

NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DBN:	11X455
School Name:	Harry S. Truman High School
School Address:	750 Baychester Ave. Bronx, NY 10475
Principal:	Sana Nasser
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Restructuring Advanced English Language Arts - All students; Hispanic students; English Language Learners; Students with Disabilities ; Economically Disadvantaged Students
Areas of Identification:	Mathematics - All students; Black students; Hispanic students; English Language Learners; Students with Disabilities; Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	December 6-7, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Community and School Background

Harry S. Truman High School serves 1,791 students in grades 9 through 12. The school enrollment is 1.8 percent Asian, 43.7 percent Hispanic, 51.7 percent Black and 1.3 percent White students. Of these students, 10.1 percent are English language learners (ELLs) and approximately 25.5 percent are students with disabilities.

The administrative team consists of the Principal and nine Assistant Principals (APs). The Principal has served the school for 13 years and the APs have served between four months to 12 years. There are 116 teachers on staff; four percent have been at the school for less than one year and four percent for fewer than three years. Ninety-four percent of teachers are highly qualified. The rate of teacher turnover is 17 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	
+	Positive trend data for all identified subject/areas and subgroups for the past two consecutive years, as demonstrated by an increase in the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 and/or a Performance Index increase of five or more points.	✓
+	The school's most recent Total Cohort 4 year graduation rate shows a 20 percent gap reduction from the school's previous Total Cohort 4 year graduation rate and State's 80 percent graduation rate benchmark.	✓
-	School is ten or more points away from meeting its Effective Annual Measurable Objective (EAMO) for one or more identified subgroups in subject/area(s) of identification.	✓

-	Performance data for the school on NYSED Accountability Overview Reports (AOR) for the past two consecutive years show an increase in the number of subgroups that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in identified area(s).	✓
-	Performance data for the school on NYSED Accountability Overview Reports (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).	✓
+	Most recent NYC Progress Report Grade of B	✓
+	NYC Quality Review Score of Proficient	✓
NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures		
+	NYC Quality Review Score of Proficient	✓

B. School Strengths

- The Principal is a leader who is respected by the school community and has ensured that the school environment is safe, welcoming and attractive.
- Students are generally well-behaved around the school and in classes.

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:

- While most teachers attended professional development (PD) provided by the Network on the Common Core State Standards, not all teachers make effective use of the written curriculum for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics despite it being rigorous, coherent and aligned with New York State (NYS) Standards. Reading and writing are used as the basis for lesson development in ELA. Consequently, some instruction lacks rigor.
- Scope and sequence documents and pacing calendars are not consistently used by teachers to support their teaching, resulting in inconsistency in the quality of instruction across the school.

Recommendations:

- As part of their observation of instruction, all school leaders should monitor and evaluate how effectively teachers use the written curriculum to ensure rigor and consistency.
- School leaders should monitor and evaluate planning documents and conduct regular classroom observations to ensure that pacing calendars are effectively used.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- The range of instructional strategies used by teachers varies widely. In some mathematics classes, the mini-lesson was extended leaving insufficient time for individual and group work. In ELA, a

number of lessons are teacher directed. In these lessons, although students were compliant, they were passive learners. Instruction was mainly teacher-directed in classes with students with disabilities.

- There was little evidence of the use of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for modifying work for English language learners (ELLs) who are students with disabilities. Lesson plans often indicated modifications but these were frequently generic or were not used in the lesson. As a result, although students behaved well, they did not learn as they should.
- The use of data to differentiate instruction for all subgroups across the school is weak, except in classes taught by specialist teachers of ELLs. Lesson plans sometimes indicated differentiation but the plans were not always executed. Some students struggled as the work was too difficult, while others found it unchallenging.
- Classroom grouping is frequently not purposeful, although there are a number of exceptions. Grouping is often based on social preference instead of focusing the work given to groups on their needs as determined by data.
- The use of questions by many teachers to promote higher order thinking skills is inconsistent and sometimes weak in the identified areas. There were examples of probing questions, but the teacher did not allow the student to extend their answer or follow up the response with another question. As a result, many students are not encouraged to become independent learners.
- The quality of feedback given to students through rubrics was inconsistent. The majority of classrooms displayed standard-based rubrics, and most work had suggestions as to how students may improve their work. However, other feedback lacked sufficient detailed guidance as to how students might improve their work.
- In some classes, learning time is not effectively maximized. The use of a timer is not always effective and the timing allowed is not always appropriate for the activity. This is sometimes because the teacher has miscalculated the time necessary to complete the activity or because there are low expectations of what students can achieve. There was little evidence of the IEPs regarding timing being met.
- There was little evidence of technology being used to meet the needs of all students. In an example where it was used, every student was actively engaged in learning.
- The school has a large number of students in a most restricted environment, and the instruction in these classes is often weak. School leaders reported that the school tried the model of integrated co-teaching but after one year, evaluation indicated it was not a successful strategy, so it was withdrawn.
- In some mathematics and ELA classes, goals are based on State Standards, but a number of students are not able to articulate goals because teachers do not discuss the goals. In these classes, students are not equal partners in the process of learning.
- The school grading policy does not emphasize academic rigor and does not include guidelines for grading the work of students who need significant modification.

Recommendations:

- School leaders should provide PD to introduce teachers to a wider range of instructional strategies that can be used in the classroom 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.
- School leaders should monitor and evaluate lesson plans to ensure that all general education teachers and teachers of students with disabilities use information from IEPs to modify instruction for students with disabilities. They should then monitor and evaluate instruction and provide feedback to ensure that the lesson plans are used.
- The school leader should provide PD opportunities for teachers on a variety of instructional strategies to promote differentiation of instruction. The focus of the 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 the classroom to check that differentiated activities are in place throughout the school. On-going 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. On-going PD should be provided for teachers as needed.
- The school should move from teacher posed questions that require one-word answers or are recall and comprehension-based to questions that elaborate upon the answers of other students by summarizing and rephrasing new information. 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.
- Rubrics should be used as an integral tool in planning and assessing assignments. Teachers should participate in PD activities that model the use of rubrics to provide teacher feedback, peer feedback and student self-assessment. School leaders should monitor student work in books and on display and evaluate the quality of feedback that is provided to ensure that it helps students improve and move to the next level.
- All teachers should ensure appropriate pacing and sequencing of instruction. The students should clearly understand expectations and be expected to self-direct and be personally accountable.
- The school leadership, with Network support, should provide training and support to targeted teachers to ensure that they have the skills and competencies to effectively use technology in instruction, 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.
- School leaders and teachers should be provided with support, guidance, and, where appropriate, PD to implement an effective co-teaching model. Teachers should be given opportunities to visit successful co-teaching classrooms in other schools. The co-teachers should be given scheduled

collaborative planning time to ensure best practices in co-teaching instruction and to implement balanced literacy to support students with disabilities. The administration should closely monitor co-teaching classroom practices and provide constructive feedback to teachers when this process is started.

- 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 make sure that teaching points are related within the same lesson and should be Standards based. School leaders should ensure through the observation process that this practice is uniform.
- The school leaders and teachers should review and revise the school's grading policy to ensure academic rigor. This policy should be known to students and parents and posted in each classroom. School leaders should monitor that this policy is consistently implemented.

III. School Leadership

Findings:

- The strong leadership and systems in place to review school and student performance have not yet had sufficient impact on closing the achievement gap. The Principal has a broad understanding of what the school needs to do. She has produced an action plan that correctly identifies what should be done to raise achievement. However, the action plan does not have timelines or benchmarks to guide the school.
- Despite increasing the rigor of supervision of instruction, the quality of teaching and learning is still inconsistent in the identified areas. This is because of inconsistent practice among school leaders.
- The School Leadership Team (SLT) is ineffective in its role of establishing goals to raise achievement as they rely heavily upon administrators to provide goals for them. They do not review progress towards the developing goals.
- School leaders have developed programs for students entering grade 9 using the analysis of data. The programs have not been sustained in grades 10, 11 and 12.

Recommendations:

- The Principal, with the support of the administrative team and the Network, should use the Principal's action plan to create a schoolwide plan to improve achievement. 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, PD, and 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 should use the observation process to focus upon instruction of students with disabilities and ELLs in general and special education classes, concentrating on how teachers use data to modify lessons. School leaders should work with the Network to further develop their skills of observation.

- The school should seek Network support in working with the SLT to develop the team's understanding of their responsibility for setting goals for the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). 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.
- School leaders should extend the program for grade 9 students across grades 10 to 12 in order to bring continuity to their learning.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:

- Although the school has a system in place to identify at-risk students, school leaders do not use the information to make well-informed decisions about support for such students. School leaders do not effectively monitor counseling services so the administrators do not have a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of intervention.
- Students complain that they have limited access to the library as it is not open before and after school. This inhibits their access to resources.
- The school does not have a systematic process to involve parents and families. There is no parent coordinator on the staff, and parents and school leaders report that they have difficulty in establishing a quorum for elections.

Recommendations:

- School leaders should work with the Network to develop a framework for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of counseling services and use the information to develop the services further. The schedule should be regularly reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of all students.
- School leaders should review access to the library to enable students to use it more.
- The school leader should appoint a person with responsibility for outreach and liaison with parents. The school leader should request assistance from the Network to work with this person in the development of an action plan to involve more parents in the processes that impact their child's education. The action plan should be implemented for formal and regular two-way communication, shared leadership and collaborative decision-making with stakeholders.

V. Collection, Analysis and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- There is no evidence of a system in place to analyze the data that is collected and transfer the results into an action plan. Although there is the capacity to implement this through the use of a web based program and other data analysis tools, teachers and support staff are not consistently monitoring student progress records and students' academic needs.
- While administrators, teachers and counselors collect a wide range of assessment data, there was limited evidence that these assessment data are being used to track individual student progress and achievement and is used for instructional planning.

- There is no evidence of an interim assessment plan in place that is used to monitor student progress and develop action plans to adjust instruction.
- There was limited evidence to suggest that teachers analyze the information about each student to identify effective instructional strategies. The IEP annual progress reports were requested but not received.
- The development and use of PD growth plans by school leaders is inconsistent. In ELA, teachers have individual teacher growth plans, but there was little evidence of these in other departments.

Recommendations:

- The school should revisit the current system for data disaggregation and analysis to focus more closely on student-by-student, class-by-class and subgroup-by-subgroup deficiencies in addition to the whole school and grade monitoring. An improvement plan should be created to ensure that all teachers incorporate item skills analysis to inform their instruction in all testing grades. Particular attention should be given to monitoring the development of student skills as they move from grade to grade to check for vertical alignment in curriculum programs in each content area.
- The Principal should request PD support from the Network in developing the essential teacher skills needed to implement a more rigorous and systematic analysis of data. The school should hone these skills to identify precisely the aspects of the identified areas that are causing greatest concern. Plans should then be put in place to address these issues and to ensure that these areas are a focus for teaching and learning. The school administration should monitor the analysis down to classroom practice and hold staff accountable to ensure that improvements are made.
- School leaders should 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 cohorts with instructional needs adjusted accordingly.
- School leaders should set clear expectations for teachers regarding collecting, recording and analyzing data from student work. Administrators should review the assessment binders regularly during walkthroughs, informal observations, etc. The binders should include plans for modifying instruction and next steps for developing more rigorous curriculum that meets the needs of students. Teachers should be trained in using formative assessments to differentiate instruction. Lesson plans should incorporate the implementation of flexible grouping based on the results of the assessments. School leaders should regularly meet with teachers and counsellors to review their students' performance and set goals for student progress toward meeting shared learning goals. This data should be used to plan lessons, with particular attention to student grouping and differentiation. Informal and formal observations should include feedback for teachers on the effectiveness of their use of data to inform instruction and implement grouping.
- The school's leadership should work to ensure that the use of PD growth plans is consistent across all departments.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:

- School leaders have established a full program of PD, but the PD plan has not yet had an impact on improving the quality of instruction, especially in general education classes that contain students with disabilities and ELLs as well as in special education classes.
- The impact of the work of the recently formed Inquiry Teams on instruction has been limited because the work focuses on a small cohort of students.
- There is little evaluation of the impact of PD upon instruction, so it is not adjusted to meet the needs of teachers and students. There is inconsistency across departments as to how staff is held accountable for using the strategies they have learned in PD. Staff in ELA and mathematics is beginning to be held accountable for incorporating PD into daily teaching, but there was little evidence of the impact of PD in instruction in general education classes for students with disabilities or for ELLs or in special education classes.

Recommendations:

- The school leader should review the PD plan to ensure it is closely aligned with the goals identified in the CEP. The plan should have as its primary focus improving teaching, learning and student achievement in the identified areas.
- School leaders should ensure that the work of the Inquiry Team filters into the classroom and positively impacts student learning and achievement. The Inquiry Team should be expanded to cover all grades.
- School leaders should evaluate the impact of PD upon instruction and conduct follow-up observations after PD sessions to hold teachers accountable for incorporating the strategies learned into classroom practice. The school leaders should develop detailed recommendations based on the PD provided and specific next steps in their observation reports to focus their next observation.

VII. District Support**Finding:**

While the Network has provided support to the school in PD programs, mentoring of teachers through in-class support and providing specialist staff to support work with ELLs and students with disabilities, the Network indicated that it is a support organization and does not participate in monitoring the school or in identifying priorities. There has been limited impact of the Network's PD on instruction in the identified areas.

Recommendations:

- The Network should work in tandem with school leaders in observing instruction, developing strategies and identifying PD opportunities to bring about sustained improvements in teaching and learning in the areas of identification.
- 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	
(b)	The school has made some progress in identified areas, and may make AYP with the implementation of additional focused interventions to accelerate improved student achievement.	✓

B. Overall Recommendation

Reference	Review Team Recommendation	
(b)	Continue implementation of the current Restructuring Plan with <u>modifications</u> recommended as a result of the review.	✓

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

The school has started to show signs of growth in the areas identified. The Principal has made strategic appointments to the leadership of ELA and mathematics. ELA performance increased in 2011 because of a focus on lesson planning. A new program in mathematics that includes the development of literacy skills augmented by skills required for Regents is beginning to introduce greater rigor into instruction. Currently, decertified students are progressing at a steadier rate than students in self-contained classes

- The school with the help of the Network should develop a system to regularly analyze schoolwide and subgroup performance data to inform the school’s continuous improvement plan. The system should be designed to evaluate strategies and initiatives implemented as a result of this analysis on a continuous basis.
- Teachers should be supported in using the information from data to inform instruction, especially for classes that contain students with disabilities and ELLs.
- The programs that have been established for grade 9 students should be extended into the other grades in order to continuously improve the skills of all students.
- The Network should work with leaders of the departments of students with disabilities and ELLs to closely analyze the data and establish strategies for all teachers based upon the analysis.