

NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code/DBN:	19K660
School Name:	W. H. Maxwell High School
School Address:	145 Pennsylvania Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11207
Principal:	Jocelyn Badette
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Persistently Lowest-Achieving (PLA)
Area(s) of Identification:	Graduation, English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	November 3-4, 2010

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Community and School Background

W.H. Maxwell High School serves 764 students in grades 9 through 12. The student enrollment is 72 percent Black, 25 percent Hispanic and four percent other students. Students with disabilities represent 24 percent of the school and English language learners (ELLs) comprise five percent. There are 24 students attending the school from outside the borough.

The school’s administrative team includes the Principal, five Assistant Principals (APs), a lead guidance counselor, and a Career Technical Education (CTE) director. This is the third year that the Principal is leading the school. Two members of the administrative team are in their first year as administrators. Turnover is low with several staff having a lengthy history at the school.

There are 52 teachers on staff, of whom 50 are tenured and two are in their fourth year. Eighty-five percent of the teaching staff is highly qualified.

Career exploration options include: Apparel Design Technology; Communication/Broadcasting Journalism; Cosmetology; Vision Technology; and Medical Billing/Coding.

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.	✓

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
-	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).	✓
-	For 2010-11, the school was identified as a <u>Persistently Lowest- Achieving school.</u>	✓
-	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

- The school provides CTE programs that are not readily available in other local high schools.
- The physical environment contributes to a sense of belonging.
- The Living for the Young Family through Education (LYFE) Program serves the children of teen mothers.

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:

- Although there was a written curriculum that was maintained in the Principal's office and was aligned with New York State standards for each subject area, instructional delivery and resources observed in the majority of classes did not reflect the written curriculum. Faculty did not display, verbally communicate, or provide instruction aligned to the State standards.
- While technological and print resources were evident in classrooms, they were neither integral to the lessons nor effectively used to engage students and enhance instruction.
- There was no evidence that teachers were using pacing calendars in the classrooms, although APs indicated that teachers receive pacing calendars and use them to plan instruction.

Recommendations:

- Systems should be implemented to ensure that the curriculum, scope and sequence binders are universally distributed to teachers and routinely used as part of daily instructional practice.

Common planning time is essential for departmental teachers to ensure that classroom lessons are consistently aligned across content and grade levels.

- Teachers need professional development (PD) to effectively integrate the use of technological resources into instruction.
- Documents such as pacing calendars, curriculum maps, and prepared note packets should be used to coordinate the instructional efforts.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- There were concerns about the lack of engagement of students during instructional activities. In virtually every classroom, there were a significant number of students who were not engaged in learning as evidenced by heads down on the table and off-topic conversations. In a mathematics class, students were using a computerized program to ascertain answers to the questions posed by the teacher; not through problem solving, but by accessing the answer key. The teacher did not appear to notice and continually praised students for responding correctly.
- There was a lack of the use of higher order thinking skills and questioning techniques during instructional classes that would promote critical thinking and student problem-solving. Teachers tended to use yes/no questions as opposed to open-ended questions and probing questions. Student contributions were not always validated; answers from students were accepted without any explanation about how the answers were derived. Wait time was minimal.
- Some teachers used SMART Boards and white boards as overhead screens to project information; however, many teachers did not use a wide range of effective strategies and resources to address the needs of students in various subgroups. In classrooms where technology was used, there was no interactivity but rather the SMART Boards were used to project a PowerPoint that students used for note taking in the same way that teachers use chalkboards. Instructional time and technology were not effectively used.
- In classrooms, students were often grouped for instruction based on the results of diagnostic tests of Regents-based questions, which led to homogeneous clusters with no evidence of effective instructional differentiation and/or no direct instruction to small groups. There was no consistent process for students to move out of one placement into heterogeneous groups. For example, in one class students were able to articulate how they were placed into particular groups. However, the students did not know the process for exiting one group and moving into another. Sometimes, students had different questions for the same assignment, but instruction was not differentiated and often teacher-centered and used lecture style classes.
- The pacing and sequencing of instruction was problematic. In the majority of the classrooms, excessive time was needed to start-up a lesson and to redirect students. This resulted in an ineffective use of instructional time. For example, students were not adequately engaged in a science class and in turn struggled to focus. In a lecture class, the “aim” and vocabulary were clearly noted on the SMART Board, but the slow pacing of instruction resulted in disruptions and classroom management issues.
- Although transition time in hallways between classes was seamless, transitions during classroom instruction were not handled effectively, as evident in an English class when the teacher declared

that independent reading was over, but the students then spent ten minutes putting away books. In a mathematics class, as well as social studies, teachers directed the students to finish their worksheets for homework because they were not able to complete the lesson. In many of the classes, instructional time was not used well, as attention was paid to student distractions and re-directing.

Recommendations:

- Staff development should be provided to classroom teachers using methods that are targeted to the needs of each staff member or department and be provided on-site through in-classroom modeling, peer mentoring, and instructional coaching. Individualized PD plans should be collaboratively formulated to improve the following:
 - **Student engagement** - Teachers should be taught how to create and implement lessons that stimulate curiosity, promote inductive and deductive reasoning, and reference real world examples and applications to learning.
 - **Higher-order thinking** - Teachers would benefit from training in Bloom’s Taxonomy and Cognitive Domain, followed by classroom observations/walkthroughs to provide critical feedback and to assess the effectiveness of the PD.
 - **Enhanced pedagogical practices and use of technology** - PD focused on effective integration of technology into the delivery of instruction and student-centered classroom activities is essential to successfully use current and future resources.
 - **Student grouping practices** - Teachers should receive staff development and effective models of differentiation that promote learning and interactions. Groups would vary and then be homogeneous or heterogeneous depending on the goals of the lesson.
 - **Pacing and sequencing** - Learning time, including start up, length and quality of instructional activities, directly impacts the effectiveness of the learning environment. Teachers should receive ongoing support to increase their ability to pace and sequence lessons.
 - **Transitions and classroom management** - Administrators should work closely with teachers to minimize the loss of instructional time due to a lack of smooth transitions.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- There was evidence that the school leader manages the organization, operations, and resources to ensure a safe school environment. However, the results of his efforts have not sufficiently impacted daily teaching and learning.
- The school leader determines the needs of staff and provides opportunities for PD. There is insufficient evidence however, that these training efforts, as well as the walkthrough and observation tools used by the Principal and APs, have resulted in a systemic positive change in classroom instruction. For example, teachers participated in PD on differentiation of instruction; however, there was little evidence of the application of differentiation strategies and no accountability structures for follow up.

Recommendations:

- The Principal and other supervisors should be provided additional training in best practices in teaching and learning to provide the type of feedback and follow-up necessary for teachers to be effective. The code of conduct, including consequences for infractions, should be consistently implemented in classrooms, as well as in the hallways.
- The Principal and leadership team should refine and expand the data portfolio to provide a holistic view of student performance, including student strengths; challenges; and learning styles. Performance on Regents exams should not solely inform instruction.
- The principles of adult learning should be applied to the design of PD, including greater staff input and individualization of opportunities for continued growth.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success**Findings:**

- Student attendance is poor and a lateness policy is not consistently implemented. On the days of the school review, attendance was below 70 percent. Students were consistently late to class with no consequences. Lateness appeared to be expected and was accepted by the staff. Teachers often adjusted their lesson plans to enable the late students to catch up.
- High expectations for students are not reflected in the classroom lessons and assignments. Homework often consisted of photocopied worksheets and short answer questions based on Regents exams.
- Schoolwide behavior policies have been developed. However, evidence that student behavior was adequately managed during instructional class time was limited. Teachers needed to redirect students to the lesson a number of times.

Recommendation:

- Shared strategies for addressing attendance and lateness that include a clearly articulated plan should continue to be discussed and developed collaboratively by leadership and staff. Teachers would benefit from a culture of clear expectations and accountability procedures for consistently addressing student lateness to class.
- The school culture, reflected in PD offerings and teaching and learning, should emphasize rigorous standards for student achievement that move beyond passing the Regents exams to a level of mastery and college readiness.
- Consistent adherence to behavioral standards and the code of conduct should reduce classroom management issues.

V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data**Findings:**

- Data is centralized and used by the Principal and the administrative team to set goals and PD opportunities. However, there is little evidence that formative assessments are being used for instructional planning. There is an over-reliance on diagnostic Regents exams.

- The assessment data used is narrow in scope, i.e., diagnostic, Regents, and credit accumulation, as well as alternate assessments for students as indicated by Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs). This does not result in adjustments to curriculum or differentiation of instruction. The data is not used to assess the effectiveness of current educational programs.
- Inquiry teams are in the beginning stages of implementation.

Recommendations:

- The Small Learning Communities (SLCs) and department meetings should be used to develop common formative and summative assessments.
- PD for Inquiry Teams will enable staff to analyze data that informs teaching and learning to improve student achievement.
- The school would benefit from specific training by the Network Team or an outside consultant to assist teachers with accessing and using data that is available through the ARIS system.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- PD opportunities demonstrate notable deficiencies. Staff needs are not incorporated in planning. Accountability for the implementation of training being received is not effectively tracked.
- Systems exist for informal walkthroughs and formal observations by administrators, but accountability structures are not evident, nor was there evidence that using the observation tools result in improved instructional practice.
- There are PD offerings for all teachers and administrators. However, these are not systemically based on individual needs.
- The team did not see evidence of PD for all staff specifically focused on ELLs, students with disabilities, and at-risk students.

Recommendations:

- Quality staff development needs to be provided to staff based on an analysis of student performance data and on individualized PD needs. The school should develop a process that assesses the effectiveness of the PD and includes additional support such as modeling, peer mentoring and coaching.
- The Principal and supervisors should be provided additional training in order to provide quality feedback to teachers that results in improvements in pedagogy and classroom management.

VII. District Support

Finding:

The Network Team has not adequately assessed school needs and, therefore, has not provided critical support.

Recommendations:

- The Network Team should provide greater curriculum coordination, specific PD, and ongoing support. Members of the administrative team require additional support to enhance pedagogical skills to influence instruction and supervision.
- The Network should provide support in implementing the recommendations of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT).

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.

Maintain, refine, and enhance CTE offerings, as these are vital elements in the school community.