



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

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| School: | Cobble Hill School for American Studies – Transformation Model | School District: | New York city Department of Education – Community School District # 15 |
| Date of Site-Visit: | January 5, 2011 | Members of Site-Visit Team: | Erica Cervine, Major Capers, Kathryn Ahern, Jean Beaudet |

| STAFFING | |
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| 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. Name and describe the activities.</i> |

Findings:

- The administrative team reported the collective bargaining agreement is still under negotiations, conversations continue around the area of the teacher evaluation system. The union and New York City Department of Education (NYCDoE) have agreed that 2010-11 school year evaluations will be based only on use of a four-tiered rating system and will not include student growth. The elements of the rubric focus on four domains of the Charlotte Danielson Model which are:
 - Planning and Preparation,
 - The Classroom Environment,
 - Instruction, and
 - Professional Responsibilities.
- The administrative focus group indicated the NYCDoE worked to develop the rubric and scoring guides for the teacher evaluations.
- The administration attended a workshop at NYCDoE on December 1, 2010 that provided professional development on the teacher evaluations and rubric and the Danielson Model.
- The administrative focus group reported they received a calendar and final rubric from NYCDoE on December 22, 2010. The calendar displayed the time line for

implementation of the teacher evaluation system. The administrative focus group said this rubric was much clearer than the one presented on December 1, 2010.

- The school is creating performance tasked assessments that will be piloted in the spring. The administrative focus group expressed concern relating to the time line for implementation.
- Merit bonuses or remediation processes linked to the teacher evaluations were not yet in place.
- Many of the district level positions were not hired at the time of the visit. At the time of the visit the only positions that had been filled by NYCDoe were the Director of Turnaround and Transformation Schools and the Deputy Director of Turnaround and transformation. The following positions had not been filled:
 - School Improvement Manager
 - Director for Partnership Development and Capacity Building
 - Director for Pipeline Development
 - Associate Director for Pipeline Development
 - Associate for Business Operations
 - Analyst/administrative support
- At the school level, the three master teachers have been hired. One each in English, Math, and Social studies. The administration reported they were afforded minimal opportunity in the hiring process.

| PLANNING | |
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| 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 JIT 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 Implementation Manager had not been hired at the time of the site visit. As per the NYCDoe Turnaround Office staff members interviewed, the job description for this position is currently being revised to access a broader range of candidates.
- NYCDoe created a full-time position titled, "Transformation Mentor Principal" for the school's former principal, and hired a new principal for the school. The former principal mentors the new principal.
- The three master teachers have been hired. One each in English, Math, and Social studies. Cobble Hill School for American Studies has utilized these master teachers by establishing a lab site as a professional study group opportunity.
- The administration reported they have received about 10% of the 1003(g) monies at the time of the visit. This initial payment was loaned to the school by NYCDoe.
- Evidence regarding Performance Targets was not requested at this time. Currently, a Performance Plan Template is under development by the NYSED.
- The school did not receive a Joint Intervention Team review. According to the SIG application, NYCDoe central office staff, network and school staff conducted a comprehensive review of the school's education program.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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| 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:

- The administrative focus group reported the professional development plan was created in late September, 2010.
- A professional development piece offered by Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) related to classroom management and guided discipline was offered on Saturdays. Over 20 staff members attend this ongoing professional development.
- Professional development on fostering long term relationships with students by reacting in a proactive way is provided.
- Teachers have common planning times; they collaboratively plan for activities and professional development to be conducted during these time slots.
- The administrative and teacher focus groups reported Quality Teaching for English Language Learners (ELL) is provided to school staff by the NYCDoE. The school has 44 ELL's, 20 of which are considered "beginners". The administrative focus group stated "this program provides many good reading and writing strategies for ELL's".
- Professional development for collaborative team teaching has been offered and attended by teachers assigned to these classrooms.
- Australian United States Services in Education (AUSSIE) provides teachers with strategies on differentiating instructions. They assist in running department meetings devoted to specified professional development and identifying best practices.
- The administrative focus group reported the professional development for this year has been selected by identifying areas of concern along with their root cause.
- Teachers indicated professional development is evaluated through oversight by the administration as well as through conversations during common planning times.

| DATA ANALYSIS | |
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| 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:

- Cobble Hill School for American Studies is in the preliminary stages of data analysis. Evidence of the *Datacation* program was seen in the school.
- Cohort transcript information is analyzed and credit recovery options are provided to students based upon this analysis.
- According to teachers the following data analysis occurs on a regular basis:
 - The math department utilizes Acuity and Predictive assessments. Acuity is administered three times per year while Predictive is administered twice

per year. Results are discussed as a team and instruction is derived based upon those conversations.

- The English department indicated they use Acuity only and post results online. They target only popular missed questions for instructional purposes.
- The NYSESLAT scores are used to make ELL student groupings.
- School based inquiry groups are established throughout the school. Each inquiry group breaks students into mentoring groups based upon transcript reports.

| CURRICULUM AND TEACHING | |
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| 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:

- According to the administrative focus group, the school day has been slightly restructured. Common planning times for teachers and a 90 minute learning block in Grade 11 English have been incorporated into the schedule. There has been no change to the duration of the school day or length of the school year.
- According to the administrative focus group, a voluntary 37-minute, before-school tutoring program for students has been instituted. Students who are in danger of failing or who have fallen behind are invited by their classroom teachers to participate on an individual basis.
- Curriculum maps aligned to the NYS standards are being implemented as observed by the site visit team. Learning Point Associates completed a full curriculum audit of the school last spring. The report on the audit is pending.
- Master teachers are working on aligning these existing curriculum maps to align further with the Common Core Standards.
- Achieve 3000 has been implemented to help increase reading levels of struggling students.
- The SED site visit team observed inconsistent differentiation of instruction throughout the building, with limited evidence of rigor, relevance, pacing or alignment to curriculum standards. Some lessons seemed below the level of what might be expected in difficulty for the grade and course.
- Evidence of teaching and learning were not apparent in the majority of the classrooms visited. Students gathered in clusters in the classrooms and hallways engaging in off-task conversations and behavior. Teachers did not redirect inappropriate language and behavior.
- The administrative focus group reported 25% of the population (146 students) is comprised of students with disabilities (SWD) and supports are in place for students. Teachers informed the SED site visit team a team teaching approach is used for SWDs.

| STUDENT SUPPORT | |
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| 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 administrative focus group indicated eight social workers are on site everyday. These social workers give support to those students who are eligible by providing individual and group counseling, as well as conducting home visits when necessary.
- Teachers provide extra tutoring support to students during and after school. Advanced Placement classes are available to students who have earned an 85 or higher on the regent's exam. A credit accumulation program is in place to keep students on track.
- An attendance teacher is in place to deal with all persistent student attendance issues. Partnership for Children counsels students with attendance issues. They conducted a raffle to help improve student attendance at the school.
- The Leadership Program provides opportunities for after school enrichment such as the leadership council, fashion club, dance club, and spirit squad.

| TRANSFORMATIONAL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP | |
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| 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 administrative focus group indicated the former principal (transformation mentor) works very closely with the school principal.
- The transformation mentor and school principal work closely together to analyze data, conduct classroom walk throughs, and provide support in relation to the schools progress.
- A school improvement manager has not been hired by the district. The school is represented by staff from the newly-developing turnaround office.

| SCHOOL CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | |
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| 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</i> |

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| | <i>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:

- At the time of the visit, the SED site visit team observed an environment not conducive to learning. The school was not safe, orderly or academically oriented. Students were observed engaging in off task conversations and teachers did not redirect unproductive student behaviors. Students were observed roaming the hallways and stairwells consistently throughout the day.
- Teachers indicated the vision of the school's improvement efforts is to increase test scores and graduation rates.
- Teachers do not think they deserve to be a transformation school and emphasized their comfortableness with the former principal.
- Common planning times provide for open communication amongst staff. Teachers reported they feel the communication with the leadership is "excellent" and expectations are communicated clearly.
- The administrative focus group reported parent engagement is being done as part of the 21st Century Grant program. Currently, parent engagement is low and the administrative focus group reported it has been a struggle for the past few years.
- The school does have a parent coordinator on staff as well as a new PTO president who are both striving to increase parent involvement in the school.
- The school did complete an analysis of why parents come to the building. Results showed distance from the school as a major issue.
- The school is currently offering parent workshops in conjunction with PTO meetings. It was reported by the administration that attendance is getting better but it is not great. Incentive strategies are being offered to increase attendance at these workshops. A parent newsletter is distributed to parents on a regular basis.
- The *Datacation* program has been growing in use by parents/guardians to check on their child's homework and academic progress.
- External/community based partners are active and present throughout the school.
- The school has vendor/partner relationships with Partnerships for Children, the Leadership Program, AUSSIE, and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID). The school is looking to expand the relationship with AVID and the relationship with Strategic Leadership and Training Excellence (SLATE) is scheduled to begin in February.

| OTHER FUNDING SOURCES | |
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| 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:

- At the time of the visit, school leaders indicated they were using an integration of funds to implement the intervention model. At the time they had received a \$68,000 loan for 1003(G) monies from NYCDoE for salaries only.

| DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT | |
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| 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 and improvement | <i>The LEA has incorporated all JIT recommendations and requirements of the SIG Application into the improvement plan for the 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 administrative focus group indicated they feel they are afforded flexible means for implementation by NYCDoE.
- As previously stated, Cobble Hill School for American Studies did not undergo a Joint Intervention Team visit; therefore, they did not have JIT recommendations to incorporate into their SIG application.
- The district made the decision to hire Cobble Hill School for American Studies former principal as the transformation mentor principal, and to hire a new principal.

SUMMARY:

The State Education Department four member site visit team conducted a full-day visit to Cobble Hill School for American Studies on January 5, 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 school has begun adequate implementation of the transformation model. The school has established its vendor/partner relationships and has implemented programs to make progress in areas highlighted in the needs assessment of the SIG application. Areas of the model that are not being implemented are in relation to the services the district is to provide to the school, such as the School Improvement Manager not hired at the time of the visit.

Evidence of teaching and learning were not apparent in the majority of the classrooms visited. Students gathered in clusters in the classrooms and hallways engaging in off-task conversations and behavior. Teachers did not redirect inappropriate language and behavior.

During the next full day visit, the team will also focus on findings outlined in this report and will again conduct 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.