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

School:	William E. Grady Vocational High School	School District:	New York City Department of Education District # 21
Date of Site-Visit:	April 13, 2011 (Second Visit)	Members of Site-Visit Team:	Kathryn Ahern, Major Capers, Andrew McGrath, Lee York

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

Findings:
- The administrative team reported the collective bargaining agreement is still under negotiations, conversations continue around the area of developing a teacher evaluation system that is linked to student growth.
- The administrative focus group indicated that in February 2011 teacher evaluations were being conducted for all tenured and non-tenured teachers using the Danielson Model.
- The teacher effectiveness rubric is based on the Danielson model. It was developed by the New York City Department of Education (NYCDoE), United Federation of Teachers (UFT) and the teacher effectiveness committee. The fourth domain - *Professional Responsibilities* – was still in negotiation with the teachers' union at the time of the site visit.
- Teacher effectiveness information gathered from formal and informal observations is entered into a database/tracker. The tracker allows the principal and assistant principals to input qualitative data on observations.

- During their focus group session, teachers acknowledged their evaluations would be based in part on student data beginning in September 2011, but they were not sure of specifics.
- The administrative focus group indicated that, beginning in February 2011, teacher evaluations were being conducted for all tenured and non-tenured teachers.
- The school has continued to create and revise performance-tasked assessments that have been piloted in the spring.
- Merit bonuses or remediation processes linked to the teacher evaluations are still under consideration.
- One master teacher for special education continues to serve the school. The principal reported the math turnaround teacher resigned and the English language arts (ELA) turnaround teacher is out on medical leave. The school expects to fill the two vacancies.
- The administration reported they were afforded minimal opportunity in the hiring process; however, they expect to be involved with the next round of hiring.
- The principal continues to make changes in policy, which result in significant and positive changes in morale, and continues t work with the school staff to increase the academic performance of students.

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

Findings:
- The NYCDoE has hired School Improvement Liaisons (SIL) to provide oversight to the identified persistently lowest-achieving (PLA) schools. As per the NYCDoE Turnaround Office staff members interviewed, a NYCDoE staff member is now assigned to work with Grady and has developed a schedule to conduct periodic visits to provide oversight and support to the school.
- The school continues vendor/partnerships with Careers in Culinary Arts Program (C-CAP), ClassLink, Discovery Education, Global Kids, Home Oil Heaters Association of New York, Kingsborough Community College, Medgar Evers College, New York Automobile Dealers Association, New York City College of Technology, Odyssey Software, School Construction Authority, St. John's University, Theater Moves and Children First Network (CFN) 450.
- The administration reported they received the 1003(g) amounts that were allocated to the school for this academic year to continue implementation of the school improvement plan.
- The State Education Department continues to work on the development of Performance a Performance Plan Template.
- The school has recently participated in a NYCDoE Quality Review. A draft of the preliminary Quality Review Summary Feedback report was not available at the time of the April monitoring visit.
- As delineated in its School Improvement Grant (SIG) application, inquiry teams meet during the first period of the day and after school. Freshman and

sophomore academies also meet during the first period of the day. Agendas and minutes were provided to the site visit team for review.

- School leaders, teaches and a data specialist reported that the school collects, distributes and analyzes data to track attendance and check credit acquisition. This information is aligned directly with adequate yearly progress (APY) requirements. Using *GoogleDocs*, this information is shared with staff on a timely basis.

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

Findings:
- The staff meets regularly for professional development activities. Interactive white boards were installed in 28 classrooms over Spring Break. Professional development sessions have begun during the teachers' common planning time, first period.
- The school provided substantial data to show what, and how, it is used to support instruction for individual students. Teachers have data books, which were available for inspection in each classroom. These data collections include IEPs for students with disabilities (SWD), as well as math and reading scores for all students. Skedula.com, ARIS and DECILE scores are some data sources that are available for teachers to use to support instruction.
- ACCESS is used to track attendance, with intervention programs in place to work with at-risk students.
- Teachers update student records at least biweekly. Status updates are available for every student and their parents or guardians with online access through *PupilPath.*
- *GoogleDocs* is used to give bi-weekly reports to the guidance department on each student's weekly performance. More intense focus is on freshman and seniors to get students on track, and then to keep them on track to graduate on time with their cohort.
- The guidance counselor continues to meet with each individual student to set short-term goals for the grading period. Teachers are informed of the student's goals. Teachers then give the student specific feedback on a regular basis concerning his/her progress toward meeting those goals.
- The Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) model continues to be used for students with disabilities (SWD). Professional development for CTT continues to be offered and attended by teachers assigned to SWD classrooms.
- Teachers reported professional development continues to be evaluated by CFN 405 and the administration, as well as through informal conversations with PD planners during common planning times.
- Teachers stated professional development opportunities this year have included:
  - Co-teaching model (relationship building, teacher effectiveness, and instructional vigor);
  - Performance-based assessments;
  - Special Education Student Information System (SESIS);

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- o Green technology;
  - o Rubrics for use in the classroom; and
  - o Peer review, lesson planning, and sharing best practices.
- School leaders and teachers stated they have received professional development relating to the teacher effectiveness rubric. The professional development pertained to the use of the rubric as an observation tool, as well as an instructional planning vehicle.

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

Findings:
- William E. Grady Vocational High School continues to analyze DECILE score assessment results.
- As mentioned earlier, data is being used to support instruction for individual students. Teachers have data books in which they gather IEPs, math and reading scores for all students enrolled in the courses they teach.
- *GoogleDocs* is used to give bi-weekly reports to the guidance department on each student's weekly performance. This data is used to keep careful track of each student's progress. It is used to show whether the individual is on track for graduation with their cohort.
- Cohort transcript information is analyzed and credit recovery options are provided to students based upon this analysis. The school will continue to employ *Odyssey* software as a data source to review online courses for credit recovery.
- The site visit team reviewed multiple spreadsheets that are updated daily, weekly, bi-weekly and monthly. The spreadsheets are maintained by a data specialist, updated by the school staff and disseminated throughout the building using *GoogleDocs*. Information includes, but is not limited to:
  - o Credit accumulation, Regents Examination and Regents Competency Examination data;
  - o Bi-weekly status reports of all students including grades, attendance, comments, causes/explanations of problems, and current status;
  - o Minutes and agendas of freshman/sophomore academy meetings;
  - o Graduation and guidance analyses; and
  - o Subject area and sub-group AYP tracking.
- Students identified for the Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (AIDP) program are tracked using twenty-day attendance reports. The data specialist shared documentation with the site visit team showing significant increases attendance percentage rates. The current average attendance rate was 80%, up 5% since our last visit. Daily attendance ranged from 76% to 83% on a daily basis.
- During their focus group sessions, teachers and school leaders stated Skedula.com is used by staff to input, monitor and analyze student data (i.e., attendance, grades, credits, schedules, grades, etc.).

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

Findings:

- According to the administrative focus, an extended day program tutoring continues and students who are in danger of failing or who have fallen behind participate in the tutoring program on an individual basis.
- The school day has been re-structured to allow a common planning time during the first period of the day. This common planning time is used for PD, collaborative lesson planning, grade level meetings, department meetings and data analysis sessions.
- The school has maintained the lengthened instructional day on Monday through Thursday. There has been no change to the duration of the school day on Friday or length of the school year from previous years.
- The assistant principals for supervision continue to work on creating curriculum maps for ELA and social studies. These maps are targeted for completion by June 2011. The CFN plans to support the school to align these new curriculum maps with the Common Core Standards using *Rubicon Atlas*.
- The NYSED site visit team observed some inconsistent differentiation of instruction throughout the building. While there was with evidence of increased rigor, relevance, and eager, thoughtful student engagement in several classrooms observed, some lessons continued to appear below the level of what might be expected in difficulty for the grade and course.
- Many classrooms observed students and teachers were working in an orderly and engaged manner to complete expected work, as noted by a clearly posted agenda, and students engaged in thoughtful discussions with each other and the teacher.
- The level of classroom management and student engagement was somewhat uneven. In other classrooms, the NYSED observed a significant number of students off-task, talking loudly over each other with off-topic comments, ignoring the teacher, often ignoring requests for cooperation. Those same teachers did not appear to hold students accountable for their conduct or work process during instructional time.
- There were several CTE classrooms where rubrics were posted for both teachers and students. The NYSED team noted recent exemplars of student work showing a range of quality with meaningful teacher comments posted prominently in classrooms and hallway bulletin boards.
- The classrooms were mixed in the amount and quality of student work posted throughout the classroom. Teachers interviewed reported that many of there

assignments are project based and provide students with experiential learning experiences (e.g., students punch time clock in auto shop).
- The administrative focus group reported that supports continue for students with disabilities (SWD). The school has 22% of the population with IEPs. A team teaching approach is used for SWD using CTT. There are 30 co-teachers in this program.
- Twenty-eight *SmartBoards* were installed and training is expected to start for teachers.
- During their focus group sessions, teaches and school leaders stated failing students are eligible for the school's grade recovery program. Students are given a series of packets with activities, rubrics and criteria for students to complete in order to gain points toward their semester grades.
- Teachers indicated an evolving shift towards collaboration and peer planning because of common planning time and school leadership directives.
- The site visit team observed varying levels of rigor and engagement in the classrooms visited. In numerous cases, the start of class was delayed considerably due to behavior and classroom management issues.

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

Findings:
- The school has a guidance counselor who continues to focus on student attendance with assistance from eight paraprofessionals and student aides. About 200 students with serious attendance problems are tracked daily and these students meet bi-weekly with counselors.
- The school has a social worker on site three days a week and a drug and alcohol counselor is on staff to provide services to students.
- The school also continues to have an "at-risk" counselor and a freshman academy coordinator. An advisor for seniors assists the senior grade level counselor.
- A coordinator of student activities plans trips throughout the city, invites guest speakers to the school, plans and presents parent information sessions, invites theater groups to present at the school and plans college tours that include overnight trips for juniors. Saturday trip to visit a college was also available to ninth grade students. Guidance personnel provided a calendar of events that confirms activities that are scheduled for the remainder of the school year.
- Students continue to participate in Saturday School and trips to the city are a frequent part of the program.
- The site visit team observed an enrichment class in creative writing/ELA that combines yearbook preparation with college preparatory literature and writing.

TRANSFORMATIONAL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	
Effective Leadership	*The school leader has the experience and skills needed to implement successfully a turnaround model and to act as a change agent for the*

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

Findings:
- A school improvement liaison is now hired to work with the school.
- School leadership continues to participate in leadership training.
- The school leadership team is implementing various components of the improvement plan.
- During their focus groups session, teachers stated the principal and leadership are caring, firm and collaborative by nature. They lead by example and are highly visible throughout the building.

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

Findings:
- The students and administrative staff reported the school climate continues to improve this semester. The principal continues to work to establish a caring professional school climate. The school is using the *Respect for All* model to establish a school culture.
- An assembly was convened to discuss the issues of bullying and building respect with students.
- Students reported in previous years, students left the school from all exits at any time of day; they took extended lunch periods; they hung out in the hallway; skipped classes; and other disrespectful and academically disengaged behavior. The new principal continues to enforce consequences and has a designated security staffed entry point for students in order to change former behaviors.
- The school leadership team reported that 100% of teachers have completed the school climate surveys and students are in the process of completing their surveys.
- The site visit team observed hallways and common areas that were clean, well maintained and appropriately supervised. In addition, numerous displays appeared throughout the building that promoted academic and social awareness. Display topics included, but were not limited to:
  o The school's culinary arts program;
  o Diversity and respect;
  o College acceptance letters;
  o Career and technical education programs;

- o Group and individual project posters;
- o Honor roll; and
- o Poetry, script/creative writing samples.
- During their focus group sessions, teachers and school leaders stated community support for the school's career and technical education (CTE) program has improved. As an example, local military personnel conducted an on-site maintenance clinic using one of its military transport vehicles.

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

Findings:
- The school was advised to review their budget for the remainder of the school year to decide if an amendment is needed to support the end of the year work.

DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT	
District Support Provides Operational Flexibility to the School	*The LEA provides or is planning to provide the school operational flexibility (such as matters regarding staffing, calendars/time and budgeting).*
District has a systemic plan for intervention and improvement	*The LEA has incorporated all JIT recommendations and requirements of the SIG Application into the improvement plan for the school.*
District has a plan to identify, recruit, place, and retain effective leadership	*In accordance with SIG requirements, the LEA has a plan for hiring and retaining leadership.*

Findings:
- The administrative focus group indicated they continue to be afforded flexibility to implement the school improvement plan.
- As previously stated, William E. Grady Vocational High School did not undergo a Joint Intervention Team visit; however they did participate in a recent School Quality Review and will use this information to inform their work to implement the school improvement plan.
- The school is supported by a SIL who is hired by NYCDoE through CFN 405, and has developed a schedule to conduct periodic visits to the school. The SIL was on site during the NYSED visit and stated she has a dual role with NYCDoE as school improvement manager. Her work with William Grady HS began in late March of 2011.

SUMMARY:

The State Education Department four-member site visit team conducted a full-day visit at William E. Grady Vocational High School on April 14, 2011. The team was

able to review building-specific information, and observe classrooms in relation to the schools efforts to continue implementation of their reform model for improving student learning.

The school has made significant progress in the implementation of the transformation model. The school has strengthened its vendor/partner relationships, and has implemented several programs to make progress in areas highlighted in the needs assessment of the SIG application. An extended day program continues to be in use, along with well-attended tutoring sessions and Saturday school for struggling students. Data use to inform instruction had developed according to the implementation plan.

The climate during passing times between classes remains pleasant and business-like. Students were polite to visitors. High levels of rigor and effective classroom management strategies were still somewhat uneven and variable. Evidence of effective teaching and engaged learning was uneven in a few classrooms as noted above. The culinary arts program students cooked and served an excellent meal for the administrative focus group, CFN and other visiting school partners and the monitoring team.

The school has made progress in providing professional development for data analysis, curriculum, teaching strategies that encourage student engagement, support programs for chronically absent or tardy and other struggling students, school climate and community engagement strategies. The district continues to support the school with a newly appointed school improvement liaison.

NYSED also encouraged the school to review its current expenditures and make any final amendments (FS-10) that are deem necessary for this year.

Please contact Kathryn Ahern, at (718) 722-5965 if you have any questions regarding this report or application process.