

Office of Innovative School Models
 Persistently Lowest Achieving (PLA) Schools
 School Improvement Grant (SIG)

Progress Review Report — 2011-2012

School:	Automotive High School	School District:	New York City Community School District (CSD) 14
Date of Site Visit:	October 13, 2011	Team Member(s)	Dr. Kathryn Ahern and Kalimah Geter

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Grade Configuration: 9-12

Total Enrollment: 749 (as if 10/11/11)

Areas of PLA identification: High school graduation and mathematics

Identified subgroups All subgroups

Intervention model: Re-start — External Partnership Organization (EPO) — **New Visions for New Schools**. The principal was replaced as of August 15, 2011; the staff was not screened for rehire or removal prior to start of school year.

The school's community-based organization (CBO) partners and major vendors:

1.	Counseling in Schools (CIS)	4.	University of Chicago
2.	CAMBA	5.	Good Shepherd Services
3.	International Network for Public Schools		

STAFFING	
Organization and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has changed school improvement grant (SIG) models this year from the transformation model to the restart model. The school is now run by an educational partnership organization (EPO), New Visions for New Schools. • The EPO hired a new principal in August 2011. The new principal also hired one more assistant principal (AP). The school has four assistant principals. • There are seven English language arts (ELA) teachers employed at the school who are directly supervised by the principal. The principal is also serving the school as a reading and ELA specialist. All ELA teachers work directly with the principal during common planning time (CPT). • The school employs eight math teachers, including one master teacher and one turnaround teacher. These teachers are supervised by an assistant principal who also supervises all science teachers. • Both the master teacher and turnaround teacher were retained for a second year by the previous principal. • The new principal had no input into either the hiring or retention of either the master or the turnaround teachers. Their continued tenure was decided by the previous principal with no input by the EPO. • There are five special education teachers, who are supervised by an assistant principal. • The school employs one teacher who teaches English as a second language (ESL) and for English language learners (ELL). • The ninth grade has been restructured such that all students receive a double block of ELA coursework daily. • The principal reported there were 56 incoming students with Proficiency Levels 3 or 4 in math, based on the eighth grade math exam; the rest of the class was provided a double block of math.
Teacher Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school administrative team (the principal and assistant principals) has received the New York City Department of Education (NYCDoE) training to implement the Teacher Effectiveness Model rubric for observations of teachers. The low inference observation model provides a rubric based on the Danielson model. • The school administrative team is assisted in implementing the observation rubric by a “talent management coach” supplied by the NYCDoE School Transformation Office. • According to the administrative team, a talent coach visits the school weekly. The coach is supported in part by SIG funding and deployed to all Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 NYC transformation schools. • Teachers have been observed informally twice since the beginning of the school year. Verbal feedback has been provided to date; no written formal evaluation feedback has been provided to date, pending a language approval agreement between the NYCDoE and the United Teachers Federation (UFT). • Teachers receive verbal feedback from informal observations. Additionally, teachers receive feedback through hallway conversations, which has been well received and appreciated by teachers. • The school administrative team reports that it has a formal plan to observe each teacher formally at least two times in the fall and two times in the spring. They plan to make 10 informal visits to each teacher's classroom during the year.

PLANNING	
Student Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average daily attendance rate this year is 76%. • The school is implementing a plan of increasing discipline consequences to encourage and enforce students in showing up to class on time, at all times of the day, and also to reduce students lingering in the halls between classes. • A list of 16 potential, long-term absentees (LTA) has been identified to date. • Counseling in Schools (CIS) has begun its work at the school, and plans to prepare and develop programs to support students with behavioral challenges including but not limited to gang related activity. These programs are in the early stages of implementation and are not yet able to report results. • Good Shepherd Services continues to work with the school on attendance outreach to students and their families. They offer group, individual and family counseling services after school and on the weekend. • A new Cultural Center is being established on each floor for students. Each center is staffed with deans, guidance counselors, social workers and therapists available to support students with attendance and any other type of personal or academic problem. • The Cultural Center on the first floor will work exclusively with 9th grade students, the center on the second floor will work with 10th grade students, and the third floor Cultural Center will work with 11th and 12th grade students. • The effects of these new Cultural Centers on student achievement and school culture were not yet evident because at the time of the visit they were not operating fully.
Student Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counseling in Schools provides counseling and special programs for students with behavioral challenges. • CIS will work one-on-one with teachers in the school to look for ways to engage students with behavioral challenges. • Good Shepherd will continue its attendance outreach programs as in the first year of the grant.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results to date are unavailable since CIS has just begun its work at the school. The Cultural Centers were set to open shortly after the NYSED Team visit, on or around October 17, 2011.
Teacher Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has experienced 52 staff absences to date. The staff is comprised of 100 employees at the school.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)	
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common planning time (CPT) is now scheduled for teachers by department. The school did not offer CPT prior to this school year. • Common planning periods offering professional development (PD) are mandatory for all teachers. • Calendars for September—October 2011, have been distributed which include opportunities to receive both in-house and outside PD from several vendors, including the UFT. According to the principal, these PD activities are separate from the CPT activities. • Teachers receive common planning time each week, where PD is facilitated and provided by the EPO, as well as NYU Metro, Counseling in Schools and other vendors. • Teachers use common planning time to review pacing calendars, share

	<p>lesson plans and collaborate in order to respond to student academic needs and behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers plan to collaborate on PD by visiting each other’s classrooms (inter-visitation) and observing the master teacher’s lessons. The EPO is working with teachers to plan an inter-visitation calendar. • PD made available after school and on weekends is not mandatory. Teachers can request to attend outside PD opportunities, which are reviewed for approval by the principal. • Special education teachers are presently not participating in common planning time activities. At the time of the visit, special education teachers were using their planning time to update individualized education plans (IEP) for students with disabilities. • The principal clarified that the special education teachers were exempted from CPT until November 30, 2011 to complete IEPs. This group of teachers will resume attending CPT following the completion of the IEPs. • The Master teacher attended PD through the NYCDoE prior to the start of the school year. Four additional PD sessions are planned for this individual as on-going PD throughout the school year. • The master teacher voluntarily attends monthly PD sessions at the UFT Teacher Center in Manhattan. In addition, she has attended training for the implementation of the teacher effectiveness rubric, which she shared, or “turn-keyed” with the mathematics department during CPT. • PD topics are chosen weekly by the school administrative team based on individual departmental needs. Topics for the sessions to date include the enforcement of the student discipline code, effective student engagement strategies, the teacher evaluation rubric based on the Danielson framework, the use of <i>DataCation</i> for data collection, <i>Skedula</i> training, the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), navigating informational texts and workshops on how to use the Promethean Boards (interactive whiteboards). • PD for teachers on using data to inform instruction is not presently occurring.
<p>Instructional and Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A UFT supported Teacher Center continues serving teachers at the school. Representatives reported that it would provide a menu of PD activities including the CCLS and the Danielson framework for teacher observation. • Common planning time (CPT) has allowed subject area and grade level meetings to occur regularly since September 9, 2011. For example, CPT is used to provide instructional support around the development of CCLS performance tasks, including writing across the curriculum and for improving mathematics understanding. • The EPO is providing support based on its scaffolded apprenticeship model (SAM). The SAM point person facilitates the CPT activities and inter-visitation. The point person also supports the teachers in an effort to align and revise the curriculum to the CCLS. • Planning is in process to begin inter-visitation by academic subject area teachers to observe the inquiry strategies employed, using rubrics, performance assessment tasks and projects in the career and technical education (CTE) courses. • The intent of the EPO, according to representatives interviewed, is to align the revised curricula and the domains of the Danielson framework for teacher evaluation. This intent was not yet fully realized at the time of the visit. • The new teacher evaluation system requires “action steps” which the assistant principals (APs) are using to set goals and next steps with teachers. The APs use the action steps to look for improvement in teacher practice during subsequent observations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DataCation, an assessment management system, is in its second year of implementation at the school. Teachers are expected to use Skedula for all grades, assignments and daily attendance records. PD is then differentiated based on teacher familiarity, skill and need.
Monitoring and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school administrative team reported that they use informal observations to note if the PD is being implemented in individual classrooms. No formal monitoring of PD is apparent at this time.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data that Informs Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An assessment management system, <i>DataCation</i>, has been implemented at the school. Teachers use <i>Skedula</i> to post attendance, grades, assignments, projects, instructions and observations of student behavior. Students and parents have access to individual student grades, course assignments with instructions, student attendance and some teacher comments through <i>PupilPath</i>. <i>DataCation</i> is being used to gather biographical and anecdotal information on students. The intent is to use this information to plan interventions. The interventions and their effects on student achievement are not yet widely evident throughout the school, nor is it clear to what extent the teachers are using the data to inform instruction. Teachers reported the use of <i>ARIS</i>, the NYCDoE database system, as a source of information on students. How this data is used by teachers to inform instruction is not yet evident. Data analysis by teachers and the AP of each department is in the initial stages but it is not yet widespread or regularly used to drive and plan day-to-day instruction. Before school started this year, the principal and programmer used the results of the citywide eighth grade exam and other <i>ARIS</i> data to program students into the appropriate math, ELA and history courses.
Data & Student Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The social studies department revised history courses based on an analysis of the Regents exam results for 2010-2011. This analysis has resulted in the department deciding to move the US History course that culminates in the Regents exam to the 9th grade rather than wait until students are in 11th grade. Newly created Regents prep classes have been developed for students in grades 11 and 12 so that students are able to retake and pass the Regents exams, particularly in Algebra, ELA and US History. These classes are embedded into the students' daily programs. Other uses of data are planned but were not yet evident at the time of the visit.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

Learning Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The length of the school day and the school year has not changed since last year. Each instructional period lasts 46 minutes, with a three-minute passing period between classes. New this year, all ninth grade students have a daily schedule that runs consecutively from period 1 through period 9. Most 10th grade students also have the new daily schedule. Double blocks of time for math and ELA are now programmed into the revised ninth grade student schedule. Another new program this year is a mandatory automotive Career and Technical Education (CTE) rotation in which students experience the four
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	<p>programs offered by the CTE department in ten-week increments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common planning time (CPT) was instituted on September 19, 2011, for collaborative daily planning by department. • The widespread effects of CPT on the culture of learning in the school were not yet evident.
<p>Mapped & Paced Curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NYC Chancellor's plan to roll out the ELA and math CCLS through performance tasks developed by each school will begin in the second half of October 2011. • The school administrative team and teachers report the curriculum in each department is being revised to infuse literacy, promote inquiry and engage the disengaged student. The effect of this change in focus is not yet evident school-wide.
<p>Instructional Programming Linked to Student Needs Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Wilson Reading</i> program and <i>Read 180</i> are used in ELA to support students with below grade-level reading skills. • Content area teachers began to implement a modified version of <i>Understanding by Design</i> to address academic skills in all content areas. • Double periods of ELA and math are offered to all incoming ninth grade students who scored below a Level 3 on the eighth grade ELA and math exams.
<p>Effective Teaching Practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students were attentive but not highly engaged in most classrooms. The student assignments and activities appeared appropriately challenging, creative and rigorous in some classrooms, but not so in others. • Every classroom visited had a lesson aim and objective for the class posted somewhere prominently in the room. • Classroom management was variable and uneven in many of the classrooms visited. • Rigorous instruction, with the use of higher order questioning and evidence of inquiry-based student engagement, was highly uneven across the classrooms visited. • In some classrooms, teachers provided students with real-world connections to the lesson objectives. • Lesson plans were not available in all classrooms visited. Not every teacher appeared prepared to share a lesson plan with NYSED Site Visit Team. • Observations of the CTE workshop displayed highly effective strategies with students working together in focused, efficient and collaborative groups. • CTE teachers were observed treating students as professional employees with visible expectations and standards set for students.
<p>ELL/SWD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction for English language learner was provided by the use of <i>Rosetta Stone</i>. • <i>Read 180</i> will be used for ELLs when the new laptops and materials arrive and the software is installed. • The computers were not yet available for student use. The laptop orders have been placed but will not be completed until the EPO has a signed contract, which gives it full authority to complete business transactions. • The school employs one certified ESL teacher. The ELL student population at the school is 4.5%. • The ESL teacher and the supervising assistant principal plan to create curriculum maps; these maps are not yet complete. • Instruction for ELL has been a pull out model, but was planned to start as a push-in model during the week following the site visit. • Students with disabilities (SWD) comprise about 34% of the student population. • The Wilson Reading program is used for self-contained special education

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> classroom instruction. Support for math was not evident for either ELL or SWD.
STUDENT SUPPORT	
Additional Social/Emotional Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Centers have been established on each floor of the school. Each center has a guidance counselor and a dean to address student issues. Counseling in Schools (CIS) intends to work in the building with students and teachers, including providing teachers with assistance and feedback around classroom management. The group was set to begin work later in the year. Teachers and the administrative team reported that there is a greater push for social-emotional support for students that targets specific behaviors this year versus past school years. A counseling program (supported by CIS and assisted with the help of counselors) was instituted this year to address the needs of young men, particularly to counteract the effects of gang activity. School safety has improved, and the principal reported that teachers are beginning to understand the importance of being consistent in behavior modifications and expectations. There is a significant presence of school safety agents (SSA) and a NYPD task force, moving students through the hallways and addressing inappropriate student behaviors. Regular and frequent hall sweeps are performed to check that students are in their assigned classrooms and do not wander the halls or congregate in stairwells unsupervised. Between classes, students are asked to produce a pass if any adult passes them in the hall. There is a stronger enforcement of the student code of conduct and dress code this year, as evidenced by young men not wearing sagging pants, hats, hoods, beads or other evidence of gang affiliation. The NYSED Site Visit Team observed that student language and behavior in the halls was more respectful, with a notable lack of inappropriate language, compared to last year.
Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a greater push for social emotional support, targeting specific student behaviors, this year versus past school years. Cultural Centers have been established on each floor of the school. Each center has a guidance counselor and a dean to address student issues. CIS will work in the building with guidance counselors, deans and teachers to support the Youth Development model being implemented this year. CIS will provide teachers with assistance and feedback on effective classroom management strategies. The group was set to begin work in mid-October. A counseling program (Rites of Passage) was instituted this year to address the needs of young men to counteract the effects of gang activity. A group of 45 young men was identified to participate in this new program. These programs mentioned in this section were in the initial stages of implementation. Data was not yet available to show results. The NYSED Site Visit Team observed school safety agents (SSA) patrolling the halls in pairs with clipboards in hand. They were observed to stop students and request his/her hall pass. The SSA then recorded information on the clipboard before proceeding.
Enrichment Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are many opportunities for students to participate in academic and social enrichment activities. Seniors in the top 40% of the class (about 60 students) have an opportunity to participate in the <i>At Home in College</i> (AHIC) program, a college-readiness program offered at the school through CUNY.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities are being planned for college and career fairs and college visits later in the year. • Leadership development is available through SLATE activities for young men, through National Technical Honor Society and student government activities. • The school offers career and technical education (CTE) programs in automotive technology, automotive body repair, automotive business and a pre-engineering program entitled <i>Project Lead the Way</i>. • Other programs, clubs, sports, for students include nine PSAL sports teams, music and theater programs. • Although the majority of the students are boys (95%), the girls at the school reported very few activities were available which were aimed specifically for their needs or interests. This remains an issue noted since last year.
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SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	
Effective Leadership and Principal Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal is newly appointed to the school this year and is new in the NYCDoE school system. She has several years of experience in schools on Long Island. There are four assistant principals with a range of experience from one to over 20 years at the school. • The school administrative team is supported by three members of the New Visions for New Schools EPO. They spend from three to five days per week at the school in an active support capacity. • According to all constituent groups interviewed during the visit, the principal has proven to be focused, decisive and willing to make changes in a timely manner. By all reports, she stands by the decisions she makes and sets clear expectations. • The principal has taken the initiative to program students according to their needs, make informed decisions based on consultation and address their issues in a timely manner according to EPO and Children First Network (CFN) personnel. • The teachers report that the principal listens to the teachers and considers their needs and suggestions in her cabinet meetings and school wide decisions. • The principal was described as consistent and honest. • The principal's philosophy is to address the behavioral problems, the emotional and the developmental problems of the students. • Teachers noted that there is a more concerted effort to improve communication and structures in the building and to design a more coherent instructional model.
Leadership Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school administrative team has received training from the NYCDoE in the implementation of the Teacher Effectiveness Model. • The EPO facilitates and delivers the majority of the PD activities at the school. • The EPO and Children First Network (CFN) offer support and supervision for the principal, APs and teachers. For example, New Vision supports the principal with mentoring, organizational and back office support. The EPO, acting as the CFN, also organizes and delivers PD and academic and pedagogical coaching for teachers and oversees the revision and development of the curriculum.
School Improvement Manager/External Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not yet have a school improvement manager (SIM); rather the NYCDoE has provided a temporary school improvement liaison (SIL) through the CFN. • The NYCDoE reported that the SIM positions were being advertised at the time of the NYSED Site Team visit. The new SIMs are scheduled to

	<p>assume duties early in January.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EPO, New Visions for New Schools, has a regular and consistent presence in the school, as reported by the school administrative team, teachers, parents and students. • The EPO reported that the organization does not yet have an executed copy of a contract from NYCDoE. This hampers them from acting in a fully authorized manner on behalf of the school. • The school administrative team is assisted in implementing the observation rubric by a “talent management coach” supplied by the New York City Department of Education (NYCDoE) School Transformation Office.
Building Level Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EPO and school administrators meet at least once weekly to discuss all school issues and aspects related to the SIG. • The school leadership team (SLT) includes the parent coordinator and UFT representative. The SLT plans to start meeting once per month beginning in mid-October.

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
Environment is Conducive to Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents, students and teachers all reported that expectations this year are clearer and efforts for school improvement are more focused. • Parents, students and teachers all noted that the school building and grounds around the school seem safer, calmer and more pleasant. • The NYSED Site Visit Team noted a considerably better dynamic in the halls during passing time between classes than last year. • All focus groups reported that morale and general student behavior have improved since last year. • Students and parents reported that teachers seemed more caring and attentive this year, with teachers more likely to ask students' opinions on a more frequent basis.
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers all reported that expectations this year are clearer and efforts for school improvement are more focused. They noted that this has made a significant improvement in work relationships across the building. • The continued use of the Teacher Effectiveness rubric appears to have encouraged the continuation of collaboration and reflection between the administration and faculty at this school.
Parent Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has an active parent-teacher organization. A newly elected president organizes and plans activities for parents and guardians. • The principal has instituted a series of Saturday morning “coffee talks” to encourage more parent dialogue and to introduce parents to the new programs and changes planned for the up-coming school year. One such meeting has occurred so far this year.
External/Community-Based Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EPO continues to work with the school in a major partnership. • The school has a number of working partnerships which include CIS, Good Shepherd, and CUNY (through the AHIC Program), and Dr. Pedro Noguera (through NYU Metro) • CAMBA plans to begin work at the school later in the year.

BUDGET AND OTHER FUNDING SOURCES	
Budget Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget modifications have been made and are pending approval, since the new principal began her work in August. The amount of the budget has not changed, but the allocation of funds is being shifted in response to the shift to an EPO.
Use of 1003(g) or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is in the second year of the SIG. The funding for the second

1003(a) grant funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> year is \$997,659. The school received \$1,173,716 last year from the SIG.
Use of Other Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other significant grants or outside major funding sources were not reported.

DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT	
District Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrators, teachers and parents noted that the changes in the NYCDoE open enrollment policy have significantly changed the population and demographics of the school over time. These changes brought students to the school, with significantly different and widely varied educational needs, which did not match the programs offered in the school at the time. The NYCDoE Office of School Improvement has a “talent coach” that works with teachers and administrators to implement the teacher effectiveness rubric. The NYCDoE has provided temporary school improvement liaisons (SIL) through the Networks. The SIL have limited interactions with the schools. The NYCDoE has not yet hired the school improvement managers (SIM) as noted in the SIG. The NYCDoE has explained that the SIM will work with three to five schools with SIG funding, and that all the SIM will be hired and begin work in January 2012.
JIT/SIG Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school did not have a JIT report before being awarded the SIG for 2010-2011. The school had a Quality Review by the NYCDoE in 2010-2011. The current SIG plan appears to seek to address the issues identified during the grant monitoring visits made by NYSED last spring. Many of the planned activities are in the early stages of implementation. Results based on student achievement are not yet available.

SUMMARY

The NYSED Site Visit Team conducted a full-day site visit at Automotive High School on October 13, 2011. Although the visit was brief, the team was able to ascertain information about the school's efforts to begin the implementation of their revised reform model for improving student learning.

The NYSED Site Visit Team met with various stakeholders to review the school's implementation plan and to determine progress to date toward improved student achievement. The school administrative team is respectful and eager to promote rapid improvements in student performance; however, implementation of significant activities is only in the initial stages. The school received its funding in early October from NYSED. The EPO does not yet have a signed contract from the NYCDoE, which precludes it from acting with full authority at the school and hinders operations at several levels.

Teachers meet regularly in departmental and grade level common planning time to discuss student behavior and plan engagement strategies but effective implementation of data to drive classroom instruction is limited. Staff, students and parents all spoke positively of the school's efforts to improve student achievement. The EPO, district and school representatives were candid with their comments and highly cooperative throughout the PLA monitoring process. CTE class observations displayed effective engagement strategies and teachers were observed treating students as professionals with high expectations for achievement of course goals. Girls at the school still reported that very few activities were geared toward their needs.

The next site visit to Automotive High School will be in the spring of 2012. At that time, the NYSED Site Visit Team will review whether the EPO has been fully authorized through delivery of a signed contract with the NYCDoE. It will also review the effects on student engagement, student achievement and school climate of the departmental work on student engagement. The curriculum revision and curriculum mapping, the increased uses of both student assessment and anecdotal data to inform instruction will be reviewed, as well as the installation and use of the *Read 180* software and laptop computers, and the improved use of the Promethean interactive whiteboard technology. NYSED will review the continuing implementation of the professional development plan, and the implementation of math instructional programs to support both English language learners and students with disabilities. NYSED will also verify if special education teachers have regular opportunities for participation in common planning activities.