

**NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

<b>BEDS Code/DBN:</b>	08X560
<b>School Name:</b>	Bronx Academy High School
<b>School Address:</b>	1440 Story Avenue Bronx, NY 10473
<b>Principal:</b>	Gary Eisinger
<b>Restructuring Phase/Category:</b>	Persistently Lowest-Achieving/ School Under Registration Review (PLA/SURR)
<b>Area(s) of Identification:</b>	Graduation Rate
<b>Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:</b>	February 8-9, 2011

**PART 1: INTRODUCTION**

**A. Community and School Background**

The Bronx Academy is a transfer school that serves 330 students in grades 10 through 12. The enrollment is almost evenly divided between Hispanic and Black students. Of these students, six percent are English language learners (ELLs) and approximately six percent are students with disabilities. Most students come from throughout The Bronx.

The administrative team consists of the Principal and two Assistant Principals (APs). The Principal was appointed in September 2010, along with the AP for Instruction. The other AP is long-serving. There are 19 teachers on staff. All are tenured and highly qualified. There have been few staff changes in the last three years and none in the last year.

**PART 2: ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

**A. Performance on Key Indicators of Student Achievement Trends and School Progress**

<b>Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)</b>	<b>School Performance Indicators+</b>	
	<b>NYSED Quantitative Performance Measures</b>	
-	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	

<b>Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)</b>	<b>School Performance Indicators+</b>	✓
	(AOR) for the past two consecutive years) indicate an increase in the achievement gap between identified subgroups and the <b>All Students</b> subgroup in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓
-	For 2010-11, the school was identified as a <b>Persistently Lowest- Achieving school.</b>	✓
-	Total high school Cohort Graduation rate is below 60%	✓
	<b>NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures</b>	
-	Grade of D or F (or C for 3 consecutive years) on the most recent NYC Progress Report	✓
-	NYC Quality Review Score of Under-Developed	✓

### 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:

- There was no curriculum in place until September 2010 and this has had a seriously negative impact on student learning and achievement. With the appointment of the new Principal and AP for Instruction, written curricula in all subjects that are aligned to New York State (NYS) Standards and the Common Core standards are being written. However, the new curriculum adaptations are incomplete and are not yet having an impact on student learning and achievement.
- The long-term sequencing of the curriculum is not in place and available for all teachers. The creation of scope and sequence documents and pacing calendars for each core academic subject is only now being developed. The lack of such documents over time means that student learning has been significantly impaired.
- There is little interdisciplinary connection between content and concepts across subjects. Common learning skills, such as collaborative learning and research, are not developed across content areas.
- Student progress over time has been significantly restricted because of insufficient trade books, differentiated materials, and technology to effectively engage students and support their learning.

##### Recommendations:

- In order to facilitate the completion of the new standards-based curriculum tailored to the needs of students, teachers should receive PD (PD) in *Understanding by Design* to support their planning.
- The administration should ensure that the curriculum mapping is completed and an overview is made available to all staff on-line so that long-term planning is evident.

- Curriculum development should be monitored by the administration to ensure that important concepts are delineated and developed over time. Curriculum maps should ensure that as students move from course to course, they develop key learning skills as well as a deep understanding of core content.
- The school should use funding strategically to purchase a wide range of trade books, differentiated materials and technology that is aligned to NYS Standards to address the specific needs of students and further engage them in the learning process.

## II. Teaching and Learning

### Findings:

- The range of instructional strategies employed is narrow. Whole class instruction sometimes extends for too long in many classes. Other teaching methods, such as independent research, are seen in few classrooms. Co-teaching is rarely used. While teachers use technology well to illustrate instruction, student use of technology for their work is underdeveloped. The range of teaching strategies has recently expanded but is not yet having a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning across all classes.
- Teachers' questioning skills vary considerably among the classes. In most classes, questioning and tasks given are closed and do not encourage problem solving or higher order thinking skills. In a small number of classes, there is good practice with teachers asking open questions that encourage students to explain their reasoning to the class.
- Tasks set for students are rarely differentiated in difficulty and there is a significant lack of challenge to ensure that the academic needs of students are met. In some classes, the work set is far too difficult. In one class, that was typical of many, students were all working at completing the same task relating to chemical bonding, but it was evident that some students were failing to understand or complete the task because the level expected was too high for them. The main reason for this is that teachers are not using data about student skills and knowledge to present the work appropriately. In addition, teachers rarely group students in different ways for different purposes in lessons, such as by ability, and so the conditions for more differentiated instruction and teacher focused support are not created. This practice is embedded and has been a major contributing factor to low student achievement.
- The pace of learning varies considerably between classes. In many lessons observed, the level of rigor for many students was not challenging enough, reflecting significant variations in teaching skills and quality. In a small number of lessons, the challenge and interest engendered by the tasks results in a good pace to learning.
- There is limited evidence of students' academic work having rubrics to guide them or of teachers giving specific feedback to students that outlines what they need to do to improve. Bulletin boards displaying NYS standards are not routinely referred to in all classrooms. Students have their longer-term graduation goals discussed and reviewed regularly, but teachers do not set next step curriculum goals for them to work towards and help the students to become more reflective on their progress.

- The recently introduced grading policy has had a minimal impact, and it is not yet monitored by administrators to ensure that components, such as the 60 percent that is class work, are consistently awarded across the school. However, it is well understood by staff and students.
- Students are considerably tardy for the first period in the morning for a variety of reasons. One impact of this is that some students may not accumulate graduation credit for classes given during first period. The Principal and staff are aware of this, but there are no rigorous procedures in place to ensure that all lessons get off to a timely start.

**Recommendations:**

- The school should urgently provide professional development (PD) opportunities for teachers aimed at specifically increasing the range of teaching methods used and extending student engagement in class more fully, particularly by reducing the use of whole class instruction. Some of this training should continue to be provided internally, including by the core team of curriculum leaders that has been established and from the AP for Instruction. The Principal should request that the Network be more involved in providing support and guidance to the staff as a whole and to individual teachers whose specific skills need developing in this respect.
- The administration should build on the limited good practice in questioning techniques among a small number of staff and seek to extend these skills across the school. The Principal should also draw on external expertise across the Network to provide targeted support for individual teachers who need to develop effective questioning skills.
- As a matter of urgency to address the embedded weaknesses in differentiating instruction, administrators should give priority to supporting teachers to differentiate their instruction through coaching, observing best practice and collaborative planning during common planning time. High quality training should be provided on the effective use of student data to guide instruction, both internally through the appointment of a data specialist, and by drawing on expertise across the Network.
- The administration should, through their monitoring of teaching and feedback, work to raise the low expectations among some teachers about what students are able to achieve to ensure that they demonstrate the skills required of them. The AP for Instruction should continue to provide support, PD and rigorous and regular close monitoring of individual teachers to check on their progress because, at present, teachers are not held accountable for the progress of the students they teach.
- The school should ensure that objectives for a sequence of work in teachers' plans are provided to students as next step goals for achievement. This should enable students to be more reflective and self-correcting when reviewing their own progress. Displays of annotated student work illustrating good and weaker features in relation to rubrics should be extended more fully across all subjects and classes. The administration should ensure that all teachers provide high quality feedback on student work that makes clear why a piece of work is good and what is needed to improve.
- The Principal and administrators should monitor the implementation of the grading policy across classes and subjects to ensure that awards are applied consistently, for example, in relation to class work and homework.

- The school should, as a matter of urgency, address the problem of student tardiness at Period 1 in the day by adjusting the program.

### III. School Leadership

#### Findings:

- There is no strategic plan for the implementation of key priorities in the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) or to effectively engage staff and partners, including the Network, in the school's improvement. There remains a culture of low expectation in the building that the new administration is seeking to remove. There is a School Leadership Team (SLT) but, over time, the SLT has not been influential in bringing about improvements in student performance. While there is great clarity among administrators about the direction and pacing of change and a greater awareness of school goals among staff, the impact on student performance and school improvement is limited.
- The PD provided by the Principal and AP on implementing a new comprehensive curriculum, although of good quality, has yet to impact significantly on improving student achievement. Insufficient training has been provided over time for teachers in the use of data to guide instruction, and this remains a significant weakness.
- Weaknesses in curriculum planning over time have resulted in there being significant weaknesses in pacing, and this has a detrimental impact on student learning and achievement.
- The system of teacher and staff evaluation is not effective in holding teachers accountable for the progress they make in improving their practice in the agreed target areas. Formal observations are not rigorous enough. There are no clear criteria for evaluating student learning and its roots in pedagogy that the school leaders apply consistently to give clearly focused feedback to teachers.
- There is no specific program for additional instructional activities targeted for at-risk students. The program of enrichment is also limited.

#### Recommendations:

- The school should work with the Network to translate the CEP into a more specific strategic plan that sets out the steps to be taken and by whom, the roles and responsibilities of the SLT, how internal and external support and training will be provided, the pacing of the change and success criteria for measuring progress. The role of key players, such as experts from the Network and other sources, including the data specialist, should be tied into the plan so that expertise, resources and leadership are coordinated to collectively drive forward improvements.
- The Principal should extend the training and PD of all staff by drawing on outside expertise, including from the Network where appropriate, to accelerate improvement. The PD should focus on the implementation of the school's new curriculum and on the use of data to provide differentiated instruction. In addition, strategies such as sharing best practice, coaching and targeted training should be extended to focus more specifically on developing individual teachers' skills and competencies.
- Administrators should take steps to accelerate the process of planning sequences of work and curriculum pacing to cover the year as a whole, so that coverage for all content areas is fully in place.

- The administration, with Network support, should introduce as a matter of urgency a far more rigorous system of formal observation and feedback to teachers, guided by criteria that are consistently applied. A program of coaching and access to training or mentoring should be developed to help teachers to improve their practice and to be accountable for their improvement.
- The school should urgently introduce a program of additional instructional activities for specifically identified at-risk students and seek ways to extend the enrichment program.

#### **IV. Infrastructure for Student Success**

##### **Findings:**

- High expectations for student achievement are not shared among staff. Classroom observations and staff interviews revealed that many teachers have low expectations for student learning and lessons are not rigorous enough.
- There is no scheduled articulation between teaching staff and student support services.
- There is no evidence of Academic Intervention Services (AIS) during the school day to address the specific needs of at-risk students, including ELLs and students with disabilities.

##### **Recommendations:**

- The administration should engage all stakeholders in establishing a vision of high expectation that is reflected across the school. This vision of academic excellence should be evident in all classrooms. The administration should provide extensive PD to ensure that lessons are rigorous and challenging. Lessons should be student-centered, and learning strategies should be varied to include modeling, problem solving, decision-making and reading and writing across disciplines.
- Formal case conferring sessions led by guidance counselors and attended by subject area teachers should be instituted once a week to address the needs of students in crisis.
- The administration should implement criteria for identification of students in need of AIS support, including ELLs and students with disabilities. These targeted students should be provided with services during the instructional day.

#### **V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data**

##### **Findings:**

- The use of data to impact instruction and to inform decision making is at an early stage of development. Over time this has been a significant and systemic weakness. There is an absence of internal data from prior school years that is making it difficult to measure year-to-date comparisons of the effectiveness of programs, initiatives and pedagogical impact.
- Internal formative and summative assessments are not revised and aligned to the newly created curriculum maps. These assessments are not being monitored by the administration for consistency across class, grade and subject area. No data is being culled from these assessments

and compared to standardized assessment results. The scholarship report data is not being compared to Regents' results.

- The school has not developed a systematic way to identify at-risk students for Academic Intervention Services (AIS) supports. Although student subgroup data is disaggregated, this information does not form the basis for instructional planning and has not translated into developing differentiated instructional strategies.

**Recommendations:**

- The school should have a dedicated data specialist to warehouse and archive all data. This staff member should have regular articulation periods with school administrators, teachers, parents and students and provide regular PD sessions for the staff on the use of data to impact instruction. The data specialist should have expertise in the areas of graduation cohort data, NYS and NYC assessment data and accountability measures, and internal formative and summative assessments.
- The school should revise and align its formative and summative assessments to the curriculum maps. The data specialist should assist the teachers in the revision and creation of these assessments to ensure consistency of grading across the school. This interim data should be compared with external summative assessment results on a periodic basis.
- The administration should urgently develop a systematic way to identify at-risk students for AIS supports and provide services for these students within the course of their regular program. Outside expertise should be used to provide PD on the use of data and how to differentiate instruction based on that information.

**VI. Professional Development**

**Findings:**

- Over time, PD has not been aligned with the school goals for improving teacher competency or based on data reflecting teacher and student needs. This has contributed significantly to low student achievement. Current curriculum mapping and sequencing of work derived from the online curriculum mapping is in its early stages and there is little discernible impact on student achievement and outcomes. Much work remains to be done, and the administration faces many challenges with the ingrained weaknesses in differentiated instruction, rigor, student engagement and the use of data to guide instruction.
- There is limited effectiveness across the school in *Understanding by Design*, and this slows the rate of student learning and progress. A lack of intervisitations across classes prevents teachers benefiting from seeing better instructional practice to help aid improvement.
- Procedures to ensure that PD is bringing about improvements in instruction and learning are not effective. The AP of Instruction meets with every teacher and consults with them regarding their PD needs. All teachers have been formally observed. Based on the observations, the AP has created an analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement for each teacher. However, this system is not effective because it is at a very early stage of development and arrangements are not in place to coach and support individuals to improve their instruction.

- The Principal and the AP are not rigorous enough in their monitoring of the implementation of the new curriculum and the impact of the PD provided to bring about embedded changes at a faster pace than they are currently doing.
- There is no systemic and planned support for individual PD, and this results in the pace of change being slow in addressing the individual instructional weaknesses of many teachers. There has been little internal support and training provided by staff members to meet the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities.

**Recommendations:**

- Administrators should develop a plan to establish PD for individual teachers, based on student data and information from lesson observations undertaken by the administration.
- Administrators should develop a plan to meet the personal needs and goals of teachers for the areas of differentiated instruction, increased rigor, student engagement and the use of data to guide instruction.
- Administrators should establish a system where the core team can collaborate with those staff members who have mastered the Atlas Rubicon platform and train other staff in the school. External expertise should be provided in the use of *Understanding by Design*.
- The Principal and AP of Instruction should establish protocols to ensure that staff are implementing the key goal of introducing a new curriculum and meeting the rigor needed to improve overall instruction.
- The school should develop internal supports and use training from the Network to meet the specific needs of teachers of ELLs and students with disabilities, in addition to the in-house support being offered by two teachers during prep and PD periods.

**VII. District Support**

**Findings:**

- The instructional support provided by the Network is limited. Only administrators have been provided with PD this year in the form of required training in the Common Core Standards and some walkthroughs.
- The Network has not provided sufficient PD in the areas of curriculum development and the use of data.
- The Network has not provided the school with sufficient historical data or suggested methods to retrieve this data.

**Recommendations:**

- The Network should assist the school in its curriculum development and the creation and revision of corresponding assessments.
- The Network should provide on-site support with a specialist (or specialists) in the areas of curriculum and the use of data. Workshops should be offered in these areas and staff members other than administrators should be provided with the opportunity to attend.

- The Data/IT Specialist for the Network should provide support for the school in retrieving historical data to assist administrators in measuring their progress towards improved graduation rate. The Network should archive this information for all of the schools that it supports.
- The Network should support the school in the implementation of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) recommendations.

**PART 3: OVERALL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION**

**A. Overall Finding**

Reference	Review Team Finding	✓
(d)	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	✓
(d)	Phase-out- close the school	✓

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

Although the new Principal and AP of Instruction have proved effective in making strategic decisions and implementing changes, there is a great deal of ineffective practice in all aspects of school life and school programs that is embedded in the fabric and culture of the school. It would take an inordinate amount of time to correct these failings and to put in place highly effective academic programs. The recommendation is that the school should be phased-out. The good work of the Principal and AP should be recognized and their effective skills used in another school.