



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

Progress Review Report — 2011-2012

School:	Grover Cleveland High School	School District:	Community School District (CSD) 24
Date of Site Visit:	November 3, 2011	Team Members	Kalimah Geter and Dr. Kathryn Ahern

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Grade Configuration: 9 to12

Total Enrollment: 2,109

PLA identification: Graduation Rate

Identified subgroups: All Students

Intervention model:

Re-start model— The Educational Partnership Organization (EPO) is Southern Regional Education Board SREB. The current principal is in her first year as principal of the school and the effective date of her tenure was October 20, 2011.

The school's community-based organization (CBO), Partnership support organization (PSO) partner(s) and major vendors:

1.	Community Mediation Service	5.	Long Island University
2.	Greater Ridgewood Council	6.	Vaughn College
3.	Pathways for Healing	7.	Buena Vida Nursing Home
4.	The Puerto Rican Family Institute	8.	Children's First Network 202

STAFFING	
Organization and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal was appointed on October 20, 2011. • The school employs 17 English language arts (ELA) teachers, 17 math teachers, 15 special education teachers and 15 English as second language (ESL) teachers. • During the 2011-12 school year, the school hired one ELA teacher, one ESL master teacher, one math teacher, one social studies teacher, four social studies coordinators (one for each academy) and two guidance counselors, using School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding. • The school used SIG funding to fund part of the salary of the school's parent coordinator.
Teacher Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School administrators reported the Teacher Effectiveness model (based on the Danielson Framework) is being implemented. • At the time of the NYSED site visit, every teacher at the school had received a partial-period observation. School administrators stated, during the month of November 2011, that full-period observations would be conducted for each teacher. • Each teacher will receive two full-period observations and four to six partial-period observations during each school year. • Each teacher has received a post-observation conference with verbal and written feedback provided from each observation. • Staff uses a low inference format matched with the Danielson Framework rubric to provide observation feedback to teachers within three to five days after each observation.

PLANNING	
Student Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average daily student attendance rate was 83 percent when the NYSED site visit occurred. • During the NYSED site visit, a high level of student tardiness was observed. The NYSED Site Visit Team members observed a significant number of students entering school late through the security area. The principal reported that though some students were tardy, a number of the students arriving at that time were enrolled in the Achieve Now Program which begins at 10:45 a.m. each day. • The school has three attendance teachers on staff, one full-time and two half-time. These teachers conduct home visits to meet with parents of students who are chronically absent. • School administrators stated the school has worked with the New York City Police Department to track down chronically absent students. • The school runs the Academic Intervention Dropout Program (AIDP), which supports students with attendance issues. The program currently works with 130 students and conducts daily telephone calls and home mailings. The counselor overseeing this program reviews attendance data daily and identifies students with long-term absences. • The Puerto Rican Family Institute supports the school in its attendance intervention efforts. The institute provides counseling interventions and cultural exploration incentives (e.g. student trips to Broadway shows and landmarks around New York City). • The school offers the Achieve Now program which serves students who are under-credited. This program runs from 10:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day.

Student Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are identified for intervention programs based upon academic performance, attendance records, teacher anecdotal referrals and identified social and emotional factors as reported by school staff members and counselors.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school did not provide evidence regarding the outcomes of the intervention programs.
Teacher Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher attendance was at 85 percent at the time of the NYSED site visit. The school did not provide information regarding supports provided to increase the teacher attendance rate.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)

Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to teachers, they receive on-site professional development (PD) on Mondays and students have a shortened schedule and early dismissal on Mondays. A consultant is working on a school-wide literacy plan linking the curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). This work is funded by a Melissa and Bill Gates Foundation grant. The master teacher works one-on-one with teachers who need extra support and provides individualized assistance to all teachers as requested. According to school administrators, a consultant works with teacher inquiry teams on ESL strategies across the curriculum. Training is planned for teachers to become familiar with the iLearn program, used for credit-recovery. The National Academy Foundation is providing training to teachers in the information technology program. Teachers have participated in a variety of PD activities offered by the NYCDoE and PD provided by the Children’s First Network 202 (the Network). According to EPO representatives, they work with teachers four to five times per month in focus teams to provide PD in instructional planning, rigor and student engagement. Additionally, focus teams review SIG requirements and work collaboratively to meet those requirements. ESL and special education teachers work continuously with EPO representatives on differentiated instructional strategies. NYSED Site Visit Team members reviewed PD attendance records and noticed an uneven participation rate across individual records.
Instructional and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluations of SIG progress is conducted weekly to assess the need for weekly changes and/or adjustments to grant implementation. Assistant principals, the talent coach and EPO staff members work closely with the principal to provide group and individual PD to all staff members and provide additional support to those staff members who are identified for further attention and support. “Snap-shot” or partial-period observations take place daily. Assistant principals review classroom instruction to assist them in selecting PD topics and to meet individual teacher needs.
Monitoring and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant principals monitor the implementation of PD topics and strategies during classroom snap-shots and full-period observations.

DATA ANALYSIS	
Data that Informs Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers stated most PD is focused on the Teacher Effectiveness model and the use of data. In September 2011, the school created focus teams centered on data and graduation rate during Monday PD sessions. The school collects data using the NYCDoE <i>Automate the Schools</i> (ATS) system, progress reports, acuity data; item analysis, <i>Achievement Reporting and Innovation System</i> (ARIS) and classroom test scores, which includes uniform midterms and finals.
Data & Student Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal reported data analysis is a challenge at the school and is currently a mission of high priority. Teachers collect data from in-class tests, quizzes, benchmark assessments and “scholarship roots” (progress on meeting school goals). Southern Regional Education Board reported the use of a six-step analysis process called root-cause analysis. The strategy is designed to help teachers collect and analyze student data to determine what is working.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING	
Learning Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The length of the school day for students follows two sessions. The first session begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 2:15 p.m. The second session begins at 7:50 a.m. and ends at 3:01 p.m. The school offers an <i>Achieve Now</i> credit recovery program for students both during and after school hours until 5:00 p.m. each day. Teachers participate in common planning sessions every day of the school week. These sessions include student inquiry groups and a review of eleventh and twelfth grade students’ progress toward meeting graduation requirements.
Mapped & Paced Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ELA curriculum has been revised to reflect the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) recommendations to rewrite the instructional program for each grade level to reflect the study of non-fiction literature and the implementation of the CCLS.
Instructional Programming Linked to Student Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is beginning an iLearn program called “APEX and AVENTA” which supports students with deficiencies in math. At the time of the visit, teachers were being trained to fully implement the program.

<p>Effective Teaching Practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During classroom visits, the NYSED Site Visit Team observed technology being used in most classrooms as part of instructional practice. • NYSED Site Visit Team members observed differentiated instruction being used in several visited classrooms. • Several visited classrooms displayed student projects, which included teacher comments and grading rubrics. • During classroom visits, NYSED Site Visit Team members observed uneven instructional rigor and student engagement. • Teachers were observed circulating in the classrooms to assist students as they worked independently and in groups. • Students were on-task and well behaved in many classrooms. • In several classrooms, teachers distributed differentiated independent assignments on the main topic of instruction. • NYSED Site Visit Team members observed students in the ninth grade academy using interactive white boards. Students used white boards with ease as part of their daily instructional routine. • During classroom observations, most teachers appeared to be skilled in using the technology effectively to motivate and engage students in the content. • During classroom visits of the ninth grade academy, varied levels of effective questioning during whole group instructional times were observed. • During observations of special education classes in the ninth grade academy, teachers used a variety of strategies and stimulating questioning during instruction. • Some differentiation was observed in the ninth grade academy. The level of differentiation was distinctive and notable between the self-contained special education classrooms and general education classrooms. Students and teachers worked on the same topics; however, the levels of challenge and remediation varied and appeared to be appropriate for students.
<p>ELL/SWD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ESL master teacher works with teachers three times a week on ESL strategies for the English language learner (ELL) population. • According to school administrators, the school serves a population of students with disabilities (SWD) that is 25% of the total student population, or 498 students. • The school uses the <i>Wilson Reading System</i> to support the SWD population. • The school offers an integrated co-teaching program for ninth and tenth grade SWD. • The EPO works with teachers of SWD and ELL populations to monitor and implement instructional strategies supporting these populations.

<p>STUDENT SUPPORT</p>	
<p>Additional Social/Emotional Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school provides Academic Intervention Services (AIS) in the form of after school tutoring and the Saturday program which provides students with assistance in completing homework assignments and making up late assignments. • <i>Response to Intervention</i> (RTI) is provided for students with disabilities during the regularly scheduled school day within the school's "academy" structure.

<p>Counseling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a partnership with Pathways for Healing, which provides therapeutic counseling services to students. • The Community Mediation Service provides support to the school regarding attendance improvement. • The Greater Ridgewood Youth Council provides tutoring and job placement services to students. • Vaughn College provides counseling and tutoring to students who are at risk for academic failure. • The school has a College Now program in partnership with Long Island University. Students receive remedial math and ELA support. Students also have the opportunity to take college level courses through this program.
<p>Enrichment Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school offers a well-attended art and music program for students. • The school offers students the opportunity to focus on specialization areas such as hospitality and tourism. • The school participates in the Civil Air ROTC program. • School administrators reported college tours have been provided by Dawn College and St. Lawrence College. In addition, students have toured colleges in upstate New York as well as New York City community colleges, sponsored by the College Now program.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

<p>Effective Leadership and Principal Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the principal, the EPO serves as the superintendent and evaluates her. The principal has submitted the Principal Performance Review to the district superintendent and to the School Improvement Office. • The Network leader and the EPO representatives act as the principal's mentors.
<p>Leadership Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal previously worked as an assistant principal at Queens Vocational High School. At that school, she became familiar with the EPO's program <i>High Schools that Work</i> and is very knowledgeable about the EPO and its school improvement approaches. • The principal and assistant principals are receiving leadership training from the EPO. At the time of the NYSED site visit, the training was focused on the new teacher evaluation model and its implementation as well as using data to inform instruction. • The talent coach provides PD to the school administrators five days a month concerning the distributive leadership model and root/cause analysis.
<p>School Improvement Manager/External Providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has been assigned a school improvement liaison (SIL) until the school improvement manager (SIM) is assigned. The SIL has been in regular communication with the principal monthly regarding the progress of SIG implementation. There have been two face-to-face meetings between the principal and the SIL. • The school has been assigned a network leader from the Network. The network leader is in communication with the principal weekly in face-to-face meetings regarding the SIG implementation and PD needs. • Southern Regional Education Board provides various PD opportunities for the school. Two EPO representatives work with the school regularly regarding the school's mission statement, goal setting and leadership development PD, and instructional and curriculum strategies. These representatives provide PD four to five times each week.

<p>Building Level Leadership Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal’s cabinet members meet twice monthly to discuss SIG goals and assess progress needed to plan the next steps of implementation. • The principal meets with her cabinet twice monthly; however, she monitors the progress of the SIG implementation each week in preparation for meetings with the cabinet and to address any issues of concern. • Southern Regional Education Board reported they look at the SIG and the related school goals weekly in preparation for planning next steps in the school improvement process. Additionally, the EPO is assisting teachers through focus teams to implement SIG actions and goals.
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<p>SCHOOL CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</p>	
<p>Environment is Conducive to Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents, students and teachers reported the academy structure for the ninth and tenth grade students is highly appreciated. They stated the academy structure/small learning communities gives students opportunities to focus on academics and gives them a sense of belonging to a community. • The academies have classrooms clustered along specific hallways in the building. NYSED Site Visit Team members observed teachers and students in these small learning communities (SLC) know each other by name. As a result, teachers know when an older student or someone not part of the SLC is present. • Students in the eleventh and twelfth grade reported the desire to have a greater sense of belonging to a community through the SLC structure. They stated they would appreciate the same level of belonging that was displayed in the SLC. • NYSED Site Visit Team members observed student behavior in the hallways between classes to be noisy but friendly. Behavior of students in both the ninth and tenth grade academies was generally respectful and attentive. • Parents reported their children are more actively engaged in stimulating and high-interest activities this school year. • Parents and students reported teachers are more responsive to their needs this school year.
<p>Parent Involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a functioning Parent Association. In addition, parents are part of the school leadership team and several parents volunteer in the school regularly. • The school offers parent workshops and orientation sessions. • The school is working on its mission to get more parents and community members involved in the school. • Parents of students in ninth and tenth grade stated the academy structure gives students more support and structure in the large-population, high school setting.
<p>Collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators, teachers and staff reported communication is open and productive at the school. • Teachers assigned to the ninth and tenth grade academies reported they collaborate regularly during common planning times. • Teachers are currently working together to develop more interdisciplinary units as a direct response to the JIT report recommendations.

<p>External/Community-Based Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has partnerships with community-based organizations such as the Buena Vida Nursing Home where students have opportunities to perform community service. Additionally, the school receives tutoring and counseling services from Community Mediation Service and Pathways for Healing. • The Greater Ridgewood Youth Council provides job placement and tutoring for the students. • Southern Regional Education Board representatives reported spending at least four days per month conducting PD activities and observing teachers. • Southern Regional Education Board has provided a literacy specialist to work on developing a school-wide literacy collaborative, and a math specialist to develop a school-wide math collaborative. • According to Southern Regional Education Board representatives, one of their consultants works with the talent coach and the school administrative team five days per month providing PD on building leadership capacity. • Southern Regional Education Board representatives spend time looking at data with teachers to build a shared understanding of what the data means and how it should be used to inform instruction. • Southern Regional Education Board, as a national organization, gives teachers and administrators access to its national school improvement network. Conferences and PD activities are made accessible to any teacher that expresses an interest. After attending a conference or workshop, teachers are expected to report back and “turn-key” the information to their peers.
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<p>BUDGET AND OTHER FUNDING SOURCES</p>	
<p>Budget Modifications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the time of the NYSED site visit, modifications to the SIG had not been made.
<p>Use of 1003(g) or 1003(a) grant funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the NYSED document entitled “New York State Improvement Grant (1003g) Cohort 1 and 2 Awarded Amounts,” the school was awarded \$1,700,000 for the 2011-12 school year. • Many indicated actions outlined in the SIG application were being implemented at the time of the NYSED site visit. In some cases, teachers and administrators were in the process of being trained to fully implement programs and strategies. • One noted concern was regarding the hiring of staff funded by the SIG. The grant stated six staff members would be hired which included full funding of the parent coordinator salary; however, the principal stated 11 staff members were hired, which included partial funding of the parent coordinator salary using the SIG.
<p>Use of Other Funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the principal, work regarding connecting the school-wide literacy plan and the CCLS is underway. This work is funded by a Melissa and Bill Gates Foundation grant. • Based on its submitted budget the school was allocated \$1,699,737.06 for this school year by the NYCDoE.

DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT	
District Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The principal receives support in the form of email communications from the SIL. No on-site visits were reported.• The school has a talent coach who works closely with the principal on a weekly basis regarding SIG implementation and the school's on-going PD needs. The talent coach is physically at the school one to two times each week.
JIT/SIG Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• JIT recommendations appear to be aligned with the SIG application.

SUMMARY

The NYSED Site Visit Team conducted a full-day site visit to Grover Cleveland High School. The full day visit took place on November 3, 2011. Although the visit was brief, the team was able to collect information about the school's efforts to continue the implementation of their reform model for improving student learning.

The NYSED Site Visit Team met with various stakeholders and reviewed initiatives that appeared to provide the school with the opportunity to make progress towards improved student achievement. School administrators were respectful and eager to promote rapid improvements in student performance. The school had a significant number of partnerships and programs in place that seemed likely to support increased instructional rigor while also increasing student engagement and achievement.

Teachers meet five times each week in common planning sessions to discuss student data and to learn about best practices and strategies to support student progress. The current principal previously worked with the EPO while employed as principal of another PLA school in New York City during the 2010-11 school year. Due to the principal's familiarity and comfort with the EPO's strategies and programs to promote student achievement, the NYSED Site Visit Team agreed that the collaboration seemed likely to promote progress toward student achievement.

During the site visit, the school provided evidence to support the implementation of many approved SIG actions. The NYSED Site Visit Team noted one concern regarding the hiring of staff funded by the SIG. The grant stated six staff members would be hired which included full funding of the parent coordinator salary. However, the Principal stated 11 staff members were hired which included partial funding of the parent coordinator salary using the SIG. Further clarification of this matter is needed. 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 in the implementation of the Re-start Model.