

**NYSED/ BUFFALO CSD JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

<b>BEDS Code:</b>	140600010033
<b>School Name:</b>	PS 33 Bilingual Center
<b>School Address:</b>	157 Elk Street Buffalo, NY 14210
<b>Principal:</b>	Miguel Medina
<b>Restructuring Phase/Category:</b>	Persistently Lowest-Achieving (PLA/SURR)
<b>Area(s) of Identification:</b>	English Language Arts and Mathematics
<b>Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:</b>	March 2-4, 2011

**PART 1: INTRODUCTION**

**A. Community and School Background**

PS 33 Bilingual Center serves 528 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 8. This is an increase of 40 students over last school year. The student enrollment is 64 percent Hispanic, 12 percent Black, two percent Asian and 22 percent White students. Of these students, 48 percent are English language learners (ELLs) and 17 percent are students with disabilities. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009-2010 was 89 percent. This is a parent choice school and its enrollment is impacted by the following factors: siblings in attendance, proximity to the school and attendance boundary preferences.

The school leadership team includes the Principal, one Assistant Principal (AP), the literacy coach and the building mathematics teacher. There have been four Principals in the past four years. The current Principal, appointed last August, had been the AP since 2008 and also had been a mathematics teacher at the school for about five years. The current AP has a total of nine years of experience as an administrator and transferred from another school in September.

There are 47 teachers in the school. Of the 47, 42 or 89 percent have been at the school for more than two years.

**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 (+/-)	<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.	✓

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 <u>All Students</u> subgroup in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓
-	For 2010-11, the school was identified as a <u>Persistently Lowest- Achieving school.</u>	✓

## B. School Strengths

- The school with support from the District offers a Regents Living Environment and a Regents Algebra course to a selected group of 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- The new administration has revitalized programs that support student social-emotional development and celebrates their accomplishments and heritage. The school implements a character education program, a 25 Book Reading Campaign, after-school programs, and a middle school incentive program that culminates in motivational activities.

## 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 7 JIT Indicator Categories:**

### I. Curriculum

#### Findings:

- There are no curriculum maps for English Language Arts (ELA), English as a Second Language (ESL), or Native Language Arts (NLA) curriculum or units of study that incorporate ESL strategies into the content areas.
- The District has provided a standards-based English Language Arts (ELA) and a Native Language Arts (NLA) curriculum with their corresponding scope and sequence, but classroom observations indicate that whereas both programs aim to teach the same language objectives though in different languages, there is no clear alignment between these two curricula. Moreover, the ESL curriculum is implemented separate from and does not necessarily reinforce and/or support the ELA and NLA curricula in a way that effectively responds to the needs of ELLs.

#### Recommendations:

- Develop curriculum maps and units of study that share the same objectives across ELA, NLA and ESL programs, while incorporating instructional and learning strategies that support individual student needs.

- Reinforce and extend the training on the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model to ensure the incorporation of ESL strategies in content area teaching. In addition, the District should support the school in the development of language objectives for each unit of study in all core subjects to ensure that ELLs learn academic vocabulary, language structures and language functions that are relevant and subject specific.

## **II. Teaching and Learning**

### **Findings:**

- Faculty expressed high expectations for all students. However, the lack of challenging student work being displayed around the school, the dominance of the teacher standing in front of a chalkboard, and the use of colloquial Spanish in bilingual classrooms convey an attitude of lower expectations, particularly for ELLs and students with disabilities.
- In most classrooms, there was little evidence of small group differentiated instruction, student-student interaction, high level questioning strategies, or ESL strategies in ESL settings or in classrooms with many ELLs.
- Special education teachers in co-teaching classrooms did not provide any direct instruction or specific instructional strategies to address the needs of students.
- Most teachers used the interactive boards installed in their classroom as they would a regular chalkboard or an overhead projector: that is, to display worksheets, textbook pages and/or illustrations without taking advantage of the boards' technological and interactive properties to demonstrate concepts, illustrate vocabulary words, and enrich students' knowledge.
- Many teachers do not use data to prepare their lesson plans as evidenced by the lack of differentiated instruction, particularly as it applies to subgroups.
- There was a lack of rigor in the lessons provided in a majority of the classrooms observed.

### **Recommendations:**

- Provide in-classroom coaching and additional training on explicit instruction to ensure the effective implementation of the District literacy plan, including high level questioning strategies, small groups for reading instruction, reinforcement and extension of literacy skills, and time for independent practice of previously learned skills or strategies.
- Provide in-classroom coaching and additional training to ensure that NLA and ESL effectively support the development of students' first language literacy skills and the acquisition of English.
- Arrange for teachers participating in co-teaching lessons (regular education, special education and ESL teachers) to meet regularly to plan their lessons and coordinate the delivery of instruction to ensure student learning.

- Have the school leadership, in collaboration with the literacy coach, conduct learning walks and low inference observations in exemplary classrooms to develop models to help other teachers develop lessons that are academically rigorous, relevant, and differentiated, and hold teachers accountable for their consistent and effective implementation. Technology should be used to enrich and promote the learning of students. Teachers should read, assess, and give written feedback on student work, including writing journals, homework, and /or artifacts.
- Teachers need to use data in preparing their lesson plans that differentiate instruction, particularly as it applies to subgroups.
- The administration and the District must ensure that instruction is of high quality and meets the needs of the students. This may mean replacing ineffective staff that are not able to meet minimum expectations.

### **III. School Leadership**

#### Findings:

- The Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) for the current school year does not include clearly defined schoolwide goals with measurable objectives, action steps, and accountability measures.
- The administration has yet to organize a formal school-based management team with parent representation or taken the steps to develop a parent association.
- The school has built grade-level meetings and planning time into teachers' weekly schedule. The Principal leads most of these meetings, which focus on academic issues, data analysis, and discussion of professional readings. Teachers, however, expressed a desire for additional time for vertical planning and teacher collaborations.
- The new administration appears to be aware of teachers' professional needs and has begun to take steps to address some of them, as evidenced by informal observation reports, teacher interviews, and classroom observations. However, much more needs to be done to ensure that lessons are academically rigorous and differentiated to respond to students' needs as well as interests.
- Colloquial Spanish is being used in bilingual classes instead of high quality language. This limits the students' ability to have an understanding of their own language or transfer it to English. In addition, there is a lack of support for bilingual students in specific subject area classes where a bilingual support person is supposed to be co-teaching. In classroom observations either the bilingual co-teacher was missing from the class or the bilingual teacher in the class was not assisting the bilingual students in understanding the lesson.
- The school administration has written a vision statement for the school, "Ensuring Excellence and Equity for All Students"; however, neither faculty nor students were familiar with it.

**Recommendations:**

- The school leadership team should substantially revise the CEP and establish a short list of schoolwide priorities with measurable goals that address the ongoing needs of all students, particularly ELLs and students with disabilities, and ensure that these goals are aligned with the school mission statement.
- The Principal should reach out to the entire parent community and strengthen relationships with community residents, partners, and businesses in order to identify parent and community advocates to work towards constituting a formal parent association.
- The Principal should review the schedule and ascertain if additional time for vertical planning and teacher collaborations can be provided. The leadership of the planning meetings and grade-level meetings should be expanded so that teachers are aware that the message being articulated by the Principal is not his alone but part of a greater initiative to improve instruction. There needs to be a clear understanding that rigorous lessons and data driven differentiation of instruction has to occur.
- The Principal should use the teacher evaluation process to ensure that lessons are academically rigorous and differentiated to respond to student needs as well as interests.
- The school administration should embrace research-based educational findings that support District efforts to establish a solid foundation in students' first language as a vehicle to develop fluency in English. Rigor should be maintained in the native language if it is to be transferred by students to their understanding of English. Currently, the Principal whose native language is Spanish does walkthroughs and evaluations in the upper grades and the AP who does not speak Spanish does walkthroughs and evaluations in the lower grades. The administrators should develop a system for walkthroughs and evaluations that ensures that bilingual instruction is high quality in all classes.
- In order to ensure that the school is "Ensuring Excellence and Equity for All Students," the school leadership team should be expanded to include teachers at every grade level. The school leadership should also consider forming a student council and have representatives participate in school leadership meetings. All those involved in the school have to understand the school motto is the touchstone to which they compare their daily practice.

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

- The tone around the school is respectful, but the school is not student-centered as evidenced by the predominance of whole group lessons, little opportunity for student interaction, limited differentiation, and the quality of the work displayed around the school.
- Spanish-speaking students in kindergarten and early elementary grades appear to be frequently referred for a special education evaluation. However, classroom observations showed there was a lack of instructional rigor in the bilingual kindergarten and the bilingual lower elementary grades.

For example, in one class a teacher was having the students do phonemic sound-letter responses and she was making the wrong sounds for the children to repeat. In another class the students were coloring a face of George Washington with no context discussion. There appeared to be no sense of urgency in teaching the bilingual students to be academically successful. It appeared that the teachers do not believe that the students are able to achieve and are referring them to special education instead of providing high level instruction.

- The school parent coordinator position is vacant. However, the school uses a phone system and monthly calendar to keep families informed of school events, and parents often attend festivities such as heritage celebrations if their children are part of them. However, teachers indicated that parent attendance at academic events is low, including participation at parent-teacher conferences.

**Recommendations:**

- The school should use its vision statement as a strategy to stimulate a learning environment with high academic expectations for students and adults and an active parent community. The student and teacher work displayed at the school should be of high quality. In addition to the Student of the Month, the school should proactively involve students from all programs in student leadership activities, including a student council. The school may want to adopt a read-aloud book of the month to promote vocabulary development schoolwide while celebrating good literature, languages, and cultures.
- The school should ensure that instruction in the early grades is student-centered and developmentally challenging and that the phonics-based beginning Spanish reading program used as the intervention model is effectively implemented to prevent the unnecessary referrals of young children to special education. The school leadership team, working with staff, should review referrals to special education within the context of current instructional practices and classroom expectations.
- Greater emphasis on parental use of the school facilities (parent room, computer and library use) should be provided in the information sent home so parents understand that they are a welcomed part of the school community. Once a new parent coordinator is hired, more effort should be made to get parents involved in the life of the school through academic/cultural activities.

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

**Findings:**

- In general, teachers comply with District and school mandates regarding summative assessments, but many teachers do not use data to prepare their lesson plans as evidenced by the lack of differentiated instruction, particularly as it applies to subgroups.
- Teachers have participated in PD regarding the use of summative data and formative assessments, including item analysis of the ELA test and the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), but there was little evidence that this knowledge is incorporated into the development of differentiated lessons.

- Much academic work was displayed in the school, but there were no clear criteria regarding how it was selected, and only a few of the selections were of high quality and representative of grade-level work. In addition, in the work displayed with rubrics provided by the District, specific feedback to students had not been provided.

**Recommendations:**

- Teachers should use data to drive instruction in their classrooms. Additionally, the school should consider organizing teacher teams for discussions regarding data across programs, grades, and subjects to provide the faculty with the opportunity to focus collaboratively on targeted student groups and specific academic results.
- School leadership should ensure that teachers use formative assessment data to adjust their groups in class to differentiate instruction and for the re-teaching of skills. If this is not happening in a classroom, then it needs to be noted on the teacher's evaluation and be a focus for the teacher improvement plan. The school leaders should also follow-up on PD activities through classrooms observations that focus on the application of new strategies and shared practices.
- Teachers should ensure that rubrics use the language of the NYS Standards, are tailored to particular assignments, and give students specific feedback in a language that is content-rich and student-friendly.

## **VI. Professional Development**

**Findings:**

- The impact of the PD offered on teacher instructional practices and student work was not always evident, although teachers participated in numerous on-site PD provided by the District, including training on the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), NYSESLAT, and Transferring NLA skills to ELA. Off-site trainings in classroom management and data analysis, among others, were also offered to the teachers but were not readily observable in classrooms.
- There appears to be limited formal evaluation of PD and monitoring by school leadership of the implementation and effectiveness of PD.

**Recommendations:**

- In the process of developing a new Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP), the school should include PD aligned with identified schoolwide goals.
- The school leadership should develop evaluation mechanisms to measure the degree to which teacher implementation of new practices impacted student achievement.

## VII. District Support

### Findings:

- In the 2006-2007 school year, the District developed an action plan for improving bilingual and ESL services at the school. This plan has been reviewed with the school administration. Despite these efforts, the school level implementation of a transitional bilingual education model is inconsistent, and teachers expressed confusion regarding the use of NLA.
- The school has changed the percentage of time devoted to NLA instruction several times during the past years. This may have impacted the quality of teaching as well as the achievement of ELL students.
- The District continually places ELLs at this school, and teachers expressed the need for further on-site support and training, particularly related to the education of Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE).
- The District purchased materials based on a needs assessment submitted by the school, but bilingual teachers expressed a need for more high quality books and literature written in Spanish to respond adequately to the various levels in their classrooms. Teachers indicated that they had to purchase resources for their classes. .

### Recommendations:

- The District should support the school in providing increased oversight to assure that an academically rigorous Spanish bilingual program with a strong ESL component is being implemented. The bilingual program should have an organizational structure, human resources, materials, and textbooks that would make its success possible.
- The school administration, in collaboration with the District, should also consider offering Spanish as an enrichment program for all pre- K through 8 students.
- The school should seek the support of the District to train all classroom teachers further in second language techniques, so that the support provided by the ESL teachers is extended into the regular classrooms.
- The District, in collaboration with the school community and partner organizations including the University of Buffalo, should consider transforming this site into a Global Center where other languages and cultures represented in the community are celebrated through a variety of programs, such as music, the arts and virtual classrooms.
- The District should provide language professionals to the school to work with the Principal in order to help him recognize quality bilingual instruction and further identify effective teachers. Teachers not providing high quality lessons should be replaced with effective staff.
- The District 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	
(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.**

- **Develop A Schoolwide Action Plan Aligned To The School Vision:**
  - The school mission and vision captured in “Ensuring Excellence and Equity for All Students” should become a theme that resonates throughout the building, including in classrooms and in the school community.
  - The new Plan should set an ambitious and clear direction for the school to address longstanding issues, namely academic rigor, high expectations for its students, and teacher accountability in the regular English program, the bilingual education program, and the program for students with disabilities.
  - The school administration should reach out to the entire parent community and strengthen its relationships with community residents, partners, and businesses in order to establish a formal parent association.
  - The school should establish a schoolwide Student Council with elementary and middle school representation on the leadership team.
- **Establish a coherent program for English Language Learners:**
  - The school administration, with the continuing support of the District, should set clear and well-defined goals for the bilingual program.
  - Students enrolled in the transitional bilingual education program should be taught the NLA curriculum using rich academic Spanish language and effective instructional strategies to accelerate the development of literacy in Spanish and thus the foundation for their academic learning in English.

- Similarly, students enrolled in the transitional bilingual education program should receive rigorous instruction in English as a Second Language in all four-language domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Participation in the ESL program should prepare these students to perform at mastery level on the NYSESLAT.
- The school must ensure that ELLs are given opportunities that prepare them to attend high school and go on to college.
- **Develop a Professional Learning Community:**
  - Teachers should develop professional collaborations across programs, grades, and subjects to deepen their understanding of data and how it relates to individual student progress and to develop relevant and rigorous lessons regardless of whether a student is in kindergarten or in the advanced middle school group, a recent arrival who is learning English, or a student with disabilities.
  - The school should consider the reorganization of teachers in teams that focus on targeted student groups and specific academic results.
  - Teachers who are teaching Spanish NLA should seek to enrich their Spanish language skills continually through book groups, movie forums, and other activities to prevent the natural loss of proficiency and become good language models for their students.
- **Build on the language and cultural resources of the school community:**
  - The multicultural and multilingual characteristics of the student population, faculty, and parent community offer possibilities for the development of a global community that benefits from enrichment curricula for all its members. To that end, the District, in collaboration with the school community and partner organizations, including the University of Buffalo, and other academic partners, should consider transforming this site into a Global Center that:
    - encourages all students, pre-K to grade 8, to learn Spanish as a second language;
    - offers Spanish courses for adults – teachers, parents and members of the community;
    - incorporates the Irish and Gaelic culture of students into the school curricula;
    - introduces its students to the music, art, dance, and cultures represented in the broader school community; and
    - uses existing technology to identify partners in Spanish-speaking U.S. schools or abroad to develop cross-cultural projects with students.