

NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DBN:	05M200
School Name:	The James McCune Smith School
School Address:	2589 7 th Avenue New York, NY 10039
Principal:	Renee Belton
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring (year 1) Focused
Area(s) of Identification:	English Language Arts- Hispanic Students
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	November 29 – 30, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Community and School Background

The James McCune Smith School serves 566 students in pre-Kindergarten through grade five. The school enrollment is one percent Asian, 31 percent Hispanic, 66 percent Black and two percent White students. Of these students, 24 percent are English language learners (ELLs) and approximately 32 percent are students with disabilities.

The administrative team consists of the Principal and two Assistant Principals (APs). The Principal and APs have served at the school for six years. There are 38 teachers on staff; one percent has been at the school for less than one year and 13 percent for fewer than three years. All teachers are highly qualified. The rate of teacher turnover is one percent.

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	
+	Performance data for the school on NYSED Accountability Overview Reports (AOR) for the past two consecutive years show a reduction in the number of subgroups that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in one or more identified subject/area(s).	✓
-	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 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).	✓

Positive or Negative Indicator (+/-)	School Performance Indicators	✓
	NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures	
-	Most recent NYC Progress Report Grade of C	✓
-	NYC Quality Review Score of Developing	✓

B. School Strengths

The school culture is safe, supportive and nurturing.

C. Key Findings and Recommendations

I. Curriculum

Findings:

- Curriculum maps are established and teachers are developing them to include the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) during their common planning periods. This is helping to ensure that there is consistency within each grade. Although documentation indicates that New York State (NYS) Standards are used as the basis for planning, they are used inconsistently. This results in a lack of rigor in instruction.
- Although there was some evidence of lesson objectives being used in planning and instruction, many teachers did not include them or refer to them during instruction so a number of students were often unclear about what they were expected to do.

Recommendations:

- The school should develop pacing calendars that are aligned with the curriculum maps to provide a timeframe for instructional delivery. Network staff should provide the necessary resources to support the school in completing and implementing the curriculum maps and pacing calendars. School leaders should monitor and evaluate planning documents and carry out regular classroom observations to ensure that pacing calendars are effectively and consistently used.
- Teachers should be provided with specific lesson plan content that is aligned with State Standards and contains clear learning goals and objectives for student activities. School leaders should observe classes to ensure that teachers are implementing the prescribed content.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- The quality of instruction varied widely within and between grades because school leaders have not rigorously monitored instruction. Planning and use of instructional strategies varied greatly across the school. Many teachers did not effectively plan for or use a variety of instructional strategies but relied on direct instruction. In general education classes, instruction was not always modified for the identified subgroup, Hispanic students, or for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). In classes where this was the case, many students lost interest in the

lesson and did not learn. Students stated in discussion that they would like lessons to be more fun.

- Differentiated instruction was minimally used in the development and delivery of lessons. The instructional needs of many students, including the identified subgroup, were not being met due to the lack of differentiation. Consequently, many students found the work either too challenging or undemanding. Although the students did not disrupt the class, their attention wandered.
- Grouping was evident in many classes, but the grouping was not purposeful because data was not effectively used and, in many cases, all groups worked on the same activity. In a few classes where the teacher worked with groups of at-risk students, the support did not meet their needs.
- Questions were mainly closed and did not encourage students to reflect or develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. There was little evidence of questions used to assess how well students were learning so the teacher was uncertain about how well students had understood. Although a small number of teachers used questions to develop higher order skills, this was not common practice across the school. Tasks frequently lacked challenge. As a result, many students did not develop independent skills of self-evaluation or inquiry and student language skills were not effectively developed.
- The school does not have a comprehensive grading policy. Rubrics lacked rigor, and their use was inconsistent across the school. The feedback using the rubrics did not give sufficient detail about how students can improve their work.
- With some exceptions, students were not actively engaged in learning because the activities lacked challenge and did not motivate students to participate. In these classes, students were passive and did not learn.
- Although school leaders make class sets of laptop computers and notepads available and most classrooms have two computers, there was little evidence of them being used as a strategy to support learning.
- Although some teachers displayed learning goals, many lesson plans showed little evidence of learning goals in planning or in teaching. As a result, students could not explain what they were expected to learn.

Recommendations:

- School leaders should provide professional development (PD) to introduce teachers to a wider range of instructional strategies to promote greater student participation in the learning process. Teachers should be expected to implement these strategies, and school leaders should monitor the effectiveness and provide additional PD for teachers when necessary.
- The school leader should provide PD for teachers to promote differentiation of instruction. The focus of PD should be on the use of data to drive lesson planning and instruction. Strategies should focus on ensuring that tasks match the academic needs of identified subgroups. School leaders should regularly monitor teacher planning and instructional practice in all classrooms to ensure that differentiated activities are in place. Ongoing PD should be provided for teachers who continue to struggle with using data to match work to the individual needs of students.

- School leaders should provide PD on the implementation of flexible grouping based on formative and summative data. All students should be provided with tasks and activities that address their specific learning needs in all lessons. School leaders should monitor teacher planning and instruction to ensure that the use of data to group students becomes common practice in all classrooms. Ongoing PD should be provided as necessary.
- School leaders should encourage teachers to move from teacher-posed questions that require one-word answers or simple recall to comprehension-based questions that require students to support answers by citing text, elaborating on the answers of other students and summarizing and rephrasing new information. Teacher lesson plans should include questions that require critical thinking and discussion. Teachers should use wait time and not allow students to opt-out of class discussions. Teachers should use random selection and/or avoid calling exclusively on willing student volunteers. Teachers should require students to answer in complete sentences.
- A uniform grading policy that includes the development of rubrics to assess academic learning that are aligned with the school report cards and the New York State Standards should be developed by school leaders and teachers. The grading policy should be aligned with these rubrics, appropriately weighted and collaboratively developed. School leaders should monitor the implementation of the policy. Teachers should be trained in how to provide high quality feedback regarding student work and then quickly ensure that this becomes embedded in instructional practice. School leaders should regularly review student work that is displayed in hallways and classrooms to ensure that high quality feedback is the norm.
- Through collaboration during common planning time and PD opportunities provided by the Network, school leaders and teachers should ensure that all student work is appropriately challenging and demanding. Teachers should provide regular opportunities for students to work cooperatively and to discuss issues so that they become more proactive learners. The administrative team should carry out regular observations of lessons to monitor that this is consistently occurring.
- The school leadership, with Network support, should provide training and support to all teachers to ensure that they have the skills and competencies to effectively use technology, including laptop computers and SMART boards. School leaders should ensure that strategies learned in PD are fully implemented in the classroom so that technology is routinely integrated into teaching and learning.
- Teachers should ensure that lesson objectives are shared with students so that they have a good understanding of what it is they are learning. Lessons should include explicit teaching points and provide practice sessions for independent work to assess student learning before teachers proceed to the next teaching point. Teachers should ensure that teaching points are related within the same lesson and standards-based. School leaders should ensure through the observation process that this practice is uniform.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- The Principal has an understanding of the needs of the school in relation to improving the achievement gap but does not have a strategic plan to improve ELA for the identified subgroup, Hispanic students. Monitoring of instruction lacks rigor and is unfocused. New systems of

monitoring and tracking the progress of subgroups of students have just been introduced but are too new to have an impact on improving the gap in achievement. The Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) has one goal that does not rigorously address the issue of underachievement of the identified subgroup. Many programs have been introduced with little evaluation as to their effectiveness or commitment to sustaining them.

- The school's accountability status for mathematics and science is *In Good Standing* but school leaders have not analyzed the reasons for this or used the data from the analysis to replicate the management structures for ELA.
- A number of teachers did not feel that they are involved in the decision-making process. As a result, they have established independent support mechanisms within their grade instead of working to create a schoolwide community that is focused on closing the achievement gap in ELA.
- Resources are sufficient to support the instructional program, and many teachers make good use of them. However, resources are purchased and used without evaluation for effectiveness. Staff is not effectively deployed. School leaders have chosen to have small numbers in classes, thereby limiting available staff/specialists to provide coverage for teacher preparation periods. Multiple classes are consolidated daily and all students are collectively assembled in order to have teacher preparation periods. This results in the loss of five periods a week of effective instructional time for each student.
- The systems for classroom observation by administrators have recently been changed so that the administrative team can gain an overview of the effectiveness of instruction. The rubric for instruction is too general and does not focus on the administrative team's analysis of instruction. Therefore, the quality of instruction for the identified subgroup is still inconsistent across the school.
- Time is allotted weekly to each grade for common planning, but there is no common planning for student support staff due to budget cuts. Student support staff meet informally at lunch times and after school. As a result, the expertise of these specialist teachers is not used to support general education teachers.
- There is no strategic plan that outlines a program of PD aligned to the priorities of the school. There is no evidence of a survey of teacher needs.
- The School Leadership Team (SLT) is ineffective. It is not actively engaged in establishing goals and activities for the school and does not monitor the CEP. There is only one goal in the CEP as the SLT started the process late. Parents stated that the final CEP was not reflective of their work, and they were not consulted about the change. They also reported that meetings were cancelled with little notice. As a result, many of the members of the SLT feel frustrated.

Recommendations:

- The Principal with the support of the administrative team and the Network should create a schoolwide plan to improve achievement in ELA not only for the identified subgroup, Hispanic students, but for all students. The school leaders and staff should articulate a clear vision and strategic plan that drives the school towards high student achievement and clearly outlines the responsibilities of staff and leaders. The plan should include goals, action plans and PD and should use all resources available through the Network. The implementation of the plan should be monitored carefully and its impact on student achievement measured.

- School leaders with Network support should analyze why the accountability status for science and mathematics is *In Good Standing* and replicate the management of mathematics and science in ELA.
- The Principal should engage all the staff in creating a common mission, vision and plan to elevate student achievement and close the achievement gap in ELA.
- Staffing resources should be redeployed to increase instructional time and decrease the time given to mass preparation periods.
- The school leadership should implement a classroom observation schedule to monitor more closely the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Written feedback should be provided for all formal, informal and walkthrough observations, including clear targets for improvement. Follow-up observations should be included in the schedule to monitor progress. The outcomes of lesson observations should provide a focus for the school plan.
- The school schedule should be realigned to ensure that all student support staff who work with individual students have regularly scheduled times to meet. Teams should be provided with protocols for recordkeeping and dissemination of plans.
- School leaders, with support from the Network, should design a comprehensive PD plan to address the needs of teachers to improve their delivery of instruction. School leaders should closely monitor the delivery instruction by reviewing lesson plans weekly, providing feedback on lesson plans and conducting informal and formal observations with written feedback that includes recommendations for improvement. School leaders should conduct follow-up observations in a timely manner to ensure that these recommendations are being implemented.
- The school should seek Network support in working with the SLT to develop all members' understanding of their responsibility for setting goals for the CEP. The school should also develop strategies to engage and work collaboratively with parents on the SLT. The CEP should be a regular item on the agenda for SLT meetings so that all members of the team are fully aware of school goals and the progress being made towards them.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Finding:

School leaders have had limited success in encouraging parents to be involved with their children's education. A small number of parents support the school by serving on the SLT and attending meetings. There is no evidence, apart from the survey, of the school canvassing the views of parents or care-givers.

Recommendation:

The school leader should work with the parent coordinator to regularly canvas the needs, views and opinions of parents so that the school can better meet the needs of all students and their families.

V. Collection, Analysis and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- Although the school has a system for generating student data reports, there was little evidence that teachers were using data to assess programs, group students systematically or plan and adjust instructional strategies. Data is not systematically analyzed to assess the effectiveness of educational programs and then used to inform the improvement cycle. There was little evidence of data being used to develop professional growth plans and little evidence of teachers being directed to PD following the analysis from observation.
- The school has identified issues that have impacted student achievement and have established many programs to raise achievement. However, school leaders do not evaluate the effectiveness of them and the experience of teachers who use the program is not sought. Consequently, teachers felt that school leaders did not value their input.
- Administrators have begun to analyze data by subgroups, but it is too early to assess the impact on achievement. Teachers use a variety of assessments, including State tests and formative and summative assessments. However, it was not evident that data was used for instructional planning.
- Although school administration and coaches meet monthly with teachers for common planning, few teachers use data to plan instruction.
- The school does not regularly involve students and parents in setting goals for the next step in learning. Therefore, parents cannot support their children in partnership with the school, and students do not have a goal to improve their learning.

Recommendations:

- **The school should develop a system to use data to drive instruction. In developing this system, the school should consider the following:**
 - redefining inquiry focused teacher teams and the benchmarked deliverables for each team;
 - developing, implementing, and monitoring action plans to instructionally address learning deficits as indicated by the analysis of the assessment data; and
 - using data to systemically guide the development of staff professional plans.
- Network staff, school leaders and teachers should work collaboratively to conduct a thorough item analysis and subgroup analysis to determine the causes of underperformance and create a strategic instructional plan based on data. The data should be reviewed from year-to-year across grades with instruction accordingly adjusted.
- Teachers should use student performance data, both summative and formative, to create instructional groups, design skill-based activities for small groups of students with similar needs and adjust the planned curriculum with a special focus on at-risk students and identified subgroups.
- The school with the support of the Network should provide PD for teachers in using data to improve instruction. This should include a variety of methods that can be employed within the classroom to meet the individual learning needs of students. School leaders should identify this as a focus for observation.

- The school leader should expand parent-teacher contact opportunities by sharing data analysis of student work and providing monthly opportunities for teachers to engage in the goal setting process with parents and with students.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- There is no comprehensive plan for PD based upon the school goals; this contributes to an inconsistent quality of instruction.
- School leaders do not have a good understanding of the role of Inquiry Teams, confusing them with protocols for common planning. Therefore, strategies are not developed to improve instruction and student learning.
- PD is not aligned to the analysis of assessment data; therefore, the program has not reduced the achievement gap. There are few feedback mechanisms to judge the effectiveness of PD so the program is not adjusted to take into account teacher development.
- School leaders are not providing teachers with the tools they need in order to hold them accountable for implementing strategies for instruction.
- There has been limited PD for general education teachers on how to meet the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs. Consequently, in general education classes, work was not assigned that met the needs of these students.

Recommendations:

- School leaders with Network staff should carry out a needs assessment of PD in the school. Using this evaluation, they should develop and implement a comprehensive PD plan designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to ensure that teachers participate in substantial PD in order to remain current with their profession and meet the learning needs of their students. The PD plan should be aligned with the school's CEP goals and take into account the differentiated needs of the staff and the students.
- School leaders should work with the Network to seek PD on the purpose and protocols of Inquiry Teams.
- The school should develop a comprehensive PD program that aligns with school goals by using the data available in the school. School leaders should seek support for PD from the Network and other outside specialists to help them develop a detailed plan that focuses on improving teaching and learning to better meet the needs of students and teachers.
- The school leader should establish a formal and informal observation process that includes oral and written components based on improving instruction and the identified needs of teachers. The school leader should hold APs accountable for providing documentation of follow-up for all teacher evaluations and for establishing a program of differentiated PD that meets the needs of teachers and students.

- With the support of the Network, school leaders should review the PD program and include sessions on how general education teachers can more effectively meet the specific learning needs of students with disabilities and ELLs. The AP with responsibility for special education should monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning of classes with ELLs and students with disabilities. Clear guidelines for general education teachers should be developed.

VII. District Support

Findings:

- Changes in Network administrators have led to a new focus of support for the school. The Network has supported the beginning stages of a plan to track the progress of individual students within subgroups of students with the aim of closing the achievement gap. The Principal has followed the suggestions made by the leader, but the impact of this is not yet seen. The Network has not yet begun to monitor progress towards the school's goals.
- There has been no feedback on the latest CEP as it has only just been submitted. There has been little support from the Network to improve parental involvement.

Recommendations:

- The Network should plan with the school leaders to provide comprehensive, ongoing training to the school on the collection, analysis and implementation of data to inform and adjust instructional classroom practices that result in high academic achievement and meet State standards for all student subgroups.
- A mechanism should be established to obtain feedback on the CEP with school staff, parents and students. The Network should provide additional training to the administration and the SLT concerning CEP development and implementation. A schedule for follow-up sessions and ongoing consultations should be developed to carefully evaluate the plan's effectiveness and progress towards achieving AYP goals.
- The Network should support the school in the implementation of the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) recommendations.

PART 3: JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM 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 School Restructuring Plan that includes significant <u>changes in staff, organizational structure, leadership and/or configuration</u> to address issues that continue to negatively impact student academic performance in identified areas. The School Restructuring Plan must also include one of the restructuring options required under NCLB and further defined by the DOE.	✓

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

- Mentors should be provided for school leaders to focus on skills related to the findings and recommendations in this report.
- As a matter of urgency, staff should be redeployed to increase the time given to instruction.
- The management of mathematics and science should be replicated for ELA.
- A strategic plan for school improvement in ELA for the identified subgroup, Hispanic students, should be developed that involves all stakeholders. The plan should be based upon analysis of all the data in the school.
- The Principal should work with the Network to establish protocols with clear lines of responsibility for all members of the SLT.
- School leaders should work with the Network to create a sense of community. All stakeholders should be involved in establishing a shared vision and goals for the school focused upon high achievement.
- The system of teacher assessment should be reviewed to make it rigorous and developmental. It should be regularly monitored for effectiveness.
- Teachers should be supported to improve instruction, especially in their use of data to inform and to differentiate instruction.
- A comprehensive plan for PD should be developed based upon the information from the analysis of data, observation records and survey of staff needs.