



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

**Progress Review Report — 2011-2012**

<b>School:</b>	Grace Dodge Career and Technical High School	<b>School District:</b>	Community School District #10
<b>Date of Site Visit:</b>	December 6, 2011	<b>Team Member(s)</b>	Kalimah Geter and Dr. Kathryn Ahern

**Address:** 2474 Crotona Avenue, Bronx, NY 10458

**Principal Telephone:** (718) 584-2700

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**BEDS #:** 321000011660

**School Principal:** John Tornifolio

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**SIL:** Erin Gehant

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**Grade Configuration:** 9 to 12

**Total Enrollment:** 1199

**PLA identification:** Graduation Rate

**List all identified subgroups:** All Students

**Intervention model:**

Transformation— At the time of the visit, the principal was in his first year as principal of the school. His effective date was August 11, 2011. Since the time of the visit, the principal retired effective March 1, 2012. There is presently an interim acting principal in place.

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

1.	Good Shepherd Services	5.	HAI Boys to Men
2.	Young Adult Borough Center	6.	Children's First Network 603
3.	Bronx Talent Search		
4.	Committee for Hispanic Children and Families		

**STAFFING**

<p><b>Organization and Structure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principal had been at the school for eight weeks at the time of a NYSED site visit.</li> <li>• The school employs ten English language arts (ELA) teachers, sixteen math teachers, three English as second language (ESL) teachers and fifteen special education teachers.</li> <li>• At the time of the NYSED site visit, the school had not hired the master teacher as approved in the School Improvement Grant (SIG).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Teacher Evaluation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three administrators conduct teacher evaluations; the principal and two assistant principals.</li> <li>• All teachers had received two informal observations at the time of the NYSED site visit. Written feedback had been provided for 160 classroom observations, formal and informal.</li> <li>• All written feedback is provided to teachers within five days of the observation.</li> <li>• Teachers will receive two formal observations per year; one in December and another in May.</li> <li>• The school uses the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching (Danielson Framework) and the framework's rubric to conduct classroom observations.</li> <li>• The principal reported the United Federation of Teachers' chapter leader and school leadership staff have been planning and conducting on-going teacher training regarding the Danielson Framework.</li> <li>• Teachers stated prior to professional development (PD) on November 8, 2011, staff was very confused about the teacher evaluations and had not had the chance to review the rubric used for the evaluations.</li> <li>• Teachers expressed that administrators seem to need more PD regarding the use of the Danielson Framework. Teachers suggested that staff and administrators should watch training demonstrations to understand what the evaluation process should look like.</li> </ul>

<p><b>PLANNING</b></p>	
<p><b>Student Enrollment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The average daily student attendance rate was 75 percent at the time of the NYSED site visit.</li> <li>• The school has an attendance team which includes an attendance teacher, an attendance coordinator, two family assistants and five guidance counselors. This team meets regularly to identify chronically absent students. Letters are sent home and visits from the attendance teacher are conducted. Non-responding families are reported for educational neglect. Additionally, home visits and logs of all communications are recorded in iLog.</li> <li>• School administrators reported attendance rates should increase due to the school identifying many students who have moved away.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student Performance/ Outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are selected to participate in intervention programs in two ways. Some students are identified based on the Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) and the Automate the Schools (ATS) system.</li> <li>• The school provides both credit recovery assistance through iLearn and tutoring during after school hours utilizing School Improvement</li> </ul>

	<p>Grant (SIG) funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional development is being conducted regarding analyzing attendance and intervention data and tracking its progress. Children's First Network 603 (the network) staff members are working with the administrators in this area.</li> <li>According to the Principal, teacher behavior in regard to verbal and physical abuse has been addressed and interventions have been set for resistant teachers.</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher Attendance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The average daily attendance for teachers was 90 percent, at the time of the NYSED site visit.</li> </ul>

<b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)</b>	
<b>Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representatives of the network have worked with teachers regarding inquiry teams, units of instruction and curriculum mapping twice monthly.</li> <li>Teachers participate in common planning times (CPT) twice weekly.</li> <li>According to teachers, most PD sessions are regarding topics such as the Danielson Framework, designing coherent instruction, Bloom's taxonomy, curriculum mapping and the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).</li> <li>The school partners with High Schools the Work (HSTW), which provides PD regarding promoting rigor in instruction.</li> <li>The principal stated the School Improvement Liaison (SIL) had come to the school on one occasion prior to the NYSED site visit to review the NYSED site visit Protocol and to plan communications with the school as needed.</li> <li>The school has a talent coach who provides PD regarding the Danielson Framework once a week to administrators.</li> </ul>
<b>Instructional and Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers receive assistance from the network regarding the implementation of the CCLS, creating curriculum maps, revising the curriculum, creating effective lesson plans and planning differentiated instructional activities.</li> <li>According to school administrators and teachers, the UFT has provided PD regarding the Danielson Framework and the use of the domains of teaching responsibly.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School administrators monitor the implementation of PD topics and strategies during classroom snap-shots and full-period observations.</li> </ul>

<b>DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
<b>Data that Informs Instruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School administrators reported data is collected using the ARIS, ATS and High School Scheduling and Transcripts (HSST). The school also uses standardized assessments, Regents examinations, student class work and tests.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry teams review the different types of data collected every six weeks to identify tutoring needs, credit recovery offerings and to prepare students to take future Regents exams.</li> <li>• The principal stated social studies is a challenge for the school so inquiry teams are working on student needs in this area to support students toward graduating on time.</li> </ul>
<b>Data &amp; Student Achievement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher inquiry teams work with data collection and analysis to plan interventions that support students toward meeting graduation requirements. The inquiry team meets on a weekly basis to discuss collected data.</li> <li>• Parents reported they have access to <i>Daedalus</i> which provides information regarding students with disabilities (SWD) so that parents are well informed about their children’s progress.</li> </ul>

**CURRICULUM AND TEACHING**

<b>Learning Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school provides two instructional sessions. The sessions are from 8:54 a.m. to 3:27 p.m. and from 8:05 a.m. to 2:38 p.m. Classes are 38 minutes each. This schedule was in place prior to the school’s PLA identification.</li> <li>• Teachers reported CPT is built into the daily teacher schedule twice weekly. The sessions are monitored by assistant principals and each teacher is required to complete a feedback form to plan future common planning sessions.</li> <li>• Common planning sessions had begun in ELA, mathematics and science at the time of the NYSED site visit. The principal reported social studies common planning session had not started at the time of the visit but that the network was assisting the school with beginning social studies common planning sessions.</li> </ul>
<b>Mapped &amp; Paced Curriculum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the time of the NYSED site visit, the implementation of the CCLS in ELA and mathematics had not begun but was planned to start in the semester following the site visit.</li> </ul>
<b>Instructional Programming Linked to Student Needs Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During their focus group session, teachers indicated the school is moving away from the small learning community structure to organize by content area.</li> <li>• Many veteran teachers registered “shock” at receiving an observation where the practices observed were rated as “developing” or “ineffective.”</li> <li>• The teachers, school administrative team and the network indicated that most of the PD at the school was focused on the skills embedded in the Danielson Framework domains and the CCLS, especially those pertaining to reading and writing across the curriculum.</li> <li>• High Schools That Work (HSTW) presenters have been working with teachers to increase academic rigor.</li> <li>• The school has adopted a writing rubric (supported by HSTW) to be used in all subject areas.</li> <li>• The teachers and their supervising assistant principals were in the</li> </ul>

	<p>process of creating curriculum maps for each content area and across each grade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The grading policy is currently being revised to make it uniform and aligned to the NYCDoE structure of Levels 1 through 4. The school has also voted to return to an earlier practice of three marking periods (every six weeks) per semester.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Effective Teaching Practices</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During classroom visits, NYSED Site Visit Team members observed many students entering classes after the late bell, without signing the “late log” that each teacher is supposed to keep for each class.</li> <li>• NYSED Site Visit Team members observed students engaged in side-bar conversations as teachers provided instruction. Teachers did not address the conversations but instead continued with instruction, ignoring the chatter.</li> <li>• Most visited classrooms were equipped with interactive whiteboards (IWB); however, the boards were not being used for instruction during most classroom visits. Most observed IWB were used as bulletin boards for teacher made paper charts.</li> <li>• During most classroom visits, students were observed to be well behaved, usually appearing attentive.</li> <li>• In several visited classrooms, NYSED Site Visit Team members did not observe student work posted.</li> <li>• In some classrooms visited, students were observed with their heads down on desks without teachers addressing the disengaged behavior.</li> <li>• Instructional rigor was not observed, in most visited classrooms.</li> <li>• Teacher questioning frequently was neither challenging nor thought provoking.</li> <li>• During many of the classroom visits, students were observed calling out answers with frequent off-task comments without teachers redirecting students to raise their hands and/or wait for their turn to speak.</li> <li>• The classroom visit to the entrepreneurship class evidenced students with hoods on their heads and without notebooks or pens on desks for notetaking.</li> <li>• In one classroom, NYSED Site Visit Team members observed an ELA English as a second language (ESL) classroom teacher who was energetic and used encouraging language to compliment student work. Additionally, this teacher used higher order questioning techniques and held students accountable for materials that were not brought to class.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ELL/SWD</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school uses beginning, medium and advanced instruction for the various levels of English language learners (ELL).</li> <li>• According to the principal, the school received Title III funds for after school tutoring of the ELL population.</li> <li>• The school uses iLearn and Compass online programs for all subject areas to help the ELL population with language acquisition and content.</li> <li>• The school uses the online programs iLearn, Compass and Achieve 3000 to provide differentiated learning opportunities for SWDs.</li> <li>• The school provides Special Education Teacher Support Services</li> </ul>

	<p>(SETSS) as a push-in model for students to receive additional academic support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers reported the school provides resource room instruction for small groups and individualized support for the SWD population.</li> <li>• School administrators reported the school provided a summer bridge program for the ELL population using SIG funding. Additionally, parents were invited to receive an introduction to the instructional programs used in ESL instruction.</li> </ul>
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<b>SCHOOL LEADERSHIP</b>	
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<p><b>Effective Leadership and Principal Evaluation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principal is evaluated by the Superintendent by submitting a Principal Performance Review (PPR) at the beginning of the school year and again at the end of the school year. This PPR included goals that are monitored three times per school year and are evaluated according to student data at the end of the school year.</li> <li>• The principal does not have a mentor assigned from the network or NYCDoE; however, he has a self-selected former superintendent as a mentor.</li> <li>• Teachers reported the principal has brought back procedures that were in place a few years ago. Prior to the new principal, students were receiving credit for courses they had not completed satisfactorily but the principal has discontinued this ineffective process.</li> <li>• Prior to the 2011-12 school year, the school did not have a three marking period semester; however, since the new principal came to the school there are three marking periods and students are aware of what their grades mean and are held accountable for the work they produce.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Leadership Development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school leadership staff has received PD regarding time management.</li> <li>• The school has a talent coach who provides PD regarding the Danielson Framework once a week.</li> <li>• The principal and his assistant principals attended PD at the United Federation of Teachers regarding the use of the Danielson Framework. He stated this PD would be on-going and would continue to be attended by the entire school administration.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>School Improvement Manager/External Providers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the time of the visit, the school had not been assigned a School Improvement Manager (SIM); however, the school did have a School Improvement Liaison (SIL) present for the visit. The SIL had been in communication with the principal regarding the NYSED site visit and the preparation for the visit.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Building Level Leadership Team</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the principal, daily monitoring of the SIG occurs. The principal and his cabinet, talent coach and/or network leader meet daily to discuss where the school is in regard to implementation and where the school needs to go.</li> </ul>
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<b>STUDENT SUPPORT</b>	
<b>Additional Social/Emotional Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School administrators reported the school uses the Response to Intervention (RTI) program as well as Supplemental Educational Services (SES), to provide additional supports based on student needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Counseling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school partners with the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families which provides targeted support to at-risk students in the form of credit-recovery, attendance support, internships and student mentoring.</li> <li>• The HAI Boys to Men program supports male students who are at-risk of dropping out of school. The program supports these students academically and meets with them twice a week to speak to them about careers, health issues, conflict resolution and teenage fatherhood.</li> <li>• The school has a youth development manager who meets with the guidance counselors weekly to develop mentoring programs and Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS).</li> <li>• At the time of the NYSED site visit, the youth development manager was in the process of linking student attendance with PBIS and a rewards structure.</li> </ul>
<b>Enrichment Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school partners with the Young Adult Borough Center which provides academic support for students who are over-aged and under-credited.</li> <li>• The school partners with Bronx Talent Search and Bronx Community College to assist in preparing students for entrance to college.</li> </ul>

<b>SCHOOL CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>	
<b>Environment is Conducive to Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers reported the school environment is safe. At the time of the NYSED site visit, teachers stated more school safety officers had been added and had helped to decrease students lingering in the hallways.</li> <li>• NYSED Site Visit Team members observed crowded hallways during changing of class periods, without adult supervision to move students along from one class to the next. Students did not display an urgency to get from one classroom to the next.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaboration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to teachers, ESL teachers and subject area general education teachers participate in common planning periods to plan supports for the ELL population.</li> </ul>

<b>Parent Involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has a parent coordinator who plans parent workshops and programs. The number of parents varies from event to event and parental involvement was noted as a challenge for the school.</li> <li>• Four parents are active members of the school leadership team.</li> <li>• The school does not have parent volunteers.</li> <li>• Parents reported there is a Parent Association and the school is now providing more communication to parents.</li> </ul>
<b>External/Community-Based Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has active partnerships with all of its listed community-based partners.</li> </ul>

**DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT**

<b>District Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has received district support regarding the teacher effectiveness model and in making necessary changes to the SIG. During the EPO selection period, support was provided to the school.</li> <li>• The school has a talent coach that provides training and support regarding the teacher evaluation system.</li> <li>• The school is slated to be assigned a SIM who will work with the school to monitor analyze and implement the SIG.</li> </ul>
<b>JIT/SIG Alignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school did not have a Joint Intervention Team (JIT) report on record at the time of the NYSED site visit.</li> </ul>

**BUDGET AND OTHER FUNDING SOURCES**

<b>Budget Modifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the time of the NYSED site visit, modifications to the SIG had not been made.</li> </ul>
<b>Use of 1003(g) or 1003(a) grant funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the NYSED document entitled “New York State Improvement Grant (1003g) Cohort 1 and 2 Awarded Amounts,” the school was awarded \$1,250,000 for the 2011-12 school year.</li> <li>• The following actions, as per the SIG application, were not yet implemented at the time of the visit:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professional development in teacher pedagogy for extended time classes to improve graduation rate and adequate yearly progress targets.</li> <li>2. Professional development for paraprofessionals.</li> <li>3. Hiring of the master teacher of special education math and secretarial services.</li> <li>4. Provision of per session payment for five administrators to monitor at-risk students.</li> <li>5. Developing student teaching assistants to provide tutoring and technology support.</li> <li>6. The Saturday Success Academy for the ELL and SWD population</li> <li>7. The development of the industry and post-secondary council for college and career readiness.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Use of Other Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional funding is provided to the school through Title I and Title III funding.</li> </ul>

## **SUMMARY**

The NYSED Site Visit Team conducted a full-day site visit at Grace Dodge Career and Technical High School on December 6, 2011. Although the visit was brief, the team was able to ascertain information about the school's efforts to begin 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; however, deficiencies in areas approved in the School Improvement Grant remained a significant concern. Additionally, the instructional period of thirty-eight minutes seemed to be a key hindrance in creating or sustaining a culture and climate of academic learning and success for students and adults in the building. District and school representatives were candid with their comments and highly cooperative throughout the PLA monitoring process.

The following actions, as per the SIG application, were not yet implemented at the time of the visit:

1. Professional development in teacher pedagogy for extended time classes to improve graduation rate and adequate yearly progress targets.
2. Professional development for paraprofessionals.
3. Hiring of the master teacher of special education mathematics and secretarial services.
4. Provision of per session payment for five administrators to monitor at-risk students.
5. Developing student teaching assistants to provide tutoring and technology support.
6. The Saturday Success Academy for the ELL and SWD population
7. The development of the industry and post-secondary council for college and career readiness.