NYSED/NYCDOE JOINT INTERVENTION TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEDS Code/DBN:	09X339
School Name:	IS 339
School Address:	1600 Webster Avenue Bronx, NY 10457
Principal:	Jason Levy
Restructuring Phase/Category:	Persistently Lowest-Achieving /School Under Registration Review (PLA/SURR)
Area(s) of Identification:	English Language Arts and Mathematics
Dates of On-site Diagnostic Review:	January 25 - 26, 2011

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Community and School Background

Intermediate School 339 serves 810 students in grades 6 through 8. The school population is 32 percent Black, 66 percent Hispanic, one percent Asian and less than one percent White students. Of these students, 32 percent are English language learners (ELLs) and 24 percents are students with disabilities.

The administrative team includes the Principal, four Assistant Principals (APs), three mathematics coaches, three English Language Arts (ELA) coaches and three lead teachers for science. The Principal is serving in his seventh year, and the APs have served for over three years.

There are 75 teachers on the staff, including seven new teachers, eight teachers who have been at the school for one year or less, and 31 teachers who have been at the school for between one and three years. Eighty-nine percent of the teachers are highly qualified, and teacher turnover is low at a yearly rate of 12 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	
-	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).	✓
-	For 2010-11, the school was identified as a **Persistently Lowest- Achieving school.**	✓
	NYCDOE Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Measures	
+/	Grade of B on the most recent NYC Progress Report	✓
+/	NYC Quality Review Score of Proficient	✓

B. School Strengths

- The physical structure of the school provides a well maintained and safe learning environment.

- Many opportunities are available for teacher collaboration through team or content meetings.

- The school is implementing a NYC Department of Education technological approach to learning mathematics, a 'School of One,' for grade 6 students and for two grade 7 classes. The program and curriculum is personalized to meet the needs of individual students.

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:
- A written curriculum for each core subject is in place; however, the framework does not include explicit student goals for each curricular area, integrated resources to enhance instruction, or specific plans for the role of technology to increase student engagement.

- Curriculum programs do not foster rigorous and engaging instruction. In the lessons observed, there was insufficient application of higher order thinking skills, problem solving and project-based learning to stimulate and engage the students.

- The scope and sequence documents are not fully aligned with New York State (NYS) Standards and not all teachers are provided with pacing calendars to support their planning.

- The written curriculum does not include a technology plan outlining teacher and student expectations, student engagement and technological integration across content areas.

- 2 -

- The school does not have a wide variety of instructional resources in curriculum planning to support the different learning styles of its students. Some content areas, e.g., science, have limited resources. Even when resources are plentiful, teachers do not always use these effectively to support group work or to challenge students.

- Although lesson planning templates are provided for most content areas, teachers are not consistently using these to plan their work.

- Grade 6 students with disabilities and ELLs are not being given equal access to the School of One program and any of the resources and strategies made available to their grade 6 peers.

- The implementation of the curriculum by teachers varies within and across content areas and delivery is not closely monitored in all classes.

- Teachers do not use technological resources, such as SMART Boards and laptops, as instructional aids for diiferentiated learning; instead, they are used as notetaking or communcation devices.

Recommendations:
- Revisit and review the curriculum for all content areas, ensuring that it includes sufficient detail about student expectations and outcomes, the resources to be integrated, and the opportunities for the use of technology to extend and enhance instruction.

- Include a wide range of instructional strategies in curriculum programs that are designed to develop higher level thinking, problem solving and research skills for all students in all content areas.

- Monitor scope and sequence documents to check for full alignment with State Standards and ensure that all staff receive these alongside pacing calendars for all content areas.

- Develop and implement a technology plan for the school, identifying expected teacher and student outcomes and highlighting the wide range of effective applications to be used in classrooms.

- Update the curriculum so that it includes specific strategies for using a wide range of instructional resources for all content areas to support the different learning styles of students. The use of these resources should be monitored during lesson observations.

- Work with the staff to design lesson planning templates that are practical to complete, are workable in lessons and add value to the quality of teaching and learning.

- Ensure that all students have equal access to all curriculum programs, including the School of One mathematics program.

- Monitor curriculum delivery regularly across the school. Check curriculum alignment to State Standards and performance indicators in all classes and provide differentiated PD for teachers requiring support.

- Ensure that curriculum programs include specific strategies for using technological resources, such as SMART Boards and laptops, as instructional aids for differentiated learning.   Use the Network

- 3 -

to identify good practices and to create a technology plan that fully describes how this can be used to support curriculum delivery and learning for all groups of students.

II. Teaching and Learning

Findings:

- Direct whole group instruction is the predominant mode for the delivery of instruction. Teachers do not use data to identify the learning needs of subgroups within their classes.

- Although differentiated student learning is a school goal, there was no evidence of instructional strategies that were differentiated to meet the needs of students, including different product outcomes, specific instructional strategies, materials or groupings.

- There was no evidence of effective questioning techniques. Most questions demanded low-level thinking, with limited opportunity for considered or extended student response. In the majority of lessons, students who raised their hands were called upon, rather than eliciting responses from all students, pairs or groups.

- Lesson objectives were posted; however these were not always discussed with the students and were not routinely referred to during the period or revisited to check for understanding at the end of lessons. As a result, not all students were aware of what was expected of them during the lesson, or how their work related to the standards.

- Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) classes do not reflect the true team teaching approach that maximizes student involvement where both teachers are equally involved in the delivery of instruction. Grouping in CTT classes is not flexible and purposeful. The teachers use pace of delivery of instruction as the predominent method for grouping students, instead of modification of instructional strategy.

- Although all classrooms are equipped with SMART Boards, they are used predominantly as projection screens. Students did not have opportunities to use this interactive technology to enhance their learning experience. Technology is not sufficiently integrated into the teaching and learning process and in many cases it distracts from the lesson.   For example, laptops were distributed to students at the beginning of one period and after 20 minutes were not used as part of the lesson. Students were observed browsing the Internet and the teacher had to move around the classroom closing the computers, which the students subsequently opened again.

- Transitions between class and during lesson activity result in significant loss of teaching time. Students arrived to class late and, in most classes, instruction commenced 12-20 minutes into the period. Many students were observed engaging in off-task behaviors while they were waiting.

- The majority of instruction lacks pacing and rigor; it is not inquiry or research based and does not offer sufficient opportunity for hands-on activities or student collaboration. Most lessons were teacher-dominated with passive student learning.   Even when working with individual students or groups, teachers dominated the discussions.

- 4 -

- There was minimal student engagement and interaction with other students in classes, even when the students were organized into groups. For example, the selection of tasks and problems by the majority of mathematics teachers lacked rigor and did not enable students to demonstrate their deep understanding of the skills and concepts assessed on State examinations.

- Inconsistent behavior management resulted in loss of teaching time, disruption to learning and lack of engagement by students in many classes observed.

- Literacy strategies, particularly in writing, were not being reinforced by teachers in other content areas across the school. Word walls were visible but never referred to even when there were opportunities in the lesson to use them as part of the introduction to a new topic.

- Good practice is not effectively shared among teachers. Even though all mathematics teachers meet regularly, the effective strategies used in the School of One program are not implemeted by other mathematics teachers in the school.

- Teacher feedback on student work displayed in classrooms showed inconsistent application of rubrics and connections to standards, and was not purposeful and constructive to move students forward to the next level.

Recommendations:
- The school should provide professional development (PD) for all teachers on how to use data to systematically inform their teaching practice. This should include extensive work on how to use data to form flexible instructional groups to meet specific student needs.

- There should be intensive focus on improving differentiation of instruction across the school to meet the identified learning needs of individual students and subgroups.

- Teachers should develop their use of a range of questioning skills to elicit higher order thinking skills from their students and to promote student evaluation of concepts learned.

- All learning objectives should be discussed with students so that they understand the purpose of their work and how it relates to standard achievement. All objectives should be monitored during instruction and evaluated at the end of the lesson.

- CTT teachers should receive PD on the skills required in this approach and be offered the opportunity to observe schools that have an effective CTT model. They should use a variety of groupings and instructional strategies to meet the specific learning needs of students.

- All teachers should be supported in fully integrating technology into instructional practice to enhance lesson delivery and improve student engagement.

- Administrators should closely monitor transitions and time management within lessons to maximize student learning time throughout the school day.

- All lessons should be conducted with appropriate pacing and rigor. They should contain a wide variety of teaching techniques to promote student engagement and a love of learning, including

- collaborative work, problem solving activities, active, hands-on experiences and tasks to encourage higher order thinking skills.

- Lesson planning should include extension activities that increase in rigor and test students' conceptual understanding of the skills they are learning. Teachers should refer to the NYS Performance Indicators for each concept and develop sample problems to include in the curriculum that reflect the expectations of those indicators.

- The Principal and administrators should closely monitor the application of the school behavior policy schoolwide to ensure full compliance. Teachers experiencing difficulties with behavior management should be well supported to minimize class disruption and loss of student engagement and learning time.

- Teacher team meetings should include opportunities for teachers to engage in inter-disciplinary curriculum planning that includes sharing good practice alongside common literacy practices that can be integrated into daily lessons.

- Opportunities should be scheduled for all mathematics teachers to visit the School of One program. The coach should facilitate post intervisitation discussions during content meetings and identify the effective strategies that can be implemeted by all mathematics teachers.

- Teachers should use the Common Core Standards and NYS Performance Indicators to develop rubrics and to provide commentary on student work. These rubrics should include common schoolwide expectations, for example, writing in complete sentences as well as content specific expectations. The task, standard, indicators and rubric should be posted next to the student work. The teacher feedback on student work should be explicit, consistent with the rubrics for the task and referred to whenever applicable to move students forward in their learning.

III. School Leadership

Findings:
- Expectations for student and staff achievement and progress are not set high enough by the Principal and administrators.

- The Principal has not explicitly shared a compelling vision or mission for the improvement of the school with all stakeholders.

- The Principal did not involve the School Leadership Team (SLT) in developing the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP), or in any other decision making processes. The school goals are too broad and progress towards meeting these goals is not appropriately monitored.

- There is no whole school approach towards school improvement planning that links curriculum, PD, data based inquiry and lesson planning. The structure in place (PODS) resulted in a compartmentalized structure that has not fostered a unified plan for the school.

- There is a lack of parent involvement in the school, and the SLT does not operate. Parents feel that they do not have a voice in decision making processes, and translation services are not used to offer equal access to school information for all parent groups.

- Although the Principal has developed a system of lesson evaluation for teachers and other staff, the formal and informal feedback provided is not effective in improving the quality of instruction or student achievement across the school.

- PD does not focus precisely enough on the issues that will make the greatest difference in raising student achievement. Teachers report that not all planned PD takes place.

- The school leadership's management of the organization, operations and resources does not translate into an effective and efficient learning environment. This is evidenced by inadequate material resources, underutilized technology, lack of an effective whole school PD plan and appropriate systems for the monitoring and evaluation to determine effectiveness.

- The Principal's supervision of teachers and the delegation of responsibilities to AP's are weak. As a result, there is a lack of accountability across the school to assure continous improvement.

- Academic Intervention Services (AIS) are not provided early enough in the school year to support students experiencing difficulties in their learning.

Recommendations:
- Suitably high expectations for student progress and achievement should be set by the Principal and widely shared with staff, parents and the students.

- The Principal should devise a clear mission and vision for school improvement and should communicate this to the entire school community. At the heart of this mission should be the development of strategies to improve teaching and learning across the school to raise student achievement. Whole school improvement planning should be robust and unified.

- The school should take urgent steps to ensure that all constituencies are involved in the development of the CEP.

- The Principal and APs should plan a year-long PD calendar based upon needs of teachers. The topics of the plan should link curriculum, data based inquiry and lesson planning.

- The school should seek support from the Network to develop effective strategies to increase parent participation in the school at all levels. The Principal should ensure that all communications and information about the school are translated into all relevant languages to provide equal access for all parents.

- The Principal should ensure that the lesson observation process is robust and provides clear feedback to all staff, directly linked to improving the quality of their teaching and student learning. Time should be scheduled for teachers to enable the modeling and sharing of best practice through intervisitations and follow-up visits/post observation to monitor teacher progress.

- The Principal should ensure that all PD is relevant, fully reflects needs identified to achieve school goals, takes place as agreed and is monitored to assess its effectiveness.

- The school leadership's management of the school's organization, operations and resources should be urgently addressed to resolve weaknesses in creating an effective learning environment. There should be increased accountability by all staff towards continuous improvement.

- The Principal should clearly define the roles of the APs, share expectations for teacher observations and collaboratively develop protocols to provide feedback to teachers for improvement and accountability.

- AIS should be provided to support students at risk. These students should be identified early and provided focused support to address their specific learning needs. The work of this service should be regularly monitored to ensure its effectiveness.

IV. Infrastructure for Student Success

Findings:
- The school building does not reflect the cultural diversity and specific needs of the school community.

- Hallway displays are weak and do not engage parents or students.

- Parents do not understand the school's current reporting systems and are not able to effectively support their children at home.

- The current behavior policy is not consistently implemented across the school.

- A comprehensive system to identify and support at-risk students is not in place.

- Currently, there are no AIS programs for at-risk students in all content areas.

- ELL teachers do not have regularly scheduled meeting time during the school day. They meet voluntarily after school to discuss their students and engage in common planning.

- Students are not aware of their educational status.

- Science equipment and supplies are inadequate to provide for hands-on inquiry based lessons. For example, only six functioning microscopes are available and triple beam balances are in short supply. Only one lab is available and is only used by eighth grade students.

- The shared school library does not reflect the diversity or specific needs of the school population, particularly for ELLs and students with disabilities.

Recommendations:

- School leaders should develop a plan to ensure that cultural diversity is infused throughout the school. All stakeholders should participate in this initiative and develop resources that adequately reflect student and community diversity.

- The school hallways and shared areas should display a wide range of topics and information, with translation as appropriate, to interest and engage students and parents.

- Administrators should ensure that parents have regular opportunities to learn about school initiatives. Workshops and guides should be provided in languages to meet parent needs in interpreting and using reporting systems to monitor their children's progress.

- The school should ensure that all teachers and support staff are adequately informed about the expectations outlined in the behavior policy and how it is to be implemented schoolwide. The administration should regularly monitor the implementation of this policy.

- Students at risk of failure should be rapidly identified, with support structures in place to address their specific behavioral, academic and social/emotional needs.

- The Principal should use AIS to meet identified student learning needs earlier in the school year to maximize impact.

- ELL teachers should be offered opportunities to have regularly scheduled meeting sessions during the school day.

- The school should ensure that students are regularly informed in class and advisory meetings of their current academic status and promotional requirements. The broad and comprehensive approach for informing students of their status should include regular reports on their academic progress and any suggested supports available to them for remediation.

- The school should urgently review the implementation of science instruction that should include providing the resources and equipment required to effectively deliver the curriculum.

- Library resources should be reviewed and improved to meet the needs of all students in the school.

V. Collection, Analysis and Utilization of Data

Findings:

- The school leader has developed a platform for capturing student data; however, it is not robust; does not inform teaching and learning; and does not address the academic, social or emotional barriers that affect student achievement. There is insufficient analysis of subgroup data to identify specific learning needs.

- The procedures in place for monitoring student progress are not explicit. They lack depth and are not used consistently and systematically across the school to carefully track the progress of individuals or subgroups.

- Data analysis at the whole school level by administrators does not lead directly to planning and delivery to meet student needs in the classrooms.

- AIS are not implemented in a timely manner to address student needs identified through data analysis.

- Student achievement and progress is not effectively articulated to students or their parents/caregivers.

Recommendations:
- Improve data collection and analysis processes so that the information gathered provides a complete picture of student achievement for all content areas including whole grade, class, subgroup and individual performance. Supplement external data with information captured in in-school assessment processes and conduct item analyses to precisely identify student needs.

- Develop action plans that explicitly articulate specific periods of analysis of student progress and benchmarks for success. These should be communciated across the school via the Teacher Teams and the SLT.

- Use the data and information gathered about student performance to effectively address student needs at classroom level.

- Identify at-risk students rapidly, through data analysis, and ensure that AIS supports are made available to them earlier in the school year.

- Use a wide range of communication structures, including systems such as Teacher Ease and ARIS Parent Link to inform all stakeholders about student progress. Organize regular workshops for parents on how to access and use these reporting sources.

VI. Professional Development

Findings:
- There is no evidence that data from student achievement or lesson observation processes is used to inform PD. As a result, the PD plan lacks detail and does not address the specific needs of the school.

- The feedback provided through formal and informal observations does not explicitly lead to PD opportunities and support. Sufficient time for PD is allocated, but it is not appropriately targeted to make systemic changes in teaching and learning to improve student achievement. The PD structure lacks focus and covers a range of topics that are not aligned closely enough to the needs of teachers. There is no PD outside of individual observations for special education teachers, while ELL teachers voluntarily participate in PD after school.

- Although there is an identified group of mentors, new teachers were unaware of mentoring arrangements.

- 10 -

- Administrators do not monitor the implementation of initiatives introduced during PD and do not evaluate the effectiveness of PD offerings either through classroom observations or teacher surveys.

Recommendations:
- Include Network support in developing a PD plan that is informed by data and is responsive to the needs of all teachers and support staff.

- Use the classroom observation process and the analysis of student work to identify the topics and themes for PD that will have maximum impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Ensure that individual teacher needs are addressed by differentiating offerings to include individuals, groups and departments as well as providing whole school trainings. This should include relevant training opportunities for teachers of ELLs and special education teachers.

- Organize mentor meetings and training sessions for teachers who are new to the profession and the school. Ensure that they are fully aware of ongoing opportunities for articulation and support.

- Monitor the effectiveness of the PD program consistently and regularly through data analysis, lesson observations and teacher surveys.

VII. District Support

Findings:
- Specific Network support for PD is available on a regular basis and as requested. However, the school has not used this service frequently enough to meet specific school needs or followed up offerings by monitoring the effectiveness of this support.

- An achievement coach is provided to support the school with data analysis and reporting. However, the school has not taken advantage of the available support to interpret and use the range of data to inform instruction.

- The school has not used the Network and central offices for support, resources and training as a means for improving parent involvement, except for attendance improvement.

Recommendations:
- Include Network support in the development of a PD plan that includes regular on-site support and monitoring of training priorities.

- Ensure that regularly scheduled meetings with the achievement coach include detailed training in the interpretation and use of data.

- Engage the services of the Network in the development of a parent engagement plan that includes strategies for increasing parent participation in the decision-making processes in the school.

- 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	✓
(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</u>, <u>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.

- Assign new leadership with the experience and capacity to effectively communicate a clear vision for improving student achievement.

- Develop a leadership team that is able to support all staff in the delivery of a high quality curriculum with essential support for all subgroups within the school.

- Create a comprehensive PD plan that includes support and mentoring for first and second year teachers.

- Enable changes to the curriculum to facilitate the differentiation of instruction to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students to improve their academic progress and achievement.