Office of Innovative School Models



Persistently Lowest Achieving (PLA) Schools School Improvement Grant (SIG) Monitoring Report

School:	Brooklyn School for Global Studies	School District:	New York City Department of Education District #15
Date of Site-Visit:	April 28, 2011 (Second Visit)	Members of Site-Visit Team:	Susan Gibbons, Mark Barth, Major Capers, Andrew McGrath

STAFFING	
Collective Bargaining	Negotiations are continuing regarding revision of the collective bargaining agreement in order to support: development of a teacher evaluation system, removal of staff based on the evaluation system and changes in work day, duties and hours.
Teacher Evaluations linked to Student Performance	Teacher evaluations linked to student performance have been put into place. The system and data used must be consistent with State APPR system.
Identify and Reward staff or Remediate/Remove Staff	A clear and transparent process for identifying staff for rewards and remediation is in place (A process must be in place immediately upon the development and implementation of the Teacher Evaluation System).
Implementation of Strategies to Recruit, Place, and Retain Qualified Staff	Activities are funded to recruit, place, and/or retain highly qualified teachers.

- In their focus group session, school leaders stated the school began implementation of a new teacher effectiveness rubric in early February 2011. Information gathered from observations is entered into a database/tracker. The tracker allows the principal and assistant principals to input and analyze qualitative data on observations. Staff say they welcome the use of the tracker.
- The teacher effectiveness rubric is based loosely on the Danielson Model and was developed by the New York City Department of Education (NYCDoE), the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) and the teacher effectiveness committee. The fourth domain - Professional Responsibilities – was still under negotiation with the teachers' union at the time of the site visit.
- According to school leaders and the School Improvement Liaison, the eleven NYCDoE transformation schools of the 2010-11 school year were piloting the teacher effectiveness rubric at the time of the site visit.
- School leaders stated every teacher in the building has been observed at least once. The first round of observations concentrated on the third domain (instructional delivery), and the second round will concentrate on the first domain (analyzing /planning). Domain 3 (instruction) focuses on questioning, pacing of lessons, and checking for understanding;

- Teachers were only being rated on pedagogy during the 2010-11 school year. The school plans to use student growth and student performance in teacher evaluations starting in September 2011. There will be pre and post conferences, with both verbal and written feedback. Running records will also be used.
- Three Master Teachers and one Turnaround Teacher were hired to provide mentoring services and to affect instructional practices at the school. An assistant principal was hired in February 2011 to attend to attendance and behavior issues.
- All administrators have been trained in the formal and informal evaluation of teacher effectiveness.
- The Master Teachers work with identified staff, using the teacher effectiveness rubric for common instructional language. Support and feedback are based on classroom observations using the rubric.
- The Master Teacher for Special Education gives feedback on classes, lesson plans, and collaborates with the principal on observations. Special education teachers are concerned about the new evaluation system since the school has a high proportion of SWD (30%). The Master Teacher for Special Education stated "We emphasize observations are intended as 'value added'."
- The administration hopes to add a Math Master Teacher for the high school level and high school Master Teachers in science and social studies. These additions will provide support in driving the core curriculum.

PLANNING	
Implementation of Timeline	The district/school is on track to complete activities in accordance with the approved timeline for implementation, or to submit an approvable School Improvement Grant (SIG) application. Identify elements that are off-track.
Performance Targets	The district/school is implementing activities which will help them meet the school's performance targets. (Performance targets are tied to the school's achieving "In Good Standing" by the end of the 3 year grant period. Refer to the school's Performance Plan Template, as available.)
Implementation of JIT Recommendations	The district and school are implementing the plan based on the JIT recommendations. The recommendations of the JIT are addressed as delineated in the SIG application or Restructuring Plan, as applicable.

- Last year, the school earned an "F" on its progress report, one of only five in the city; this has had an impact on enrollment, according to the principal.
- 20-25-five percent of eighth graders continue here in the ninth grade; there are four feeder schools.
- The principal indicated that the report resulting from the January 6, 2011, site visit was helpful to the school in directing its reform efforts.
- The administration views this summer as a big opportunity for planning. Next year they:
 - o will create an attendance teacher position 0.2
 - want to add science and history Master Teachers
 – only 2 sciences, biology and chemistry, are currently taught in the high school. Master Teachers inspire other teachers but they are spread thin with other responsibilities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Quality, On-going, Implementing job-embedded professional development, as defined by the

Job-embedded Professional Development	USED, and as approved by NYSED.
Supportive of Instructional Needs	All professional development is researched based and supportive of the instructional needs of the school.
Monitoring and Analysis	Professional development is monitored and analyzed to ensure staff participation and classroom implementation.

- According to the administration, teachers have had two professional development sessions on the new evaluation system. The UFT provided professional development on it. As well as administration, master and turnaround teachers
- Teachers reported they have analyzed the domains with the Master Teacher in after-school workshops. Some professional development time is set aside for self-reflection. The schedule for the spring allowed time for this reflection.
- Administrators described the rubric as a "terrific vehicle for changing instruction to be more differentiated" and Domain 3 focuses on the "art of questioning." Teachers are now looking at each class through this lens, including both special education and the content areas.
- Master Teachers collaborate with the principal on observations and give feedback to teachers on classes they observe. Other professional development the Master Teachers said they provide includes:
 - o lesson planning,
 - o differentiated instruction, and
 - managing IEPs (using Special Education Student Information System (SESIS) software),
- Teachers described differentiation of instruction workshops as well thought out. They have submitted curriculum and unit mapping.
- Additional sessions this spring include SESIS training, data collection and use, Snap Grades (an on line grading system), literacy core standards, CTT partnership models, and smart board use.
- The professional development topic of smart boards is supported by a technology grant from Teaching Matters and will focus on how to infuse technology into everyday classes.
- Teachers reported some professional development activities are teacher-led, either from personal expertise or from attendance at outside professional development events.
- The Master Teacher for Special Education provided professional development for all general education teachers.
- The teachers maintain an inquiry page for each team on ARIS; they meet from 8:10 to 8:35 on Wednesdays for grade team meetings and on Mondays and Tuesdays for planning time.

DATA ANALYSIS	
Data to Inform Instructional Programming	Data is used to identify and implement research-based instructional programs that are aligned with state standards
Data for Instructional Decisions for Student Achievement	A system is being implemented which allows for the continuous use of data to make instructional decisions for students.
Findings:	·

- During the focus group session, school leaders stated mock ELA and math exams were given to students in grade six through twelve. Item analyses were performed at each grade level to identify trends and adjust instruction.
- According to the leadership team, data inquiry teams are in place for each grade level. Examples of planning topics include, but are not limited to, mid-term testing results, attendance, behavioral incidents by interior school location, instruction for students with disabilities, and teaching vocabulary.
- School leaders stated common planning time on Mondays and Tuesdays is used for data collection and analysis. The Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) is used to collect and consider student data.
- A professional development day has been scheduled for May 4, 2011, to address data collection and the use of data to inform instructional practices.
- In the past, according to the administration, teachers were not aware of graduation requirements for students. Teachers and counselorts are now well informed.
- Administrators reported data is used to track student achievement, mid-terms, attendance, PBATS assessment completion for round tables, and DYO assessments.
- Approximately 70 graduating seniors who previously did not receive good counseling regarding requirements received an action plan including after school and Saturday classes to help them to get on track.
- The principal reported a 2006 cohort graduation rate of 60% and predicts 60-65% for the 2007 cohort.
- At the time of the visit, the school had just obtained 70 licenses for PLATO Learning, an online curriculum and assessment resource.
- The Assistant Principal for Operations and Guidance reviews documents that reflect progress, systems, and planning ahead. The relationship between data use and teacher evaluation has made some teachers nervous, especially special education teachers.
- Benchmark assessments at the middle school level are supported by mock state exams and item analysis. This is carried out by Kaplan at periodic times during the year, according to the administration. Next year, PSATs will be added, which provide greater opportunities for item analysis.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING	
Increased Learning Time	The school has implemented a longer school day, week, or school year to significantly increase the total number of school hours to provide additional time for instruction in core academic subjects, or in enrichment subject areas, or added time for teacher collaboration.
Mapped and Paced Curriculum	The written district/school level curriculum is aligned to NYS standards, performance indicators, the core competencies and is being implemented. Pacing guides are developed, used and monitored.
Instructional Programming is Linked to Needs Assessment	Curricular decisions have been made to meet the needs of all students.
Effective Teaching	There is evidence of rigor, relevance, pacing, and alignment of curriculum to State Standards, and student engagement from Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT).

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

ELL/SWD The necessary instructional programs and highly qualified states to support the needs of English Language Learners (ELL) and with disabilities (SWD).	•
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- The Atlas program takes courses and creates units and curriculum maps for the year. It includes a drop down of the core standards and NYS standards and content skills. Formative and summative assessments must link to the standards. It provides resources and suggestions for differentiated instruction.
- Individual teachers develop their own objectives, plans and units. They report they are building honors courses. The administration wants to push for more advanced classes. There are also increased opportunities for development of cross curricular units and lessons.
- Classes continue to be uneven in instruction, according to the administration. This was confirmed by site visitors' observations.
- Certain classroom visits showed differentiation of instruction (a variety of activities related to a skill), lessons related to students' experiences (comparing life in an Indian tribe three hundred years ago with current lives), and wellplanned lessons (seating changes taking place prior to instruction, allowances made for students who complete work before others do, resources in several media for students' choice).
- The school continues as a Portfolio School, administering only the ELA Regents exam and the Integrated Algebra Regents exam, although the principal talks about creating a "PBAT and Regents Culture." P-BAT roundtables take the place of Regents exams and they represent a higher standard than the Regents, according to the administration.
- Displays were observed in the principal's office of P-BAT (portfolio-based instructional assessments, along with materials on multiple intelligences.
- Benchmark assessments and item analyses are common, according to the teachers. They do this with the help of Kaplan. In the high school they conduct mock Regents exams and do item analysis for the purpose of re-directing instruction. A similar analysis with the PSAT will be conducted next year.
- Regular interval tests by unit and by time period are given, according to the administration.
- The computer lab was observed to be up and running; demonstrations of PLATO and ATLAS were conducted for the visitors by several teachers. Students have a positive attitude toward the lab, according to the teachers.
- The school has 700 site licenses for Rosetta Stone, a language learning program that parents can use together with their children.
- The Turnaround Teacher conducts lesson studies at the middle school level. There is an interdisciplinary team with a seventh grade focus. Eleven students out of twenty have IEPs. The Turnaround Teacher gave a learning styles test, the results of which are on an excel spreadsheet. The team plans, teaches and debriefs about how students are affected.
- The Master Teacher for Special Education regards the she school's special education program as *avant garde* due to the collaborative co-teaching (CCT) model.
- The school uses the Integrated Co-Teaching model with two teachers in the classroom and a maximum ratio of 60:40 special education to general education students, or no more than twelve special education students.
- According to the Master Teacher for Special Education, fourteen low performing students with high levels of behavior problems who are classified as general education students benefit from this special education co-teacher model.

- The Master Teacher for Special Education hosted a special education fair so that staff could become familiar with programs the school can access for these students. There were many vendors in attendance, also community colleges and military representatives. Other schools were invited, including Grady High School and International High School. Parents and district representatives also attended.
- The Master Teacher for Special Education indicated the school is now fully in compliance and is offering more opportunities for students.
- The teachers reported that the administration is very supportive of every initiative suggested by the Master Teacher for Special Education. Creative allocation of resources has helped to support special education and other struggling students.
- The school is offering RCTs to special education students so they may attain a diploma.

STUDENT SUPPORT	
Additional Support	Students are receiving extra academic and developmental support based on student need (AIS, character development, PBIS).
Counseling	Student support services are in place to provide students in need with additional social support (education/career counseling, social work, drug/alcohol/violence counseling, school psychologist, health/mental health professional)
Enrichment Opportunities	Students have opportunities to participate in academic and social enrichment activities during and after the school day and during the summer.

- The administration emphasized a sense of the importance of the "chain" which links the two schools that was not present at the prior visit.
- The principal sees some areas of growth potential and sources of pride:
 - He meets monthly with student government to plan social events, dances, and cultural events, such as a multicultural carnival.
 - o the increased use of data, especially for graduating seniors
 - Teachers report that students who are under-credited participate in PLATO, a program that provides the same content they are studying in class, but on line. It tracks students, is interactive and creates reports. It records how much time is devoted to a given task and when it is accomplished.
 - Over 40 students are enrolled in Saturday classes from 9 to 1, and over spring break 25 students attended. Some students are close to completion.
 - The Assistant Principal for Organization and Guidance supervises guidance services.
 - There is an increase in college awareness on the part of students, with twenty-five field trips to colleges taking place, according to the principal. They are instituting in-house College Advisors.
 - Students are aware of their personal academic goals and work toward success independently, teachers reported. Teachers differentiate for students and this was observed in classroom visits.
 - Teachers differentiate for credit recovery in the afternoon and Saturday sessions, which they describe as "crunch time."
 - There is a special services support person within the network, who has been very helpful, according to the teachers interviewed.
 - The Transformation Coordinator is arranging internships, paid and unpaid, for students with the District Attorney's Office.

TRANSFORMATIONAL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Effective Leadership	The school leader has the experience and skills needed to successfully implement a turnaround model and to act as a change agent for the school.
Leadership Development	School leaders receive appropriate and timely professional development. Mentoring or coaching programs are in place and effective.
School Improvement Manager/External Providers	The school is being guided and informed by its partnership with its School Improvement Manager or external provider.
Building Level Leadership Team	The school is utilizing its Building Leadership Team to implement the intervention model.

Findings:

- "We are not the school that we were" the principal stated.
- One teacher reported "we had three principals in nine months; the faculty kept the school together... The current principal is a "thrilling educational leader;" he articulates a higher level of craft, and he wants us to recognize "exemplary teaching."
- The school leaders described implementation of a "culture change" at the school, where learning is becoming "cool." The principal has instituted an honor roll assembly, a principal's list and a dean's list, with tangible rewards such as lpod touches and NETS tickets.
- Teachers indicated that the report from the January site visit gave the school a target for change.
- Teachers stated they have both shared leadership and accountability.
- The leadership team includes department leaders as well as administrators, according to the teachers. The team created a student activities committee which is currently planning a carnival with the students. The team listens, asks for ideas, and has ready access to the administration.

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
Environment is Conducive to Learning	The school is safe, orderly and academically-oriented. Supervision is sufficient, respectful and consistent.
Shared Vision	School staff understands the focus/ vision of the school's improvement efforts and supports them in a consistent and effective manner.
Collaboration	Administrators, teachers and staff communicate openly, positively and effectively. Professional learning communities exist and affect improvement efforts.
Parent Involvement	Strategies are being implemented to increase the involvement and contributions of parents.
External/Community- Based Partners	Strategies are being implemented to increase the involvement and contributions of community partners.

- The school climate has changed since the first visit, according to teachers and administrators, and this was confirmed by observations on the part of the visitors.
- With regard to the school climate, teachers reported the change has been "like a marathon," shifting the culture and re-identifying the school community.
- A teacher interviewed said, "The operation is stronger now."
- Administration indicated there is cohesion among staff members, and the administrators are working in unison.
- Teachers indicated they are receptive to new ideas; they continue to support the principal in the school improvement efforts.
- Another teacher stated "There remains a lingering perception that this is a bad school and is about to close. Some people give in to the negativity."

- Students have been given a voice, according to the teachers interviewed. They meet regularly with the principal as a student government and have more access to the administration.
- The principal pointed to last year's report citing foul language in the hallways. He was able to get from DoE an interim-acting Assistant Principal for Security as of February 1, 2011. With this appointment, "at long last a need that stalemated is now a priority."
- The Master Teachers credited the Assistant Principal for Security's use of incident data with changing a persistent behavior pattern in a part of the building. He changed locker assignments based on behavior pattern data; e.g., disruptive incidents near a cluster of lockers off the main lobby near the gym. He established adult coverage of all school areas during transitions. He also tracks attendance and lateness, keeping an attendance log and identifying chronically late students. Parents are contacted. His priorities are that students get to class on time, displaying appropriate behavior and the revision of the student and teacher handbooks.
- Attendance is about 86%, the goal is 95% according to the principal.
- Detention is determined by individual teachers who stated they have taken responsibility for discipline in their classrooms; some teachers hold after school detention for lateness.
- Increased expectations for students are in place as well as clearer consequences for personal accountability.
- Teachers have been seeking support from the administration, and they described themselves as "incredibly eager to collaborate." They are also building community with students through club sponsorships, as well.
- Comments from one teacher:
 - there is more compliance by leadership with the contract; last year two teachers were denied tenure without any observation; two remained;
 - the capable, caring faculty work hard before and after school and via email and telephone;
 - o there is more top down, less "safe space" with the administration;
 - \circ $\;$ the principal needs to delegate administrative tasks across the faculty;
 - in other schools the kids had high energy and the challenge was to channel it; here there is more passivity, less learning desire;
 - school is not a priority for these students, as there are too many rules; they are inhibited from speaking in class.
- Teachers described the school climate as quiet.
- The Faculty Handbook, on page 4, mentions exemplary student work is required to be on display. During this visit, the SED site visit team did observe visual projects on display in classrooms and hallways, standards, rubrics, attendance, and honor roll postings throughout the building. Bulletin boards were more reflective, and rubrics allowed showcasing of student learning. More teachers are taking risks with differentiated instruction and putting the results on display.
- The principal indicated there is a strict zero tolerance policy with regard to students wearing coats, hats, do-rags, and the use of cell phones. During this second visit, the SED site visit team observed a few instances in which students with these items were reprimanded and responsive when asked to obey the school code of conduct.
- During this visit, it was observed that students were not openly using profanity in classrooms and hallways.
- The principal indicated a random scanning was conducted by SSA's to let students know the climate was being readjusted. This revealed there are no major security issues for the school.

- A review of documents related to discipline policy and practice at the school, when compared to information drawn from interviews, shows fewer discrepancies in guidance as well as in practice.
- The school continues to work to bridge the school and the community through working with students and opening up the school to the community at large.
- The principal indicated he has developed a website to explain the school's transformation. He described it as a means for the "coming together of Global Studies," and for presenting "urgent news" to the community. The school continues to plan for their spring celebration called Brooklyn Harvest to maintain its strong ties with the community and institute a public relations makeover. Note: Teachers now have access to the website the principal created, and the SED site visit team was able to access it.
- Teachers reported there is a small, active group of parents. The parent coordinator has carried out plans for celebrations, workshops and a monthly book club. Parents expressed a desire to expand parent involvement and clubs for students and would like to see some of the features of the last website program (i.e., EASE) incorporated into the new parent data system, so parents have access to student grades and attendance.
- Five parents interviewed spoke of their involvements in developing the Comprehensive Education Plan.
- The parents appreciate the ability to communicate with teachers via email or telephone even on weekends. The teachers indicated they communicate with parents through email. About 50% of parents (200) actively use the on line system, and about 10 parents without home computers use computers in the school.
- The interviewed parents want to focus next year on:
 - o getting the school / classrooms painted
 - o upgrading the technology
 - o restoring music and art programs
 - creating more clubs, explaining that clubs used to be teacher driven but by changing the schedule it created a burden for teachers:
 - Clubs are motivating because you have to keep your GPA up;
 - Playing chess with your teacher is different from a chess club sponsored by a CBO.
 - Clubs look good on your transcript.
 - cheerleading is big (the Parent coordinator is the sponsor)
- The Parent Coordinator is highly regarded. A parent recently called her about her daughter's distress and the Coordinator took time to speak to the child. The Parent Coordinator reported "I only see about thirty parents come in the building but, it's 2011, parents are working two jobs; they can't come in."
- Parents reported that they have a resource room, conduct workshops, have a newsletter and are involved in school based planning.
- The school's external turnaround partners' participants represented:
 - Citizen Schools, providing a mandated extended learning time program for middle school;
 - The Advancement Via Individual Determination program, (AVID) providing college bound, moderately achieving students with tutors and college campus visits;
 - The Children First Network, a New York City initiative which provides professional back office services and instructional support for schools;
 - And Kaplan, which will consult and provide resources around curriculum development, job-embedded professional development for teachers, and other activities to build capacity.
- The principal reviewed the programs:

- Kaplan provides coaches in test preparation and content teaching.
 Kaplan's coaches have had great success as they work with teachers in subject content areas and test preparation. They made AYP in ELA for the high school for all students and for African American students.
- Citizen Schools—only 60% attended a \$150,000 program so he terminated the contract. This partner was deemed not a good fit for the school so the contract was not renewed.
- School is now interviewing Good Shepherd which wants \$670K and KAMDA to work with at-risk students to address attendance (now 85%)
- AVID is on hold. It arrived too soon and the school was not ready. AVID implementation was delayed until Year 2. On-going on-site professional development will be provided this summer.
- They will switch to Kingsboro next year for two college courses statistics (math) and advanced writing. This is prep for a CUNY level remedial cycle.
 - Brianza Academy Advantage provides workshops for Assistant Principals; for teachers, class management and data inquiry; for parents, finance, health and fitness, and safety and security will be added. Data inquiry occurs twice each week for 25 minutes where students meet across grade levels and departments throughout the middle school and high school. The focus is on participation in class, homework, special education student participation, and academic vocabulary.
 - The master teachers meet with the partners to plan.
- During the Partner Interview, it became clear the partners will continue to meet to define their roles and work, as they continue to implement their respective programs within the school.

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES	
Use of 1003(g) or 1003(a) grant funding	The LEA is using School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding to support the implementation of or planning for school intervention models.
Use of Other Funding Sources besides 1003 (g)	In addition to SIG 1003(g) and/or 1003(a) funds, the LEA is using a number of other resources to implement the school intervention models or the Restructuring Plan, as applicable.

- According to school leaders and the network representative, SIG funding was not made available to the school until February, 2011. As a result, the school used local tax levy funds to initiate much of the work delineated in its original improvement plan. An amended draft budget was presented to the site visit team, along with a corresponding budget narrative. School leaders stated they were not aware of the current approval status of the amended budget.
- During their focus group session, school leaders stated they wrote a grant to Community School Board 6 for capital improvement. The grant included funding for air conditioning to promote summer learning opportunities, an elevator, and resurfacing of the school yard.
- The school is due to receive funding through NYCDoE for Project Connect. The funding is to be used to provide wireless internet access to the entire school.

DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT	
District Support Provides Operational Flexibility to the	The LEA provides or is planning to provide the school operational flexibility (such as matters regarding staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting).

School	
District has a systemic plan for intervention and improvement	The LEA has incorporated all JIT recommendations and requirements of the SIG Application into the improvement plan for the school.
District has a plan to identify, recruit, place, and retain effective leadership	In accordance with SIG requirements, the LEA has a plan for hiring and retaining leadership.

- The school is a member of a consortium permitted by the NYSED to exempt students from taking Regents exams in lieu of Portfolio-Based Assessment (P-BAT) except the ELA Regents Exam and the Intermediate Algebra exam..
- The Department of Education network representative is from the Children First Network and provides day to day support service delivery. The principal spoke highly of his team. The school improvement liaison has been charged with tracking the implementation of the plan since February 1, 2011.

Summary:

The State Education Department four member site visit team conducted a fullday site visit at Brooklyn School for Global Studies High School on April 28, 2011. Although the visit was brief, the team was able to acquire information about the school's efforts to implement their reform model for improving student learning. The principal reported that the report resulting from the January 6, 2011 site visit was helpful in that it was used as a blueprint for changes made in the interim.

The site visit team met with various stakeholders and reviewed initiatives that appear to provide the school with the opportunity to make progress toward improved student achievement. The school leadership team is visible and supportive, and the network is actively involved in the school improvement efforts. Both the administrative and teacher focus groups were able to articulate the changes which have taken place at the school and plan to continue the transformation, with rationale, data and detail. Numerous external partners are working collaboratively with the school, and the teaching staff is proactive and student-centered.

Staff, students, parents and educational partners all spoke positively of the school's efforts to improve student achievement. District and school representatives were candid with their comments and highly cooperative throughout the PLA monitoring process. The school and the district appear to be working together to coordinate their efforts and implement as much of their Transformation Model as possible.

The next site visit to Brooklyn School for Global Studies High School will be during the fall of 2011.