

NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code/DBN:	32K564
School Name:	Bushwick Community High School
School Address:	231 Palmetto Street Brooklyn, NY 11221
Principal:	Tira Randall
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Persistently Lowest-Achieving/ School Under Registration Review (PLA/SURR) English Language Arts Mathematics
Area(s) of Identification:	Graduation Rate
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	February 8-9, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Community and School Background

Bushwick Community High school (BCHS) serves 371 students in grades 10 through 12. The school has an open-door admissions policy and admits students, between the ages of 17 through 21, with zero credits and/or poor attendance and discipline records. The school enrollment is 37 percent Black, 62 percent Hispanic and one percent Asian students. Sixty percent of the students enrolled live near the school with the remaining 40 percent coming from outside the area.

The administrative team includes the Principal and two Assistant Principals (APs). The Principal is serving in her seventh year. The APs have served for one and three years. There are 25 teachers on staff. One teacher is new to the school; seven teachers have served between one and three years and six teachers have served between four and seven years. This represents a low rate of teacher turnover.

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 is identified as a <u>Persistently Lowest- Achieving school.</u>	✓
-	Total high school Cohort Graduation rate is below 60%	✓
NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures		
+/-	NYC Quality Review Score of Proficient	✓

B. School Strengths

- The school provides a safe learning environment where respect for and by the students is evident in the halls and classrooms.
- The school has an energetic, caring, and dedicated staff who are committed to the mission of BCHS, i.e., where each student, regardless of his prior academic record, can continue his/her education and graduate.
- Many collaborations and partnerships with local agencies have been forged to provide additional support for the at-risk student population.

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:

- The written curriculum is not aligned fully with New York State (NYS) Standards and performance indicators. The curriculum offered does not provide for rigorous classroom instruction or student-centered learning activities.
- Although the school is well-resourced to deliver its current curriculum, observations indicated a low level of use of these resources in classrooms to enliven and support teaching and learning.
- The curriculum is individually developed by teachers, resulting in inconsistency of delivery across content areas.

Recommendations:

- The District/Network should work with the school on the development of curriculum in all core areas and ensure that it is aligned clearly with the current NYS Learning Standards. Curriculum should be aligned to the NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards in English language arts, literacy and mathematics to prepare for implementation in school year 2012-2013. Knowledgeable and trained staff (national, state or local), who understand the key elements and requirements of curriculum design should construct the curriculum.

All teachers and administrators should participate in professional development (PD) in order to plan and implement a curriculum with rigor, and use teaching methods that are student-centered. The curriculum should form the basis for assessing the individual student mastery and progress. Walkthroughs and formal evaluations should include how well the teacher knows and implements the curriculum for the subjects taught.

- Administrators should encourage, model and monitor the integration and use of resources within the instructional process. Resources should be regularly used in lessons to directly impact student learning by increasing and enhancing student engagement in their work.
- The curriculum for all content areas should be developed on a departmental and schoolwide basis to ensure full coverage of the standards and to avoid repetition and redundancy. Administrators should evaluate curriculum documentation and observe classes to ensure that the curriculum is delivered in a coherent and effective manner.

II. Teaching and Learning**Findings:**

- Lesson observations identified that most instruction is teacher-led and directed, regardless of the number of students present in the class. Group sizes varied considerably in the lessons observed, but appropriate changes to the direct teaching style were not made. The small number of students in some classes would have allowed a more individualized approach to meet specific student needs, but teachers failed to take advantage of this opportunity.
- The development of differentiated instruction to address the different learning styles and needs of students is an identified school priority but was not evident in the delivery of instruction in classrooms.
- There was no evidence of a co-teaching model in use in the school.
- The integration of culturally responsive materials and resources was inconsistent across content areas. Effective use of instructional materials was observed in humanities classes but this was not evident in other content area lessons.
- During discussions, students were not able to demonstrate their understanding of NYS Standards or of the goals and objectives as posted in their classrooms. As a result, students are not clear about the purpose of their learning.

- Too few opportunities were provided for interactive, hands-on, collaborative tasks to enliven students' learning experiences. This had a negative impact on student learning and engagement.
- Questioning in classrooms was ineffective and did little to involve students in the learning process. The majority of teacher questions demanded little from the students and few questions required students to elaborate on their answers or engaged students in higher order thinking skills.
- Tardiness was not addressed in a consistent manner by staff and this led to instructional time being wasted.
- Few classrooms posted rubrics or State standards to demonstrate expectations for each subject. No examples were seen of annotated, standards referenced student work in hallways or classes. As a result, students were not supported to understand the next steps for improvement and were not provided with exemplars to illustrate what they are expected to achieve.
- In the lessons observed, students were not provided with the opportunities to use the available SMART Boards. In most instances, SMART Boards were used by teachers as a 'chalkboard.' In addition, although resources were available students did not use calculators or computers.
- Documentation review indicated that there is no schoolwide grading policy. Individual teachers use their own systems, leading to confusion among students as to how well they are doing in different subjects.

Recommendations:

- The Network should provide PD on a wide range and variety of instructional strategies to be used in the classroom to address the different learning styles and diverse needs of students. There should be a high level of expectation that teachers will implement these strategies and an equal expectation that administrators will monitor lessons to ensure that this is happening.
- The school should urgently revisit their focus on the provision of differentiated instruction to meet the identified needs of individuals and subgroups. Administrators should support teachers in using data to drive their planning and should monitor classes to ensure that all teachers are responding appropriately to the specific needs of students.
- The school should seek support from the Network to effectively implement a co-teaching model across the curriculum that will maximize support and learning for all students. This is particularly relevant for the at-risk student population. Time should be provided for co-teachers to plan together and administrators should visit classrooms to ensure the implemented co-teaching model enhances student learning.
- The Principal should allocate funds to purchase culturally responsive resources and teachers should ensure that they are fully integrated into the teaching program.

- Teachers should share goals and objectives with their students at the beginning of each lesson to ensure that all students are clear about what they are expected to learn and how it relates to the NYS Standards. All lessons should end by revisiting the objectives to check for understanding. Administrators should hold discussions with students about their learning goals and their knowledge, understanding and awareness of precisely what it is they are learning.
- Administrators, with Network support, should provide PD for all teachers to extend their repertoire of instructional strategies to include more student interaction, such as pair and share, group collaboration and problem solving, and peer and self-assessment. Teachers should build routines and strategies into their planning and ensure that their use becomes commonplace in classroom delivery.
- Teachers should be provided with PD from the Network to enable them to extend and develop their questioning techniques so that students have regular opportunities to use their higher order thinking skills and to be more involved in learning in the classroom. Teachers should include in their lesson plans a range of differentiated and higher-level questions specifically targeted at encouraging students to justify or extend their responses. Administrators should insist that strategies outlined in PD transfer into instructional practices.
- Administrators should set high expectations for a prompt start to all lessons, shared with all staff and students. Administrators should closely monitor student arrival times to check for consistency of practice across the school.
- Administrators and teachers with the support of the Network should develop rubrics for all content areas on a schoolwide basis to provide meaningful feedback that is understood by all students. The feedback should clearly indicate the ways in which a student can progress from one level to the next. Administrators should evaluate the quality of feedback through walkthroughs and discussions with students.
- An administrator should lead the development of a plan to effectively integrate the use of technology into all curriculum areas to motivate and enhance student learning. The plan should be implemented and its effectiveness in the classroom assessed.
- Administrators and teachers should develop a uniform schoolwide grading policy to ensure consistency of teacher practice and clarification of learning goals for all students.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- The expectations set by school leaders are low. There is no shared mission or vision to address the significant weaknesses in the school's performance. School leaders do not demonstrate the capacity to move the school forward and were unable to articulate the next steps for improving the school.
- The school leadership team (SLT) is not effective in driving school improvement. It works in an advisory capacity as opposed to a decision-making body. As a result, the team is not fully engaged

in all aspects of school improvement, particularly in setting and monitoring school goals for achievement.

- The Principal has proved ineffective at clearly delegating responsibilities to other school leaders to have any discernible impact on rapidly improving the school. Expectations that are clear or explicit in terms of the role that all leaders should play in monitoring the school's progress, improvement or instruction have not been established.
- Administrators do not have a clear understanding of what is being taught in the classrooms. Evidence presented indicated that the school does not fully adhere to the current NYS Standards in the humanities and science cores.
- The level of parental involvement in all aspects of school policymaking, planning, and student learning remains low.
- The Principal and APs have not developed an adequate schoolwide instructional program, including curriculum, rubrics, and a grading policy.
- The informality of the current arrangements for student support services is failing to address the full range of needs of the at-risk community.
- The Principal has not been able to locate adequate resources from the Network or elsewhere to address urgent issues such as absenteeism or engagement of the parent community.
- There is no schoolwide system established to use data information effectively to support teacher planning or student learning.
- The Principal has not developed a comprehensive PD program to address the specific, identified needs of the staff or students.

Recommendations:

- The administrators should establish an academic vision for the school that is based on high expectations for all staff and students. School leaders should articulate a detailed plan that precisely outlines the steps that are needed to improve the school. The plan should include challenging targets, roles, and responsibilities for all personnel in achieving the goals. It should be clear that all staff members are to be held accountable for improving student achievement by developing and refining their instructional practice and in doing so enable the students they teach to achieve at a higher level.
- The Principal should involve the SLT in all decisions regarding the setting of school goals. This process should be driven by extensive data analysis and disaggregation to ensure that the goals set for each content area and subgroup are appropriately challenging and lead to improved student achievement.
- The Principal should reorganize leadership responsibilities to establish strong instructional leaders in supervisory roles. Strong instructional leaders should regularly monitor the quality of teaching in the classroom and play an instrumental role in bringing about sustained improvements in instruction. The Principal should explicitly share the expectations for these roles and should carefully monitor the progress of each individual concerned.

- The administrators designated to supervise the humanities and science cores should urgently review all curriculum plans to ensure that they fully align with NYS Standards. They should address any weaknesses and ensure the implementation of the revised curriculum with monitoring procedures quickly established.
- The school should seek Network advice on proven strategies to increase active parental involvement. This outreach should include specific strategies to address not only the parents of the two-thirds of students who attend school, but also the parents of the one- third of students who are consistently absent.
- The school leadership, with the support of the Network, should plan and coordinate the development of schoolwide plans for curriculum areas, including rubrics and grading policy. These plans should be clearly communicated to all teachers and monitored to ensure consistency of practice for the benefit of all students.
- The school leadership should design a clear structure for the organization of student support services that carefully aligns caseload management and student need. This structure should remove all issues that currently lead to overlap and duplication. The system should be implemented as soon as possible and monitored to ensure that it is consistently meeting the needs of all serviced students.
- The Principal should seek advice and guidance from the Network on the steps that should be taken to address the chronic absenteeism in the school and on how to engage parents in the immediate location and beyond. This advice should come from experts in attendance and parent engagement.
- The Principal, with support from the Network, should provide PD for leaders and teachers to develop and coordinate the use of data by all staff to plan student programs. The data should be easily accessible for teachers at all times, and teachers should be supported in understanding how they can use the information provided to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students. Administrators should assess the impact on student outcomes through observations and hold teachers accountable for the progress of students in their classes.
- The Principal should create a PD plan that specifically addresses the needs of all staff within the school. The plan should use data from student achievement and lesson observation outcomes in order to identify the key areas for improvement for the whole school, groups of teachers and individuals.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- The high expectations for students voiced by administrators and teachers were not evidenced in either observations or interviews.
- The schoolwide behavior policy is largely an informal policy that is not consistently applied by all teachers across the school.

- The lack of coherence in the extensive support services results in inefficient communication and overlap of responsibility. The lack of specific roles, responsibilities and supervision severely hampers the work of the team and limits the support available to students.
- Career and college counseling is available for fewer than 25 percent of the students.
- Absenteeism is an ongoing and chronic issue that contributes to low student achievement.
- Support staff meets informally, but no specific scheduling of meetings was evident except for the deans.
- While a large array of health and social services is available, there is not a similar array of services to promote and extend academic achievement.
- There is no school library or media facility. The room identified as the library is being used for storage.
- Documents revealed low attendance of between three and 15 parents at monthly PTA meetings.
- There was no evidence of the school surveying parents to obtain their views on all aspects of school improvement.

Recommendations:

- The Principal and administrators should set high expectations for the achievement and progress of all students. These expectations should be widely shared with all staff, parents and the students themselves. To assist in this process, the school should extend its focus beyond the social supports and develop a parallel approach to support for academic achievement.
- The school should establish a written behavior policy that is clearly understood by the entire school community. The administration should closely monitor the implementation of this policy to ensure consistent enforcement.
- The administration should review caseload assignments of student support services staff to avoid duplication and confusion. A clear structure outlining areas of responsibility should be created to significantly improve the informal arrangements that are currently in place. Administrators should monitor the quality of services provided.
- Career and college advice and support should be scheduled for all first year students. The support should serve to motivate students and prepare them to be college ready. Administrators should ensure that the support provided is meeting the needs of students.
- The school should, with Network support, identify best practices at peer schools locally and/or nationally in order to significantly improve student attendance.
- The school should schedule at minimum a monthly meeting for support staff to provide a forum for discussion about individual students and to formulate agreed upon procedures for the support of students in all instructional areas. Administrators should attend these meetings.

- The school administration should introduce a process to encompass all students in appropriate support services to meet their specific needs. Current staffing is adequate to provide sufficient coverage for this at-risk student population. Administrators should observe the quality of service provided and ensure students are well-supported both academically and socially.
- The Principal should seek additional funds or reallocate funds over a period of time to create a reference library and media center to enable students and staff to access a range of books and materials to support their studies. Some of the computers should be relocated to this central area to provide opportunities for research and inquiry.
- The school should engage more parents in school activities. Administrators should review the parent meeting attendance data; the meeting agendas; and initiate parent surveys to increase knowledge, interest, and commitment. The constitution of the SLT should be refocused to emphasize decision-making as its primary role. The school should make use of its Network support to train and empower parents.
- The Network should assist the school in designing surveys to address multiple issues faced by the school.

V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- There is no evidence that the full range of school data is analyzed and disaggregated to identify the specific needs of the students. The administration highlighted the use of Regents' item analysis, but documentation was not provided. As a result, the school is not able to use data to adjust programs to meet the needs of individuals, groups or subgroups to improve their academic performance.
- The predictive assessments used in the school assessment program are school-generated and not in alignment with NYS Learning Standards. Student achievement in these assessments did not automatically translate to performance in standardized testing outcomes.
- Evidence from interviews and documentation indicated that although data is collected, it is not being used for student trend analysis or to inform instructional planning.
- *Datacation*, an electronic data tracker, is not yet used to analyze student data.

Recommendations:

- The school, with support from the Network, should develop an effective data system to provide in-depth analysis and disaggregation that impacts program adjustments to increase student achievement. The information should be used by administration and teachers to better identify trends at the school and classroom level. Administrators should ensure that data analysis is used consistently to drive instruction. PD should be provided for teachers who struggle in using data in this way.
- The administration should ensure that all formative assessments are fully aligned with NYS Standards to provide accuracy of data for program design.

- The school administration with Network support should create a formalized, schoolwide data portfolio that can be used by all staff to improve school performance. Staff should be provided with PD on the effective collection and use of a range of student data, and administrators should ensure these strategies are implemented in the classroom.
- Now that *Datacation* is in place, a committee should be convened to examine how this data should be used to analyze student performance and develop a range of instructional strategies for at-risk students.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- There is no formalized PD plan in place that takes into account the analysis of data and outcomes from lesson observations to establish whole school and individual training needs.
- The current focus of PD is the implementation of the literacy program. Although this provides value for the school, other urgent PD needs are not being addressed.
- Teachers are not currently being surveyed for their views on the topics and themes to be covered in PD offerings.
- The specific PD needs of support staff are not being met and provision is based upon request. There is no strategic plan surrounding their needs.
- Administrators do not monitor the implementation of PD outcomes and initiatives in classrooms, or monitor student data to assess the value of offerings. Teachers' views on the quality and usefulness of trainings are not sought.

Recommendations:

- The school should develop a comprehensive PD plan that is based upon student data analysis and issues identified during lesson observations. The plan should include a mix of whole school, group and individual trainings in order to address specific needs.
- The focus of PD sessions should be carefully selected to have maximum impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Teachers should be offered the opportunity to select PD topics and themes that will support them in consistently improving their instruction while also meeting the identified priorities of the school.
- The school should assign and plan for the PD of support staff to ensure they are kept up-to-date with school developments and the developments in their own professional fields to enable them to provide a high level of service.
- The Principal and administrators should carefully monitor the impact of PD on student achievement by conducting lesson observations and walkthroughs across the school and regularly seeking the views of the staff on the training provided.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- The school confirmed that an outside consultant supports its data analysis. However, examination of this data found that it was inadequate in providing appropriate information to identify student needs at the school level.
- The school has not made sufficient use of the range of supports available from the Network.

Recommendations:

- The school should access the expertise available within the Network for data support. This should include the best approaches to data collection, use, and analysis and its implication for instructional improvement.
- The school should avail itself of the full range of supports available in the Network. This should include support for curriculum development, improving teaching quality, PD, securing external funding, increasing parental involvement and raising attendance levels.
- The Network should support the school in the implementation of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) recommendations.

Other Concerns:

- The Principal and AP’s confirmed on a number of occasions that they are unable to identify their next steps in moving the school forward.
- The SURR Report of 2008 identified a number of issues that remain unaddressed, including data analysis, curriculum planning, and establishment of a school library/ media center.

PART 3: OVERALL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Overall Finding.

Reference	Review Team Finding	
(c)	The school has not made sufficient progress in identified areas, and is unlikely to make AYP under the current structure and organization.	✓

B. Overall Recommendation

Reference	Review Team Recommendation	
(c)	Develop and implement a new plan that could include <u>significant changes in staff, organizational structure, leadership and/or configuration</u> , to address issues that continue to negatively impact student academic performance in identified areas.	✓

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

- New leadership should be established with specific strengths in school improvement and working with students at-risk.
- A new leadership structure should be established to focus on academics and instruction. There should be one AP with responsibility for mathematics, science, and technology and another AP to develop and supervise humanities and the arts. All new school administrators should have extensive experience in working with data to drive school improvement.
- New teachers with proven skills and experience in improving student outcomes should be recruited to help implement the new improvement plan.