special education teachers. Teaching assistants (TA) are assigned to provide additional support to 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

Findings:

- According to teachers, the District's pacing guide and curriculum maps do not match the quarterly benchmark assessments in either English language arts (ELA) or mathematics.
- Teachers are concerned that the current elementary mathematics program, *Think Math*, aligns poorly with the new Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).

Recommendations:

- The District should align its pacing guides and curriculum maps to the items on the quarterly assessments. This work should also be based on the new CCLS.
- The appropriate District curriculum committee should conduct a correlation study between *Think Math* and the CCLS. If poor alignment is found, the District should obtain supplemental instructional materials to fill in the gaps, or it should change its elementary mathematics series.

II. Teaching and Learning**Findings:**

- There is a lack of a schoolwide lesson plan template with high quality instructional components. For example:
 - In some classrooms, lesson plans merely listed activities, pages to be covered or descriptions of what the teacher was going to do, not what students were supposed to know and be able to do. There were few references to current State standards in plans and during instruction.
 - Rigorous instruction was observed in a few classrooms, but in many classrooms the work was at a basic level. Students often were doing worksheets both in class and for homework. Higher level questioning was observed in only a few classes, and the use of formative assessments or closure was inconsistent.
 - Rubrics were posted in a few classrooms and rarely accompanied posted student work. Posted student work was missing in many classrooms and hallways but was more evident on the K-5 floor.
 - Differentiated instruction based on subgroup and individual student needs was not evident in most classrooms. Typically students rotated among groups doing identical activities. Teachers did not provide strategies that led to independent student work. In many classrooms there was a preponderance of teacher talk.
 - In many classrooms a number of students were not engaged in the lessons. Instead they carried on conversations, drew pictures or walked around the room.
- Special education teachers are not assigned to specific students, subjects or grade levels and often must teach multiple subjects across different grade levels. They are unable to find planning time to meet with other teachers because their schedules have them working with so many different teams and grade levels.
- In one special education class of students ages 10-13, pre-primer reading books, activity books such as dot-to-dot and other lower level primary materials were used in instruction in lieu of a modified grade level curriculum and materials. The teacher has asked for grade level texts, but she has not received them as yet.
- Some students with disabilities are not receiving grade level general education instruction, and some are not grouped in special classes on the basis of similar needs.

- The school lacks sufficient technology, specifically SMART Boards, Elmo's, document cameras and classroom computers.
- The school lacks a uniform grading policy by grades and subjects.

Recommendations:

- The school leaders should develop or identify a few research-based lesson plan templates. These templates should include all of the strategies included in the District's research-based document, "Components of an Effective Lesson." PD should be offered and the school leaders should state clear expectations that the lesson plan format be regularly used in planning instruction, formally review plans and provide feedback prior to lesson delivery.
 - Lesson plans should include specific goals and learning activities, as well as delineate instructional strategies. Plans should include effective introduction and closure to the lesson as well as checks to ensure student understanding. Lesson plans should list the NYS Learning Standards that are correlated to the daily lesson for instruction.
 - Professional development (PD) should be provided in supporting teachers in developing a variety of questioning techniques aimed at critical thinking and using problem solving skills appropriate to student development. These skills would specifically support teacher effectiveness with students with disabilities and ELLs with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Teachers should ensure that strategies identified in training are incorporated into their daily instruction. School leaders should make questioning techniques a focus for observation.
 - Student work should be posted in all classrooms and hallways and should be accompanied by posted rubrics. 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. 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 should provide professional development (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 teacher 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.
 - Teachers should design lessons that include hands-on activities, the use of manipulatives, student talk, and opportunities for students to work together in cooperative learning groups. Teachers should instruct students on the use of graphic organizers and how to assess their own work.
- The school should restructure special education teachers teaching assignments in order to decrease the number of different class assignments for these teachers and to enable them to jointly plan with the teams to which they are assigned.

- School leaders and District staff should provide grade level texts and age-appropriate materials for teachers of students with disabilities.
- The school leader should ensure that students with disabilities are grouped for instruction by need.
- The SLT and school leaders should work with the District to procure more instructional technology and related PD for the purpose of enhancing instruction and engaging students in their own learning.
- The school leaders and teachers should establish a schoolwide grading policy based on District policy that is easily accessible to students to ensure that they are aware of their academic progress and what the next steps are for them to make adequate progress. School leaders should monitor implementation through observations and walkthroughs.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- Given the significant change in staffing and leadership at the beginning of this school year, the school leadership has been in reactive mode in dealing with day-to-day challenges. This has distracted school leaders from proactively developing a schoolwide approach to school turn-around. School leaders have had to spend more time on the upper middle school floor than on the Pre-K to grade 5 floor. Their presence and support are needed at the elementary level as well as the middle level.
- Although the Principal has established a daily schedule for walkthroughs, school leaders have difficulty maintaining any sort of schedule, and teachers report that they have not received any feedback on lesson plans.
- There has been a lack of opportunity for faculty, parents, and students to develop a sense of community and to agree to a clear, shared vision. The elementary and middle school teachers have separate faculty meetings and some of the veteran staff do not know the newly arrived middle level staff. This has resulted in a disconnect between the elementary and middle level teachers. Faculty meetings are scheduled at different times for these two groups of teachers. Little opportunity was provided prior to the start of the school year for all teachers to get together and get to know each other. The new middle level teachers have not been given the opportunity to feel that they are a part of the school. District-level transition support for new teachers and administrators was not provided prior to the opening of school.
- A number of daily and long-term substitute teachers are working in the building. Poor quality instruction and lack of classroom management was observed in many of these classrooms.
- ELLs are scheduled by grade level, which places all proficiency levels into the same group. While in some cases beginners and intermediates are grouped together, advanced ELLs are also grouped with beginners. Teachers try to accommodate with centers and differentiation, but it is not an optimal situation for these students. ELLs are also scheduled into interventions based on ease of scheduling rather than on student needs.

- Teachers of English as a second language (ESL) do not have scheduled meetings with mainstream teachers. In addition, there is also no scheduled planning time for ESL teachers to meet with Academic Intervention Services (AIS) teachers.
- Teachers indicated that they do not feel that they receive appropriate levels of academic support from school leaders and the instructional specialist. They report that they do not often see administrators in classrooms and hallways, and that there are minimal walkthroughs and little feedback.
- One special education teacher is assigned to grade 5 resource room, grade 8 mathematics, AIS, as a consultant teacher, social studies and science classes. The variety of grade levels combined with numerous subject areas creates challenges because of the number of plans that need to be developed and subject area knowledge that must be delivered.
- Due to significant delays in the timely completion of re-evaluations, some students with disabilities are not appropriately placed or identified.
- A mid-year grade 7 schedule change resulted in a group of students with frequent behavior issues and low academic performance being scheduled into the same classrooms at the same times. For example, one grade 7 class now has ten students with disabilities and ten poorly performing general education students with academic challenges.
- More than half of the students in the middle level come from one of the neighborhood's elementary schools and are not familiar with the expectations and rules at Frazer.

Recommendations:

- School leaders should transition to proactive leadership roles and serve as instructional leaders rather than spending so much of their time reacting to behavioral issues. This will require school leaders to be more direct in clearly stating expectations for academics and behavior and holding all teachers accountable for meeting these expectations. Once these expectations and practices are in place, the Principal should develop a schedule for all school leaders to balance the support for all grade levels. School leaders should work with appropriate District staff to add additional security staff or hall monitors. These additions should free up school leaders so that they can provide balanced support at all grade levels.
- School leaders should develop and follow a schedule of classroom walkthroughs and informal visits to spend sufficient time in all classrooms. They should also collect and evaluate lesson plans and provide feedback to all staff. In instances where plans are inadequate, they should require that the teacher work with the instructional coach (IST) to develop the ability to plan effectively for instruction.
- The SLT should take the lead for developing a Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) to build community and a shared vision and create an effective schoolwide plan to improve achievement. The plan should include goals, action plans, professional development (PD), and use all resources available through the District. The implementation of the plan should be carefully monitored and its impact on student achievement measured. The Principal should consider changing the schedule to allow all teachers to attend the same faculty meetings. One of the top priorities for the Principal should be to create this sense of community that is currently lacking among teachers and students and to ensure that all staff and programs are rigorously engaging and focused on

learning for all students. Efforts should also be made to add more middle level teachers and a student support staff to the SLT.

- Detailed written lesson plans should be available for a substitute teacher to follow if a teacher has to be absent for an extended period of time. School leaders should hold substitute teachers to the same standards as they do regular teachers, and if a substitute teacher is not providing acceptable instruction, the substitute teacher should not be contacted to substitute. Since there are so many middle level teachers out for extended times, it might be more effective to identify specific effective substitutes to work with this school so that they begin to know students and expectations.
- Scheduling of ELLs and ESL teachers should be done prior to developing the schedule for the rest of the building. ELLs should be scheduled into ESL classrooms and interventions by ability level.
- The schedule should be adjusted to allow regularly scheduled common planning times between ESL and both mainstream and AIS teachers.
- School leaders and the Instructional Support Teacher (IST) should meet with teachers to identify instructional support needs and should then build these supports into their schedules. Administrators should also implement regular walkthrough schedules and provide appropriate feedback, either as patterns observed across the school or, when appropriate, individual feedback and suggestions to teachers.
- School leaders should revise the schedule to more fairly distribute assignments and students to special education teachers.
- The reported delay of 1½ years in the completion of some re-evaluations should be addressed with urgency. The District should provide the necessary psychological staff resources to ensure timely completion of these re-evaluations. The re-evaluations will provide the Committee on Special Education the information upon which to base a recommendation for programs and services.
- When scheduling students into classrooms, more attention should be paid to distributing students equitably among grade level teachers.
- School leaders and the SLT should plan transitional activities at the beginning of the school year for students who arrive from different District schools to clearly articulate the school's expectations for student behavior and academics. If the school has a summer program, that could also be used for this transition. Teachers should regularly review expectations with all their students. These expectations should be consistent throughout the building. An orientation for parents of new students should be considered. The school should also consider other strategies, such as providing new students with a Frazer tee shirt, having a "grade-buddy" to help with transitions, and ensuring that students and their families know about clubs and activities.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- Most school staff, students, and school leaders agree that, although there is a schoolwide Behavioral Plan, it is not consistently implemented.

- Only a few grade 7 and 8 teachers monitored their students in the hallways and stairwells and accompanied their students to the lunch room. In several classrooms, students walked in and out of the room seemingly at will. Students peered into the classroom and gestured to students inside the room. A number of students were wandering the hallways well after the start of class. A boy and girl were observed leaving the school early through a side door, without permission.
- Behavior in a number of classrooms interfered with the instructional process and negatively impacted lesson pacing and the teacher's ability to complete the planned lesson. For example, in one class, the students were only able to complete five of ten problems; in another class, it took 15 minutes of class time for the student to count off and form groups.
- The schedule does not provide transition time for students to move from one classroom to another. For example, student lunch period ends at the exact time that the next class begins, so the next class begins several minutes late. At the middle level, transitions between classes last several minutes, with many students taking long detours around the building rather than moving directly to their next class.
- Parents expressed concern that bullying is a serious issue at the school at all grade levels, and that not enough is being done to address the issue. They also reported that there have been several fights in the cafeteria due to what parents perceive as a shortage of adult supervisors. There is parental concern about the school's In-school Suspension (ISS) program. The team heard from both parents and students that going to the ISS room is fun.
- The front door of the school is unlocked prior to and during staff and student arrivals. Parents are concerned as a stabbing occurred in front of the school during the last school year.
- The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program was in place prior to this year. Some of the teachers new to the building, especially at the middle level, have not been trained in the program and have not committed to its implementation.
- The AIS program is inadequate for the needs of the students and does not meet the requirements of Commissioner's regulations. For example, several AIS classrooms appeared to be no more than study halls. In several others throughout the school, little instruction was occurring. The problem is more egregious at the middle level.
- The team observed minimal instruction in the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) classroom. The current middle level teachers are not trained to effectively teach the AVID program, or to support AVID principles such as Cornell notes and organizational strategies.
- Interviews indicated that parents were unaware of the school Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). They also reported that they have not been surveyed about their perceptions, priorities, and recommendations. Several of them share the opinion that the main office staff does not help them feel welcome in the school. They are impressed that this staff does appear to know their children and their room assignments.
- Several middle level teachers lock their doors during class time, making it awkward for latecomers and visitors to enter their rooms.

Recommendations:

- School leaders and the SLT should revisit and, if necessary, revise the school's Behavioral Policy and procedures that align with the District Code of Conduct to include:
 - clearly stated schoolwide procedures for dealing with student behavior with consequences;
 - a commitment to the plan by all staff;
 - clear communication to students and families;
 - opportunities for PD on the PBIS plan;
 - an increase in security staff and hall monitors; and
 - the presence of all staff in hallways and stairwells during student transitions. Exit doors should be equipped with alarms.

The school leaders should work closely with the District in developing PD on class management supports. They should ensure that the policy is consistently implemented schoolwide and should evaluate its impact on improving student behavior. The policy should be posted throughout the school, including classrooms, to promote common expectations and understanding. School leaders should be highly visible in the school and regularly make behavior the focus of observations and walkthroughs.

- Time for transitions from classroom to classroom should be written into the middle level schedule.
- The school should provide resources and training to teachers and students in anti-bullying strategies. Parents should be involved in this effort. In addition, school leaders should review the activities in the ISS room and develop a specific set of procedures and expectations for ISS.
- The front door should be locked at all times or a monitor should be placed at a desk inside the door. The District should also assist by installing a video monitoring system for the front entrance.
- The PBIS plan should be reviewed and, if needed, revised by current staff. All school staff should also receive training in the school PBIS program.
- The school AIS program should be revised by the SLT. Model AIS programs from other District schools should help with this revision. The SLT should review the purpose and objectives of AIS. The revised design should include targeted, purposeful instructional strategies and monitoring. Current AIS staff should be included in the revision process. AIS should not be scheduled simultaneously with resource room.
- The District should work with the school SLT to ensure that intermediate and middle level teachers assigned to the school are fully trained in AVID and have adequate time before school begins in September to effectively plan the program.
- The school should work with the District Parent Partnership Network staff to improve parent participation. School staff should focus on strategies to help parents feel welcome in the building and should create programs and activities that will attract parents into the school, e.g., fairs, celebrations, and informational meetings.

- School leaders should communicate to teachers that their classroom doors should be unlocked during the school day, unless a schoolwide emergency arises.

V. Collection, Analysis and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- The school lacks a location where up-to-date student data is posted and/or reviewed.
- Data collection and analysis responsibilities fall on the IST and school leaders. The IST meets with each grade level to share data, but there is no collaborative analysis or discussion of how to use the data, such as developing strategies to apply the data to modify instruction, match each student with appropriate interventions, or group students by ability within the classroom to differentiate instruction.
- The use of formative assessments during instruction was observed in only a few classrooms and a few lesson plans.
- The team saw no evidence that data is analyzed by subgroups or that instruction is differentiated by data-driven subgroup needs.

Recommendations:

- The school should consider using the IST outer room as a space to post data. Teachers should take advantage of this data to monitor improvement of their assigned students, by grade-level, and schoolwide. This data should also drive conversation at grade level and faculty meetings.
- The school, with the support of the District, should provide PD for teachers in how to use data to improve and modify instruction. School leaders and the IST should work with teachers in developing instructional strategies targeted toward student performance improvement. School leaders should identify this as a focus for observations to ensure that teachers incorporate the strategies learned in PD into classroom practice. School leaders should provide feedback to teachers and next steps in their observation reports to focus their next observation.
- School leaders should establish daily formative assessments as a priority and look for this instructional component during walkthroughs, formal observations, and in lesson plans. These assessments might include 'Tickets out the Door' and student self-assessment. These formative assessment activities should be linked to the lesson plan learning objectives and used to determine how well students learned, the effectiveness of an instructional strategy and the need for re-teaching.
- The District's data packets should also include information on all subgroups in the building, and instruction in classrooms should be designed to meet the needs of these student subgroups.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- While the school has a number of SMART Boards, a few teachers were using them ineffectively e.g., in place of overhead projectors. The team observed their use by the teacher exclusively, with no opportunity for students to use them.
- A number of teachers report that they have little input into PD decisions. They also report that first and second year teachers receive the same PD as veteran teachers.
- New teachers who were assigned to the school this year from other schools in the District did not receive transition support. There was little time for the newly assigned Principal to meet with the new staff.
- Some teachers report that they are not fully aware of the school's Behavior Management Plan. One teacher did not know what "PBIS" is.

Recommendations:

- Teachers, as needed, should be provided with extensive training in the use of SMART Boards, especially in strategies that promote active learning and hands-on use by students to maximize learning.
- The school PD committee should conduct a needs assessment to determine what teachers see as their needs for PD, based on their analyses of student performance. The needs assessment should be analyzed based on staff assignments and years of experience so that individual needs are met.
- The school should provide a training session for the new teachers coming into the building in September 2012. Content of this training should be identified by the SLT and school leadership.
- The Principal should reintroduce the Behavior Management Plan at faculty meetings and communicate expectations that it be implemented.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- Many staff at the school and District level believe that the west side quadrant of the city has not received the same support from the District and community as have other District quadrants.
- The District regularly moves students with persistent behavioral issues to other District schools. During the past month, 12 of these students were transferred into one of the school's middle level grades. This District practice has caused disruptions at the school.
- The school has a number of teachers who are or should be on Improvement Plans. Assistance plans from the teacher's previous school do not follow the teacher to their new assignment.
- The Principal received no support during her transition from high school to a P-8 building.

Recommendations:

- The new superintendent should continue in her plan to create an *Innovation Zone* in the west side quadrant that will create independence and commit support from the District for school improvement. The District should follow through and support the plan that is developed for Frazer and the other schools in this *Innovation Zone*.
- The District should seek an alternative to transferring students with persistent behavioral issues to other schools. A proactive plan for these students should be developed that requires cumulative evidence of long-term behavioral changes and gradual transitions back into regular programs. Many of these students require significantly more supports than provided to in order to succeed in a regular classroom.
- The District should provide support for school leaders in working with teachers in need of improvement. The District should also take necessary steps to ensure that assistance plans follow the teacher, regardless of that teacher’s building assignment.
- The District should screen teachers and administrators carefully to ensure that the new staff are appropriate for the needs of the school. The Principal should have the opportunity to tell the District that a particular teacher does not meet the school needs and request that the teacher be moved elsewhere. It is critical for low-performing schools to be staffed with strong, high quality teachers and administrators who can be effective change agents.
- The District should provide new school leaders with time and support to successfully transition into new buildings.
- 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)	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 following should be addressed in order to improve student academic performance:

- The SLT should identify a lesson plan templates that include all of the components included in the District's research-based document, "Components of an Effective Lesson," for teachers to use in planning instruction. The District should provide training in all of these components.
- School leaders should be clear and direct in communicating their expectations for all teachers and should insist that the focus be on improving student achievement.
- Future staffing decisions should be made by taking into account the needs of the school and expectations of the Principal by placing teachers and administrators in the building who can meet the needs of the students.