



Office of Innovative School Models
 Persistently Lowest Achieving (PLA) Schools
 School Improvement grant (SIG)
 Monitoring Report

School:	Brooklyn School for Global Studies – Transformation Model	School District:	New York City Department of Education – Community School District # 15
Date of Site-Visit:	Thursday, January 6, 2011	Members of Site-Visit Team:	Susan Gibbons, Lisa Long, Jamal Young

STAFFING	
Collective Bargaining	<i>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.</i>
Teacher Evaluations linked to Student Performance	<i>Teacher evaluations linked to student performance have been put into place. The system and data used must be consistent with State APPR system.</i>
Identify and Reward staff or Remediate/Remove Staff	<i>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).</i>
Implementation of Strategies to Recruit, Place, and Retain Qualified Staff	<i>Activities are funded to recruit, place, and/or retain highly qualified teachers. Name and describe the activities.</i>

Findings:

- Teachers reported the schedule had to be changed to allow more classes, as opposed to large blocks of time, in order to meet contractual needs.
- The principal indicated he conducted many classroom observations and completed the written feedback over the holiday break so teachers would have the evaluation information for accountability purposes.
- The school has not begun to identify staff for reward or remediation/removal. The plan called for UFT members to be eligible for monetary rewards under certain circumstances.
- No specific activities were identified by the school for the purpose of recruiting and/or retaining highly qualified teachers. An ELA teacher suddenly left the school and had not been replaced. Students reported there are fewer teachers now than last year, and class sizes are larger.
- The school leaders indicated there is a lack of alignment between student academic needs and the number and specialties of the teachers employed. Teachers cannot be cut if they are no longer needed, nor can new ones be added to teach different subjects.

PLANNING

Implementation of Timeline	<i>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.</i>
Performance Targets	<i>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.)</i>
Implementation of Joint Intervention Team Recommendations	<i>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.</i>

Findings:

- The school did not receive a Joint Intervention Team review. However, the school went through a needs assessment process.
- The school and the district are only partially implementing the SIG plan. The School Implementation Manager (SIM) has not yet been hired, although the school leader indicated interviews were taking place. Three master teachers have been hired for special education, math and ELA. The principal indicated they need a teacher for science, which is a weak area, but this position is not in the plan. According to the administration, one turnaround teacher has been hired for the junior high, but one is still needed for the high school. The plan calls for three master teachers and one turnaround teacher; however, the first FS-10 submitted for this school called for three master teachers and three turnaround teachers.
- The administration reported the transformation action plan is aligned to the performance goals for the principal.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
Quality, On-going, Job-embedded Professional Development	<i>Implementing job-embedded professional development, as defined by the USED, and as approved by NYSED.</i>
Supportive of Instructional Needs	<i>All professional development is researched based and supportive of the instructional needs of the school.</i>
Monitoring and Analysis	<i>Professional development is monitored and analyzed to ensure staff participation and classroom implementation.</i>

Findings:

- At the time of the visit the principal was in his fourth month at the school. He shadowed a mentor for five days and received professional development related to safety and security, leadership, organization, etc.
- District principals had one day of training regarding the new teacher evaluation system.
- Master teachers reported they were sent for training regarding teacher evaluations.
- The school leaders indicated teachers were trained in the new rubric, "to exceed expectations" through bi-monthly department meetings.
- Professional development is offered only twice a month, per contract.
- Grade level teachers meet three times each week, as well as meeting across grades, as indicated by the administration and the teachers.
- The school has contracted with Kaplan regarding the implementation of curriculum. The consultant will conduct a needs assessment and provide coaches for in-class professional development with the hope of building capacity

through a side by side teaching model. The consultant indicated there will be 6 – 12 teachers with content expertise available to the school. Instructional coaching should begin in classrooms by February 1, 2011.

- Lesson studies were referenced by teachers and administrators as a viable professional development tool. The turnaround teacher for special education stated she was making use of lesson studies for improvement of instruction at the middle school level.

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

Findings:

- The principal conducted general discussions about the school's goals as they pertain to credits accumulation, ELA/math Regents scholarship, attendance rates, and graduation rates.
- Teachers reported an item analysis is conducted on state assessments, using NYSTAR, with pre- and post-analyses. Then a re-teach or enrichment cycle occurs.
- The principal indicated there is a significant increase in the use of data to ensure credit accumulation. The school is using interim assessments from Acuity to identify skills that students are lacking, and they will create Design Your Own (DYO) assessments to measure growth in these skills.
- Students noted that teachers use data to make instructional decisions and provide support to learners with different levels of proficiency.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING	
Increased Learning Time	<i>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.</i>
Mapped and Paced Curriculum	<i>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.</i>
Instructional Programming is Linked to Needs Assessment	<i>Curricular decisions have been made to meet the needs of all students.</i>
Effective Teaching	<i>There is evidence of rigor, relevance, pacing, alignment of curriculum to State Standards, and student engagement from Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT).</i>
ELL/SWD	<i>The necessary instructional programs and highly qualified staff are in place to support the needs of English Language Learners (ELL) and students with disabilities (SWD).</i>

Findings:

- The school has increased learning time with an added period each day from 3 to 5 p.m., staggered by subject area, according to the school leaders. However, the

teachers reported the extended day is available only for seniors who are “dramatically under-credited.”

- Students reported class periods have been shortened from a 78 minute block to 45 minutes. Some classes are split into two segments, but the lessons are sometimes not an extension of the first session, but a repeat of it, which students said makes them “tune out.”
- The school leadership described the prior academic setting as “a non-traditional format,” and as a “misuse of the waiver.” The waiver provided the school with portfolio assessment status, under which students were exempt from taking Regents exams, other than ELA, and allowed them to use portfolios for evaluation of their knowledge and skills. The principal spoke of building “a Regents culture.” Students lacked credits for graduation, and this has become a priority for the new leadership. Teachers confirmed the school leadership’s priority of credit accumulation and that more classes were now being offered, such as physical education and integrated algebra. Regular ninth grade teacher meetings are conducted on raising student academic achievement as reported by the school leaders.
- The principal wants to bring in College Now, a program from Kingsborough College which would offer college credit to students while they are in high school.
- According to the principal, the school offers integrated algebra coaching through a partnership with Kaplan at a reported rate of \$1,000 per day.
- Administrators indicated new curriculum maps and pacing charts will be created to in response to a curriculum audit conducted in August 2010. Teachers indicated only ELA curriculum mapping had begun. Instructional quality was observed to vary from class to class, and students confirmed this. Parents also indicated confusion regarding staffing changes and concerns about the teachers’ lack of experience.
- Students indicated that instruction varied across classes and across grades. They noted that, while the school no longer had two teachers in each classroom, experienced teachers continued to have success with differentiation for large classes.
- Students lamented the loss of several “sources of pride.” The losses include “out lunch,” lunch periods outside of the building; 1:30 dismissal on Wednesday and Friday; elimination of band, music, and cheerleading; and the overall reduction in teachers.
- Students with disabilities (SWD) are placed in small groups of 5 – 7 for ELA instruction. Several Grade 9 and 10 ELA classes were observed. Aims and objectives were evident. The teacher provided a framework for the lesson and guided students in a discussion with open-ended questioning on the topic before asking them to have a discussion with each other. Students received one-on-one feedback and attention as needed.
- The master teacher for special education is also the special education coordinator. She sees her role as keeping up with compliance issues, and indicated she needs access to professional development to support classroom teachers. There are 118 students with disabilities in the middle school and the high school, and 25 English language learners. The ELL teacher pushes into the classroom and works with students after school.
- According to a staff person, one Grade 12 ELA teacher has abruptly left the school. The class does not have a full-time, permanent substitute in the interim. It was indicated there were no lesson plans for the class and students were just being helped to edit papers assigned by other teachers.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Additional Support	<i>Students are receiving extra academic and developmental support based on student need (AIS, character development, PBIS).</i>
Counseling	<i>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)</i>
Enrichment Opportunities	<i>Students have opportunities to participate in academic and social enrichment activities during and after the school day and during the summer.</i>

Findings:

- The principal and the teachers reported attendance is a significant problem at the school, contributing to the low graduation rate. The current attendance rate is about eighty percent. An attendance officer has been hired and home visits have begun. Lateness is a compounding factor, and late logs are kept.
- Parents indicated students need additional tutoring support and access to computers. Students confirmed the latter need.
- The ELA master teacher reported she teaches two classes for at risk failing Regents students, where in-depth instruction takes place. The department chairs for ELA at the middle and high schools have created an action plan to address these students' needs.
- The school has a partner that conducts an after-school program each day from 3 pm – 6 pm. The program provides targeted homework help, high school and college readiness, family outreach, apprenticeships, etc.
- The school has partnered with Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), which provides support in test-taking skills, organization skills, and study skills focused on students at Level 2 on state assessments. They will also lead a local college tour of Brooklyn College, Columbia and Fordham Universities for Grade 9 students.
- Students reported the only after school activities still available to them are student government or basketball for the high school. They would like cheerleading, band, music, drama and more physical education. There was no evidence of opportunities for students to participate in additional academic and social enrichment activities. Students reported in the past there was a Big Brothers program and Boy Scouts, but now there is no time. Students said they were planning their own prom and senior trip, but there was no faculty support for these activities.
- Students noted significant changes in the school since the inception of the transformation plan. Changes include fewer teachers and the elimination of several programs (advisories, arts, music, after school, etc.). A significant area of concern for students was the increase in class size.

TRANSFORMATIONAL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	
Effective Leadership	<i>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.</i>
Leadership Development	<i>School leaders receive appropriate and timely professional development. Mentoring or coaching programs are in place and effective.</i>
School Improvement Manager/External Providers	<i>The school is being guided and informed by its partnership with its School Improvement Manager or external provider.</i>
Building Level Leadership Team	<i>The school is utilizing its Building Leadership Team to implement the turnaround model.</i>

Findings:

- The principal reported his predecessor was hired to mentor him, but this arrangement was not beneficial and was terminated.
- The principal has established five goals for the school, which mirror the transformation goals.
- The principal reported that he has a Leadership Academy mentor who frequently visits the school. According to the principal, the mentor has helped facilitate the staff's growth as a team.
- The School Improvement Manager has not yet been hired.

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

Findings:

- The principal indicated the school is very safe, a “gentle place,” and has a zero tolerance policy. Teachers described the school climate as quiet.
- Students reported being fearful of asking questions in class, for fear of being perceived as creating a disruption.
- The faculty handbook, on page 4, mentions exemplary student work is required to be on display; however, the SED site visit team did not observe this in the classrooms or hallways.
- 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. This is confirmed on page 9 of the faculty handbook. However, the SED site visit team observed a number of instances in which students with these items were not asked to remove them. On page 4 of the faculty handbook, it clearly states that “No food or drinks are permitted in the classrooms,” and the general information document also forbids food in the building. However, students and adults were observed with food and drinks in the classrooms and in the hallways.
- Despite the faculty handbook stating expectations of students include “Use of respectful language (e.g. no profanity or put-downs),” students were openly using profanity in classrooms and hallways and did not desist even when addressed by adults.
- A review of documents related to discipline policy and practice at the school, when compared to information drawn from interviews, shows discrepancies in guidance as well as in practice.
- Although the school leader indicated detention has been abolished, a detention policy is mentioned in the general information document.
- The administrators indicated the community in which the school is located complained about student behavior throughout the neighborhood. The school has been working to bridge the school and the community through working with students and opening up the school to the community at large.
- School safety officers were observed in the hallways but their presence did not seem to deter unacceptable student behavior.

- Teachers indicated they are receptive to new ideas; they support the principal in the school improvement efforts.
- 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 immediate local community, Cobble Hill, is a wealthier district than the district the students come from, 70% of Brooklyn School for Global Studies students come from families living below the poverty level. The school is planning a spring celebration called Brooklyn Harvest to maintain its strong ties with the community and institute a public relations makeover. Note: Teachers have not yet been given access to the website the principal created, and the SED site visit team was unable to access it.
- Teachers reported there is a small, active group of parents. The parent coordinator has carried out plans for a Thanksgiving celebration and a monthly book club.
- The teachers indicated they communicate with parents through email.
- The school's external turnaround partners were brought together for the first time during the site visit. It was necessary to introduce them to each other and present their respective roles with the school. For one partner origination, it was the initial visit to the school. 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.
- During the Partner Interview, it became clear the partners had never met each other, were unclear what each others' roles were, and were in varying stages of developing a partnership with the school.

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES	
Use of 1003(g) or 1003(a) grant funding	<i>The LEA is using School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding to support the implementation of or planning for school intervention models.</i>
Use of Other Funding Sources besides 1003 (g)	<i>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.</i>

Findings:

- The LEA's Director of Turnaround and Transformational Schools reported any grant funds not used will be reallocated.
- Funds for portions of FTEs dedicated to grant implementation were rescinded by the district.

DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT	
District Support Provides Operational Flexibility to the School	<i>The LEA provides or is planning to provide the school operational flexibility (such as regarding staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting).</i>
District has a systemic plan for intervention	<i>The LEA has incorporated all Joint Intervention Team recommendations and requirements of the SIG Application into the improvement plan for the</i>

and improvement	<i>school.</i>
District has a plan to identify, recruit, place, and retain effective leadership	<i>In accordance with SIG requirements, the LEA has a plan for hiring and retaining leadership.</i>

Findings:

- The school leaders indicated the Director for Turnaround and Transformation Schools has been very helpful to the school, but provided no details.
- There was no evidence the LEA has implemented all of the requirements of the SIG application and the improvement plan for this school.

Summary:

The State Education Department four member site visit team conducted a full-day visit to Brooklyn School for Global Studies on January 6, 2011. Although the visit was brief, the team was able to ascertain information about the schools efforts to begin the implementation of their reform model for improving student learning.

The image presented is one of a school emerging from a very loosely constructed model to one more traditional and standards driven. The school climate appears to be one of inconsistencies, especially in clarification and implementation of school rules, policies related to student behavior, and classroom management strategies.

The implementation of the improvement plan is sporadic at best, with positions left unfilled, and funds drawn back to the district level with no accountability for the left unfilled, and funds drawn back to the district level without explanation to the school. Timelines have been ignored.

During the next full day visit, the team will focus on findings outlined in this report and document reviews and interviews in the following areas: staffing; planning; professional development; data analysis; curriculum and teaching; student support; school leadership; school climate and community engagement; and district support and planning for development.