+NYSED/NEWBURGH ENLARGED CSD JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code/DBN:	44-16-00-01-0020
School Name:	Temple Hill Academy
School Address:	525 Union Avenue New Windsor, NY 12553
Principal:	Roberto Cruz
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring (year 1) Comprehensive
Area(s) of Identification:	English Language Arts – All students; Black students; Hispanic students; Students with Disabilities; English Language Learners; Economically Disadvantaged
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	February 7-9, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Community and School Background

Temple Hill Academy (THA) serves 1080 students in kindergarten through grade 8. THA expanded to include grade 7 in 2008-2009 and grade 8 in 2009-2010. The school enrollment is 56 percent Hispanic, 22 percent Black and 20 percent White students. Of these students, 13.8 percent are students with disabilities, and 34 percent are English language learners (ELLs). Eighty-one percent of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. Since Temple Hill School is a magnet school, students are bused to THA from all areas of the Newburgh City School District.

THA has had a history of administrative turnover; however, the current school administration, consisting of the Principal and two Assistant Principals, is in their second year at THA. The teaching staff of 96 is generally veteran, as only four percent have fewer than three years of experience, and three percent of teachers teaching in core academic subjects are not highly qualified. The teacher turnover rate of 11 percent is mostly attributable to configuration changes in the grade levels of the school, as noted above.

PART 2: ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

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

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
	NYSED Quantitative Performance Measures	
-	Negative trend data for one or more identified subject/areas and subgroups for the past two consecutive years, as indicated by a decrease in the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 and/or a decrease in the Performance Index.	✓
-	School is ten or more points away from meeting its Effective Annual Measurable Objective (EAMO) for one or more identified subgroups in subject/area(s) of identification.	✓
-	Performance data for the school on NYSED Accountability overview Reports (AOR) for the past two consecutive years show an increase in the number of subgroups that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in identified area(s)	✓

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
-	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 ***All Students*** subgroup in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓

B. School Strengths

Precursors for school improvement appear to be present, i.e., hard working and dedicated staff, safe and orderly learning environment, receptivity to outside intervention and commitment to securing resources. Indicators that support this observation include stakeholders' descriptions of:

- An increased level of confidence in school safety and security;
- Noted improvement in the school climate and culture; and
- Professional receptivity and commitment to school improvement.

C. Key Findings and Recommendations

Summary of the key issues (causal factors), and other areas of concern, identified during the on-site diagnostic review that are negatively impacting student achievement in identified areas, as well as recommendations, as related to the seven JIT Indicator Categories:

I. Curriculum

Findings:

- Curriculum maps do not make the clear connections to New York State (NYS) Learning Standards that would provide teachers with a broad understanding of their work.

- Lack of consensus about expectations, goals, objectives and exit outcomes at each grade level results in an absence of horizontal and vertical alignment of the taught curriculum. The result is an emphasis solely on the acquisition of basic skills through grade 8.

- Teachers receive and generally follow pacing calendars; however, there is an overemphasis on material coverage combined with a general lack of emphasis on ongoing assessment of student learning and limited use of available instructional materials. This results in many students being unable to master concepts or acquire skills, particularly those related to literacy across the content areas.

- The school lacks leadership for curriculum development and implementation.

Recommendations:

- The District should work with the school on the development of curriculum in all core areas and ensure that it is clearly aligned with the current NYS Learning Standards. Curriculum should be aligned to the new NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards in English language arts and literacy and mathematics to prepare for implementation in school year 2012-13. All curricular should be developed by knowledgeable and trained individuals (national, state, or local) who understand the key elements of curriculum development.

- All curriculum maps should be reviewed to include expectations, goals, objectives and exit outcomes for instruction in all content areas, with horizontal and vertical alignment at each grade level.

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

- The District should review the responsibilities of school and District administrators and establish clear expectations for curriculum leadership and management.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- Whole group, teacher-driven instruction predominates throughout the school across all content areas but, most particularly, in ELA. Little evidence of student engagement is present as there is an overdependence on worksheets, workbook pages and whole class lessons. Teachers articulated the need for classroom control and the need to maintain the pace of instruction as reasons for this.

- Processes to develop higher order thinking skills are not evident in tasks assigned to students or in the questioning techniques observed. Teaching is focused on the acquisition of basic skills in all grades and across all content areas. Students are not encouraged or required to utilize writing strategies as a way of exploring concepts and relationships, or drawing conclusions.

- The K through grade 4 classroom configuration was generally not conducive to student collaboration or active participation and inhibited formative feedback.

- Instruction in grades 5 through 8 does not reflect an understanding of middle school best practices, e.g., reading and writing across the curriculum, collaborative learning, and support for adolescent issues.

- There is no evidence of a uniform grading policy in the school.

- Existing structures do not meet the needs of students in the identified subgroups:
  - A full continuum of special education programs is not available in grades 7 and 8.
  - Though bilingual services are available and actively used through grade 6, the services are discontinued in grades 7 and 8. Bilingual services resume in grade 9.
  - Programs and services to meet the needs of long-term ELLs and former ELLS are not evident.
  - Though the school has ample numbers of Academic Intervention Service (AIS) teachers, instructional specialists and special education teachers, there is little evidence of planning among specialists and general education teachers. As a result, program coordination is lacking and co-teachers are often underutilized in meeting the needs of all at-risk students, particularly those identified as students with disabilities and ELLs.

Recommendations:

- The District should establish non-negotiable goals for instruction, with expectations related to differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, active learning, co-teaching, etc. Professional development (PD) and ongoing in-classroom support should be provided to assist teachers in meeting District instructional goals.

- The overdependence on worksheets, workbook pages, whole class lessons and closed questioning techniques should be replaced with meaningful higher order reading and writing experiences that promote application, analysis, and synthesis across the curriculum areas.

- School administrators should work with K through grade 4 teachers to explore grade-appropriate programs and structures to meet developmental needs of students in the areas of literacy, especially for identified subgroups of students with disabilities and ELLs.

- School administrators should work with grades 5 through 8 teachers to institute a rigorous, age appropriate middle school program that prepares THA graduates for success in high school.

- Administrators should lead a schoolwide effort to develop and implement a school grading policy.

- A full continuum of services should be instituted in the school to meet the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs.
  - Particular focus should be given to address the differentiated instructional needs of the identified subgroups by providing support in general education classrooms and adequate intervention services.
  - Alignment and delivery of standards-based curriculum for all students is essential. This should include an intensive focus on the accelerated growth of literacy skills.
  - The school should provide define consistent expectations for planning among co-teachers and provide structured opportunities and training in carrying out this expectation

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- There is no evidence of a clear vision, mission, or use of the school's magnet school theme at THA. The instability of the position of principal in recent years has interfered with the development of a professional school community.

- The Building Leadership Team (BLT) has not been used to provide shared leadership in the school. Staff reports a lack of understanding of the school accountability status or the need for a Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). Both of these result in little collective sense of urgency for school improvement among faculty and staff. As a result, the District developed this year's CEP to focus school improvement efforts.

- The master schedule is neither efficient in deploying staff nor effective in supporting instruction for all students, but most specifically students with disabilities and ELLs.

- The Principal and APs devote the majority of their time to school management, leaving little time for instructional supervision or program/policy development.

- The relationship between school administrators and District academic coordinators is unclear, resulting in confusion about leadership roles and a lack of accountability for curriculum, instruction, supervision and PD.

- Mentoring/coaching programs for school administrators are not evident.

- The school leader does not provide feedback, support, and/or pathways for instructional improvement in teacher and staff evaluations.

Recommendations:

- The Principal should lead the school community in the development of a clear vision, mission and unique identity for the school.

- The Principal should guide the BLT in understanding and widely communicating this plan within the school community and then consistently work to implement it. The Principal should also lead the BLT in implementing the CEP and monitoring the plan for progress. The BLT should lead the development of subsequent CEPs.

- School leaders should establish clear program and policy priorities and ensure that priorities are reflected in the school's master schedule. Program priorities should include a significant focus on improvement of literacy skills across all content areas as well as improvement in meeting the individual needs of students in identified subgroups.

- School administrators should review their use of time and restructure their work to prioritize instructional leadership activities, including faculty and team meetings.

- The District should review and clarify the responsibilities of school and District administrators in relation to the leadership of the school's curricular, instructional, supervisory, and PD functions.

- The District should initiate a formal mentoring and coaching program for new and recently appointed school administrators.

- School administrators should implement a system of focused walkthroughs and formal classroom observations to formatively assess the degree to which the written curriculum is taught.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- There is little evidence that teachers have been trained in behavioral management strategies. This results in high numbers of referrals to school administrators.

- A lack of coordination among Pupil Personnel Services staff results in uneven responses to the needs of all students, especially students with disabilities and ELLs.

- Academic Intervention Services (AIS) program delivery is not consistent because of a lack of schoolwide policy and procedures regarding AIS.

- The school's space utilization exhibits a variety of problems and missed opportunities to provide high quality learning environments in all content areas. In some instances, multiple teachers and multiple classes share the same space and the location, size, and acoustics of some of these learning spaces is inappropriate. The intermediate level library is currently unable to support instruction or support the development of high quality literacy skills.

- The high rate of student mobility within the District coupled with a lack of timely notification about student school choices results in disruption during the first quarter as bus routes and student schedules are gradually finalized.

- Although the school master schedule reflects a 9th period "activity" block, opportunities for student co-curricular and enrichment activities are limited.

- Suspension rates for 2009-10 were high, due in part to the failure to provide appropriate, least restrictive environments (LRE) for grade 7 and 8 students with disabilities.

- Although communication to parents appears adequate and all communication is provided in the native language of families, opportunities for parent participation in the life of the school are few.

Recommendations:

- The school should implement a schoolwide positive behavior model that includes multi-tiered behavioral interventions.

- A Pupil Services Team should be established to improve coordination and promote effective response to student needs that particularly addresses the individual needs of Students with Disabilities, Black, Hispanic, Ells and economically disadvantaged students.

- The AIS plan should be reviewed to determine ways to best schedule and offer services to support classroom instruction.

- The school should conduct a physical assessment of space to maximize instruction/community/ culture. The school should either resolve the issue of poor library acoustics or relocate the library science classes to other spaces. Construction projects occurring in the library should be completed as soon as possible and the area used as an integral instructional support.

- The District should review its school choice procedures and annual start-up routines in order to provide efficient and effective planning and scheduling. This will provide timely student data to the transportation department officials to ensure a smooth start to the school year.

- Use of the school activity period should be revamped to support co-curricular and enrichment activities for all students.

- A full continuum of services should be made available at THA to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the LRE.

- The school and District staff should develop and implement a comprehensive school-home communication/collaboration model that specifically includes the needs of students in the identified subgroups.

V. Collection, Analysis, and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- The District regularly collects a variety of assessment data and makes this available to the school. However, the data are not being used to drive instruction or to inform schoolwide continuous improvement efforts.

- The District has trained school administrators on the use of the New York State Testing and Accountability Reporting Tool (nySTART) but there is no indication that opportunities are provided for discussion and use of the results for assessment analysis.

- The school has a school data team that sponsored a recent PD program on data analysis. However, there is no evidence that teachers are using data to formulate instructional goals or to adjust programs to address identified student needs. Generally, the faculty are implementing programs rather than matching instructional strategies to student need.

- Few formative assessments have been developed and implemented by classroom teachers. Teachers rely on teacher-made tests and class work for promotion standards and grade reports.

Recommendations:

- The Principal and BLT should convey a vision and develop a plan for implementing a data-rich environment for teaching and learning in the school.

- Appropriate staff development should be provided to the professional staff to enable them to effectively analyze and use data to drive instruction, and provide interventions in English Language Arts and for students in identified subgroups.

- Appropriate staff development should be provided to the professional staff to enable them to set goals, use data to drive instruction, and adjust programs based on identified student needs. The school should consider using research-based tools such as NYKids Compass, or Data Wise for this purpose. Coaches should be knowledgeable about data use and skilled in guiding teachers in developing data driven interventions.

- Data collection should include ongoing formative assessments. School and District leaders should work with teachers to develop a rich array of formative assessments, including rubrics for use in monitoring student progress and adjusting instruction in all content areas.

VI. Professional Development

Finding:

- PD is District-driven (and, until recently, Teacher Center-driven). School leaders appear to have little responsibility for PD efforts to build the faculty's capacity. Common planning time and faculty meeting time is allocated, but schoolwide PD priorities are not a focus of these meetings.

- Professional development activities generally take the form of episodic, initiative-driven training rather than comprehensive efforts aligned with school goals to improve teacher capacity and based on data that reflect student and teacher needs.

- Professional development to meet the needs of ELLs, students with disabilities and at-risk students is insufficient.

- There is little evidence that general education and specialist teachers have implemented effective co-teaching strategies in the classroom.

- There is little evidence that prior professional development initiatives have become an ongoing part of instructional practice.

- The job description of instructional coaches is neither clear nor well defined.

Recommendations:

- The District should build the capacity of school leaders to lead the school-level PD program and then hold school leaders accountable for carrying out this responsibility.

- Sustained, intensive PD for the teachers and administrators at THA should prioritize such topics as literacy development, instructional strategies, use of data and developing formative assessments. The District should adopt a clear consistent and comprehensive definition of PD and use this to guide the efforts of the newly formed PD committee.

- Embedded and targeted PD should be provided to support the teachers of general education, ELLs and students with disabilities in order to meet the specific needs of all at-risk students. This includes implementation of effective co-teaching strategies. School leaders should monitor the degree to which teachers are incorporating effective co-teaching strategies learned in PD into their daily teaching.

- PD efforts in the school should be job-embedded. After presentations, teachers should have opportunities to practice what they have learned in the classroom with support and to collaborate with one another as they incorporate change into the classroom. School leaders should monitor the degree to which teachers are incorporating strategies learned in PD into their daily teaching.

- The job descriptions of instructional coaches should be restructured to support job-embedded PD.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- The District staff developed the school's 2010-11 CEP in alignment with the District restructuring approach.

- The school administration is not involved in the writing of the School in Need of Improvement (SINI) grants or consolidated application. This causes misalignment of the CEP, Schoolwide Plans and School Improvement Grants to support student achievement.
  - The school administration is not being informed of their obligation to implement what is written.
  - The District to school level coordination system is not encouraging autonomy and responsibility at the school leadership level.

Recommendations:

- The District should work to strengthen the capacity of the BLT to fulfill its role at THA so that it will have the will and ability to help guide the school's improvement efforts in the future.

- The newly formed District Office team should thoroughly review descriptions for all District and school administrator positions and modify these to empower school leaders with the authority to carry out their responsibilities. The District should undertake an active program to build the capacity of school leaders to discharge their newly assigned responsibilities.

- The District should support the school in the implementation of the Joint Intervention Team's (JIT) recommendations.

PART 3: OVERALL FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Overall Finding

Reference	Review Team Finding for Restructuring (year 1) Schools	✓
(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 Recommendations

Reference	Review Team Recommendation	✓
(c)	Develop and implement a School Restructuring Plan that includes significant changes in staff, organizational structure, leadership and/or configuration to address issues that continue to negatively impact student academic performance in identified areas. The School Restructuring Plan must include one of the restructuring options required under NCLB and further defined by the District.	✓

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

- The new Restructuring Plan should be a collaboratively developed action plan with accountability benchmarks that the school administration and the Building Leadership Team can use to communicate a clear vision of exemplary instructional practice as well as to foster a collaborative learning community at THA.

- Job embedded PD should be regularly provided to support mentoring of the BLT to fulfill their role in guiding THA in school improvement, as well as the school administration in leading the improvement of instruction and student engagement.
  - This team should be charged with the responsibility to also lead the school's effort to regularly analyze student performance data, to make decisions and differentiate instruction for all students, particularly students with disabilities, ELLs and those requiring AIS.

- The District and school should prioritize the completion of vertical and horizontal alignment of the curriculum as well as the integration of literacy development strategies across all curricular areas. Implementation of the literacy development strategies should be supported by the literacy coach and curriculum supervisors to build capacity in all staff. The principal should ensure the implementation of the literacy-driven written curriculum on a formal and informal basis.

- Significant redesign of the master schedule should include:
  - Restructuring the school day to include formal time for planning and implementation of school reform strategies and communication building among students, faculty, and other school staff, including special education, ELL and AIS providers.

- Providing the time, staff, and space for a full continuum of student intervention and support programs customized to meet individual student needs, i.e., special education, related services, AIS and ESL.

- All staff should be trained and held accountable for regularly analyzing multiple measures of data to inform and improve their instruction. A method and structure for doing this should be made a priority in the school.

- Instructional staff and administration should be provided with regular targeted PD to improve their capacity to implement improved instructional strategies as described in this JIT report.