

NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code/DBN:	11X415
School Name:	Christopher Columbus High School
School Address:	925 Aster Ave Bronx NY 10469
Principal:	Lisa Fuentes
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Persistently Lowest-Achieving
Area(s) of Identification:	Graduation Rate, English Language Arts, Mathematics
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	November 16-17, 2010

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Community and School Background

There are approximately 1,120 students who attend Christopher Columbus High School in grades 9 through 12. The school enrollment is 49 percent Hispanic, 35 percent Black, six percent Asian, ten percent White and one percent Native American. Students with disabilities comprise 19 percent of the enrollment and English Language Learners (ELLs) comprise 18 percent. The majority of the students live 30 or more minutes from the school.

The administrative team is comprised of the Principal, four Assistant Principals (APs), and teacher leaders. The Principal has been on staff at Christopher Columbus High School for eleven years, serving for the past eight years as the Principal. There are 90 teachers; two teachers are new to the school, and the majority of teachers have ten or more years experience. Ninety-six percent of the 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 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 <i>All Students</i> subgroup in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
-	For 2009-10, the school was identified as a Persistently Lowest- Achieving school.	✓
-	Total Cohort Graduation rate is below 60% (for high schools)	✓
	NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures	
-	Grade of D or F (or C for 3 consecutive years) on the most recent NYC Progress Report	✓
+/-	NYC Quality Review Score of Proficient	✓

B. School Strengths

- Students have access to a library media center that is shared with four other high schools. Adequate laboratory facilities for hands-on inquiry based science instruction are provided.
- There are strong models of curriculum and instruction in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.
- There is a focus on student emotional and social needs. Parents report satisfaction with the school's communication regarding the achievement status of their children.

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

Findings:

- Curriculum documents are incomplete and not fully aligned to the New York State (NYS) Learning Standards. The curriculum documents in English language arts (ELA) and special education lack rigor, relevance, and embedded literacy instruction. ELA curricula are lacking objectives and scope and sequence. While NYS Learning Standards and Common Core State Standards are identified, there is no evidence of any credible connection or instructional plan for explicit teaching to the standards.
- Understanding by Design (UbD), which is used by a small group of teachers for planning some units, is being implemented in lieu of a fully developed year-long curriculum plan.
- Aims and daily learning goals were often not tied to the curriculum pacing guides and/or NYS Learning Standards.
- Classes for students with disabilities use resources that are not aligned to current Regents-level curricula or NYS Learning Standards.

Recommendations:

- The school should work with the new Common Core Standards to create curriculum, curriculum maps, pacing guides, and benchmark assessments that are scaffolded, aligned with the Common Core and are rigorous, relevant, and literacy rich.

- The school should use the newly created curriculum maps as noted above. Teachers should design unit plans based on the concepts and protocols of UbD.
- The school should ensure that learning goals are tied to the written curriculum that is aligned with NYS Learning Standards.
- Classes for students with disabilities, particularly those in self-contained classes, should be provided with resources commensurate with those being used by general education students. Teachers of students with disabilities should participate in common planning with subject area teachers and be expected to adhere to the same pacing calendars and curriculum maps and address the same NYS Learning Standards in their courses.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- Teachers did not use a wide variety of instructional strategies. All students have the same assignments, expectations and materials, i.e., one classroom text and one class graphic organizer.
- Differentiation of instruction was rarely observed and, in instances where it was attempted, it was poorly executed.
- The majority of classes implementing the co-teaching model lacked evidence of co-planning and full involvement of both teachers.
- Grouping of students was not purposeful, but instead was done by arrival time or by seating arrangement.
- Student engagement was minimal as evidenced by few students participating in class discussions. Questioning was primarily at the literal or recall level, and no critical thinking time was provided for students. When more challenging questions were asked, they were answered by the teacher.
- The grading policy was created in June 2010 and distributed in the fall 2010. Students report that it is a point system that reflects attendance, participation, and class work completion. The policy appears to be more of a procedure, as it does not reflect a uniform expectation for quality performance, i.e., how student learning is measured and communicated.
- There is no evidence of specific feedback for student learning goals, and there was no way for students to evaluate their own progress toward the learning goals.
- There is considerable loss of instructional time due to unclear directions and expectations, transitions, and poor pacing.

Recommendations:

- The school should provide training for teachers in effective instructional practices, and those practices should be implemented with fidelity. For example, differentiated instruction and literacy in the content areas should be planned, intentional, and meaningful. Other areas to be addressed include: setting learning goals (aims) based on an aligned and focused curriculum; creating

meaningful, relevant, culturally responsive and engaging learning opportunities; and using formative and summative assessments to inform instruction.

- The school should devote significant resources to supporting teachers in implementing differentiation across content areas. Teachers should be provided with professional development (PD) and in-classroom support.
- The school should train teachers assigned to co-teaching classrooms, support them with ongoing coaching and feedback, and provide them with a model for collaboration.
- The school should use formative and summative assessment data to purposefully group students for learning.
- The school should provide high quality PD in the use of Bloom's Taxonomy as a tool for scaffolding lesson plans.
- The school should revise the grading policy and practices to be standards based.
- The school should use rubrics as both an instructional tool and a self-assessment tool. There should be opportunity for students to engage with the rubric and work toward quality. There should be a clear connection between the rubric and summative assessment results.
- The school should provide curriculum pacing guides and clear expectations for maximizing learning time.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- There are fewer teachers engaged in Inquiry Teams this year compared to last. Scheduling common time has been identified as a barrier to full implementation of the Inquiry Team model. It was also reported that a delay in implementation was a result of possible school closure.
- Current school initiatives, i.e., Differentiated Instruction, Understanding by Design, student mentoring, attendance, and Inquiry Teams, are not a priority and data is not collected around them. Many of the expectations listed in the Staff Handbook are not consistently implemented schoolwide, e.g., teachers should be in the halls during passing time, students who are late must sign the late book, etc.
- All teachers engage in the goal setting process; however, many teacher goals are not tied to student achievement, are not measurable, and are not reflective of high expectations for all students.
- Staff time is not focused or maximized on student learning. No staff members are dedicated to English or mathematics Academic Intervention Services (AIS); therefore, general education students are not receiving the additional academic supports that are needed.
- The structure and content of teacher evaluations are inconsistent. A clear connection between classroom observation recommendations and teacher goals was not evident. Additionally, the school's classroom walkthrough tool and classroom observations are not aligned. There were identical recommendations across multiple observations.

- The school leader neither encourages nor participates in reflection on teacher pedagogy. The school leader is not building capacity for systems development in terms of student learning or vision for organizational structure and/or direction.
- Leadership roles, including those of APs and academy directors, are not well defined.

Recommendations:

- The School Leader should create a sense of urgency focused toward academic achievement. The School Leader should actively involve 90 percent of the staff in the School Based Inquiry Team structures.
- The School Leader should ensure that all meetings of the School Leadership Team (SLT), School Inquiry Teams, Departments and Academies focus on the rigorous and relentless monitoring of school initiatives. SLT meeting dates should be posted to advise and encourage school community attendance. Minutes of meetings and discussions regarding tasks and activities of the SLT should be prepared and shared with the school community.
- The School Leader should expect teacher goals that are tied to school initiatives and focused on positive student outcomes. These goals should be monitored and used in the observation/evaluation process.
- The School Leader should reconfigure the school day to make better use of staff, increase collaborative planning time, and maximize effective instruction.
- The School Leader should ensure teacher evaluations are consistent among administrators. They should be aligned with schoolwide initiatives, reflective of goal attainment, and focused on the explicit criteria outlined in a common walkthrough tool.
- The School Leader should provide, direct, facilitate, and participate in the PD for the building and focus conversations on student improvement and teacher pedagogy.
- The School Leader should have a vision for and develop clearly articulated roles and responsibilities for the leadership team that includes APs, academy directors and teacher leaders. A protocol should be developed to hold all administrators accountable to these leadership roles and responsibilities.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- An academic culture is not evident. There does not appear to be a shared and/or consistent expectation for students. Students themselves do not hold high and consistent expectations for themselves and their peers. Students report that the teachers do not challenge them and that the teachers are too easy.
- Students with disabilities are encouraged to take classes aligned to RCT rather than Regents curricula. There are significant concerns that students with disabilities do not have full access to NYS Learning Standards through curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student placement.

- There is no evidence of a system to identify at-risk students or monitor student progress.
- Students with chronic attendance, discipline, behavioral or family problems, e.g., must work to support the family, are offered opportunities to participate in Credit Recovery, Boys to Men, Women in Power, or Renaissance programs that offer flexible attendance options. The enrollment and rigor of these courses are of concern. Not enough students are enrolled and/or attend. While these programs represent allocations of significant resources, fewer than 70 students are enrolled in all three programs and far fewer attend.
- For the most part, students are encouraged to apply only to SUNY or CUNY, with a greater emphasis on CUNY. Last year the college application process lagged, and students were closed out of admissions.
- The student mentoring program has been implemented in time slots that were previously used for direct academic intervention, i.e., student tutoring and/or for teacher common planning time. There is no evidence of data being used to support making the decision to move to student mentoring as a schoolwide initiative.

Recommendations:

- The school should work to implement a school success system that supports their belief in the ability of every child to learn and achieve as reflected in their vision and mission statements. All policies, procedures, and actions should reflect this belief system.
- Students and parents should be made aware of the requirements for graduation and career and college readiness. All programs, policies and procedures should encourage the highest levels of achievement.
- The school should immediately engage in a comprehensive special education compliance and instructional review. Special education teachers should participate in all PD opportunities.
- The school should develop a ladder of interventions that can be applied to at-risk students with clear and measurable criteria. The Pupil Personnel Team should review students on a case by case basis and ensure student placement in intervention programs that follow the appropriate criteria. An accessible and free resource in the development of such systems is available at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/RTI/guidance/cover.htm>.
- The school should develop individualized student programming and plans that are tied to specific learning needs and include clear goals that are measurable and action items that can be implemented and monitored. Progress monitoring should be shared with school leaders, pupil personnel services, parents, and students.
- The school should encourage students to explore programs and colleges that meet a student's individual needs and interests.
- The school should create a decision making protocol that includes best practices, research and data analysis.

V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- There is little evidence of ongoing formative assessment and progress monitoring. When data is collected, there is no evidence that the data is used to inform instruction. Results from the first marking period are not used to identify students for AIS.
- Progress monitoring of annual goals for students with disabilities is implemented inconsistently and in some instances is completely lacking.
- Present Levels of Performance (PLEPS) in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) do not consistently reflect current skill levels or deficits. Annual goals for students with disabilities lack quantitative evaluation criteria, connection to student's area of disability, and alignment with student specific skill gaps.
- Initiatives designed to improve attendance are not monitored for effectiveness.
- There is limited use of the Datacation system to monitor student attendance. While the Network has trained teachers on using anecdotal logs in Datacation to capture attendance issues, information has not been entered.

Recommendations:

- The school should frequently collect data on student progress, including formative assessments and benchmarks. Existing data systems, i.e., Acuity, hold potential but results need to be thoroughly reviewed and used for daily instructional decisions and interventions, i.e., AIS, tutoring, extra support. Student achievement data should then be shared with the appropriate staff, parents, and students.
- The school should monitor students with disabilities' progress toward IEP goals and report student progress quarterly.
- Special education staff should receive training on IEP writing to ensure IEP goals, PLEPS, and transition are aligned with classification and skill level of students.
- The school should establish baseline and targeted data points in order to measure and determine program effectiveness and accordingly adjust plans.
- School leaders should hold teachers accountable for the use of Datacation to monitor student attendance and capture anecdotal information, including any family outreach. If data indicate that the program is ineffective in tracking student attendance information, the use of Datacation to capture anecdotal attendance information should be discontinued.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- Teacher observation reports do not provide clear and actionable feedback that is aligned to school goals and/or PD strategies.

- Evidence suggests that opportunities for PD are voluntary rather than part of a systematic plan. There is little evidence that PD has changed practice.
- Although differentiated instruction was a school initiative in the last school year, there is only minimal evidence of implementation with full fidelity.
- The UbD initiative is promising, but includes only a small portion of the staff at this time. A few teachers have created lessons using the UbD framework for a small part of the curriculum. There are no teachers of students with disabilities participating in this initiative.
- It is not evident that the time assigned for PD is efficiently or effectively used.
- There is no evidence that PD is monitored for its impact on classroom performance and student achievement.
- There is no evidence of PD that is targeted to the address the needs of students with disabilities.

Recommendations:

- The school should engage external partners to increase the capacity of school leaders to provide actionable feedback on teacher observations. Administrative staff should develop capacity to engage in critical conversations with faculty relative to this shared instructional lens.
- The school should develop a specific and targeted PD plan that includes measurable goals, action steps, progress monitoring, identified staff and correlations to student achievement. PD should be aligned to school initiatives and differentiated based on teacher need. PD should be on-going, job embedded, and sustained.
- The school should implement differentiated instruction with fidelity. There should be schoolwide training, support, monitoring and feedback. The expectation should be that all teachers will use the principles of differentiated instruction in their teaching every day.
- UbD should be understood as a design that starts with learning outcomes and then activities and materials are selected. In order for learning goals to be identified, there should be a clear curriculum and distinctions between big ideas and essential questions. All teachers should be expected to plan for UbD in their classrooms.
- The school should maximize the current structure of half-day monthly PD to ensure that it is used to its fullest potential.
- The school should use the data collected through the walkthrough data tool to develop PD to focus on ways to improve classroom performance. The school Inquiry Teams/pupil personnel team should be trained and fully implemented in order to regularly and systematically review student academic data and progress, establish progress monitoring protocols, define and implement interventions, evaluate student response to interventions and make changes as necessary.
- PD should be planned to include explicit strategies designed to reach a diverse group of learners, including at-risk students, ELLs, and students with disabilities.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- Academic leadership has failed to address the core issues confronting the school, in particular the low graduation rate.
- The district/Network has provided limited PD and on-site support to further develop teacher practice and improve student outcomes.
- The school has not had sufficient support in the implementation of Small Learning Communities (SLCs).
- The district/Network has provided guidance on the use of data but has failed to identify core instructional challenges and develop and support a comprehensive improvement plan to address key student achievement issues. As a result of the lack of such identification and support, students with disabilities (in particular, the students in more restrictive environments) are receiving minimal or no support.
- Parts of the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) are not being implemented. The CEP does not appear to be updated to reflect current programs and practices. The goals and action plans for school year (SY) 2010-11 are the same as the goals for SY 2009-10. Several cited practices were not observed to be in operation in the current school year.

Recommendations:

- The district/Network should provide more direction and leadership support to the school. The district/Network should have clear conversations regarding the core academic issues that are negatively impacting student outcomes.
- The district/Network should engage in student academic analysis to determine relevant PD. This work should be supported by onsite support at least two full days per week from content area and sub-group specialists.
- The school should convene administrative and teacher groups with district/Network support focusing on SLCs.
- The school should make use of the data collection tools provided by the district/Network to drive all decision-making and improvement planning including the CEP.
- The district/Network should monitor the appropriateness and implementation of current school goals and action plans.
- The Network should provide support in implementing the recommendations of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT).

Other Concerns:

- A uniform and systematic approach to ensure student success should be created, with careful consideration given as to how it meets the needs of the diverse student population.

- The district/Network should ensure that enrollment policies are fairly and equitably implemented among all schools, which will dispel the beliefs of some who feel that the school is unfairly receiving students at lower performance levels.
- Teachers expressed their concerns regarding the reduction of staff, increased class size, increased needs of students and increased mobility.
- Fifty-four percent of students with disabilities are in self-contained classrooms that do not provide access to NYS Learning Standards and have limited opportunities to be moved to less restrictive environments.

PART 3: OVERALL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Overall Finding

Reference	Review Team Finding	✓
(b)	The school has not made sufficient progress in identified areas, and is unlikely to make AYP without further significant change.	✓

B. Overall Recommendation

Reference	Review Team Recommendation	✓
(b)	Phase-out or close the school.	✓

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

- Current school leadership should not remain during the phase-out/closure of this school but be replaced with administrators with proven capacities to address the instructional systems needed to educate all students at high levels.
- The school should immediately engage in a comprehensive special education compliance and instructional review. Substantial district/Network support should be provided in making changes in the school's instructional program that will ensure equal access to NYS Learning Standards for all students with disabilities.
- The school should be provided with a new Network Team to support the school during the phase-out period.