

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



BEDS Code	331400010250
School Name	P.S. 250 George H. Lindsay
School Address	108 Montrose Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11206
District Name	NYCDOE CSD 14
Principal	Roseann Lacioppa
Dates of Visit	January 22-24, 2019



Purpose Of The Visit

This school was identified as needing additional support by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Because of this identification, NYSED arranged for an Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) to visit the school. The visit is intended to help the school identify areas of need that are making long-term success a challenge and provide several visible Quick Wins that can be accomplished and demonstrate the school's commitment to improvement.

The report provides a critical lens to help the school best focus its efforts.

Information About The Visit

- The visit was led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from NYSED. The team also included a district representative and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The team visited a total of 23 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited four classrooms with the principal during the visit.
- Team members conducted interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- Team members examined documents provided by the school, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- PS 250 George H. Lindsay School serves 459 students in grades pre-kindergarten to five.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. The school has implemented the Leader in Me social-emotional learning (SEL) program throughout the building, and the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) observed it having a positive impact on students and school culture. Nearly all students interviewed by the team spoke about the program and its main tenets, the seven habits. Students discussed how this program is part of their morning meetings, personal writing reflections, and their personal lives. Students who participate on the Student Lighthouse team, a student ambassador program connected to “Leader in Me”, demonstrated the impact that this emphasis on leadership has had within the school. These students shared that they are proud of their leadership team and have taken seriously the responsibility of being role models to their peers, and they expressed confidence that they can voice their ideas to improve the school.
2. The IIT observed a variety of student work displayed throughout the school that reflects the diverse student body, as well as the school’s “Leader in Me” program and its emphasis on college readiness and student empowerment. The “book of the month” collection reflected diverse cultures and topics, and the student art displayed on the walls was connected to Black History Month and Lunar New Year celebrations. All classrooms developed their own personal statements that were displayed outside the classroom doors as part of their emphasis on creating a team vision. Students have many options to see that they and their work are valued in the school, and most students interviewed by the IIT expressed a sense of feeling empowered and supported.
3. The IIT observed the implementation of the Wilson Foundations program during kindergarten through grade two classroom visits. Although this is a newly introduced program, staff reported that it has achieved a high level of buy-in from teachers. Teachers who are using the program expressed that they already see the impact of the program in their English language arts (ELA) instruction and student learning. Teachers also expressed that they enjoy applying it in their daily instruction, and the team observed students actively engaged during Foundations lessons.
4. The principal has fostered a positive relationship with many students. Most interviewed students expressed a positive outlook about the school and their relationship with adults and their peers. Several students said that they can give their ideas to the principal and be heard. Students stated that they have an opportunity to be chosen for the book buzz lunch with the principal.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **The school should formalize a uniform system to monitor the collection and use of data to inform instruction throughout the school.** Although the principal, data specialist, and some teachers spoke about the collection and analysis of data as a goal and priority, currently there is no program to carry out or monitor this effort schoolwide. The IIT noted pockets of different approaches to data analysis, such as the AP working to track data and trends in literacy and math and the data specialist pulling small groups in grades three and four for targeted instruction, but these efforts should be more aligned.
- **The school should track and provide targeted Professional Development (PD) to teachers based on identified areas of need.** In discussions with school leaders and teachers, the IIT learned that most PD is offered to the whole staff during their Monday PD or to those who seek out additional PD due to their personal interests.

The formal observation feedback, which the IIT reviewed, needed targeted and critical feedback on how to improve in the areas that were identified during the observations, including next steps and dedicated plans for supporting teachers with targeted PD to improve their instruction.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The principal has many ideas and expectations regarding how to improve instruction and student achievement but should ensure that her expectations are clearly and consistently communicated to the staff.** The principal articulated many of her plans for improving instruction and learning, but the IIT’s conversations with staff revealed that those plans, or how they would be carried out and monitored, needed more clarity. Further, staff who showed an awareness of the plans stated there was a need for more details of how the improvements would be technically carried out. Also, non-negotiables for instruction or communication with parents were not mentioned. For example, the principal said that all teachers use ClassDojo to communicate with parents. However, the IIT learned that there should be more monitoring and follow-up to ensure that teachers are using the application. Parents reported that those parents whose children are in classes where the teacher does not use ClassDojo have unequal access to track their children’s progress and are not able to equitably communicate with the teacher.
- **The principal and APs should ensure that meetings are regularly scheduled to self-reflect on the effectiveness of their practices.** The IIT observed that the school leaders are pursuing many strategies to address students’ low levels of achievement but should implement a structured and consistent practice of self-reflecting on the progress of these initiatives.

Learning at the School

- **Teachers should check for understanding during lessons and identify struggling students for necessary support.** In many observed classes, the IIT saw teacher-centered instruction and choral response to questions, as well as select students volunteering to share their answers, providing less opportunity for teachers to identify struggling students. The IIT noted teacher-centered conversations that often focused on correct/incorrect responses and allowed for limited follow-up by students. For example, in a writing lesson, students read aloud their writing about the theme of a story. When asked what the theme was, only a single student responded. The student was affirmed whether the answer was correct or not, but more opportunities should be provided to promote deeper discussion and to check the understanding of the other students.
- **The school’s PD priority for reciprocal math should be implemented as an instructional expectation.** The IIT observed that the implementation of one of the school’s PD priorities, reciprocal math, was not as impactful on instruction as the school’s other PD priority, Readers Workshop. For example, teachers could minimally speak to the implementation or use of reciprocal math teaching strategies in their instruction. The team found that there should be more effective follow-through on carrying out this program and on providing uniform resources for students to reference during instruction.
- **The IIT found that instructional expectations and ongoing evaluation and modification plans should be more effectively implemented.** The IIT observed that greater clarity around instructional priorities, such as increasing rigor, was needed through follow-up and additional PD. Teachers needed more support in naming the “must do” expectations that the principal said were normed in the school, such as using ClassDojo or

reciprocal math. Instructional leaders interviewed by the team expressed a desire to provide more class-specific support to teachers, but they stated that they do not always have the time in their current schedules.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Parents and students stated that they want a music program at the school.** Students shared that they like the different activities they can participate in at the school, such as Student Lighthouse, recycling, and art, but they said that they wished the school had more options for music and other extracurricular activities. Parents expressed a strong desire for the school to reinstate a full music program.
- **Students reported that they need more physical activity and recess.** Students share that there is a lack of physical education time and recess at school. Students stated that currently outside recess is something individual teachers can decide if they want to participate in and that teachers are not required to take them outside for recess. Students and parents were adamant that additional physical activity needs to be prioritized in the schedule.
- **Parents stated that some teachers do not regularly or effectively communicate with them.** Many interviewed parents shared that communication from teachers is inconsistent and needs to be improved. Teachers suggested that they could make time during the Monday PD to share best practices for communicating with families.