



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 – Community School District # 21
Date of Site-Visit:	January 4, 2011	Members of Site-Visit Team:	Kathryn Ahern, Jean Beaudet, Major Capers, Erica Cervine

STAFFING	
Collective Bargaining	<i>Negotiations are continuing regarding revision of the collective bargaining agreement in order to support development of a teacher evaluation system, removal of staff based on the evaluation system and changes in workday, 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, which 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-tasks 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. NYCDOE has cancelled its bonus program for the 2010-11 school year. This program is not SIG funded.
- Many of the district level positions were not hired 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
- One master teacher for special education has been hired, as well as one turnaround teacher each for English language arts (ELA) and math, which are the number specified in the SIG.
- The administration reported they were afforded minimal opportunity in the hiring process.
- The principal reported one of the turnaround teachers was hired before she came on board at the school. One of the turnaround teachers is not performing the quality of work necessary for the position.
- The principal indicated she was brought to the school in order to turn it around. She stated she has made changes in policy that has already led to significant and positive changes in morale, and that building a caring community has been her main goal since taking the position in September 2010.
- The principal has seven assistant principals. One is new to the school this year; all others have been at the school from two to seven years.

PLANNING	
Implementation of Timeline	<i>The district/school is on track to complete activities in accordance with the approved timeline for implementation, or to submit an approvable School Improvement Grant (SIG) application. Identify elements that are off-track.</i>
Performance Targets	<i>The district/school is implementing activities, which will help them meet the school's performance targets. (Performance targets are tied to the school's achieving "In Good Standing" by the end of the 3 year grant period. Refer to the school's Performance Plan Template, as available.)</i>
Implementation of 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.
- A master teacher for special education has been hired.
- Two turnaround teachers have been hired, one for ELA and one for math.
- The school has vendor/partner relationships 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 have received about 10% of the 1003(G) monies as to date. This initial payment was loaned to the school by NYCDoE. NYCDoE staff members indicated the 1003(G) monies had not yet been released to them from the New York State Education Department (NYSED).
- 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. Key findings included:
 - Need for the school to develop and implement a focused strategy to address the school's very low graduation rate and high student drop out rate;
 - Need for school-wide review, analysis and effective use of a broad spectrum of data to set school, class, student and student subgroups interim and long term goals aimed at raising student achievement;
 - Need to improve instruction and intervention programs for students with disabilities(SWD);
 - Need for staffing changes and on-going professional development (PD) to improve teacher effectiveness;
 - Need to improve instructional program for ELA, math and social studies;
 - Need for improvement in student engagement in math, social studies;
 - Need to improve strategies to increase student attendance.

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

Findings:

- The administrative focus group reported the professional development plan was created in September 2010.
- The staff meets for professional development activities regularly.
- All subject area teachers, except physical education and career and technical education (CTE), have common planning time during the first period of the day.
- The common planning time is also used for on-going professional development and department meetings.
- A professional development piece was offered by CFN 405, in which each department reviewed DECILE scores. Seating arrangements for each class were created using this data, pairing students with weak scores with higher scoring students.
- It is not clear if this data is used to drive instruction for individual students.
- ELA and foreign language teachers are required to submit weekly planning logs.
- *GoogleDocs* is used to give bi-weekly reports to the guidance department on each student's weekly performance.

- The guidance counselor then meets with each individual student to set short-term goals for the grading period. Teachers are informed of the student's goals, and then give the student specific feedback on a regular basis concerning progress toward meeting those goals.
- Professional development (PD) on fostering long-term relationships with students by reacting in a proactive way is provided through The Door.
- ELA and math teachers have common planning times, they vote for activities and professional development to be conducted during these time slots. ELA and social studies teachers meet regularly to plan thematic integrated units of study.
- The school has been designated as a Phase I school, that is, all students with disabilities (SWD), having an IEP, are having their educational needs met through flexible and creative scheduling for classes.
- The Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) model has been implemented beginning this year for SWD. Professional development for CTT has been offered and attended by teachers assigned to these classrooms.
- 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 CFN 405 and the administration, as well as through conversations during common planning times.

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

Findings:

- William E. Grady Vocational High School is in an early phase of data analysis of DECILE score assessment results.
- Seating arrangements for each class were created using this data, pairing students with weak scores with higher scoring students.
- It is not clear if, or how, this data is used to drive instruction for individual students.
- ELA and foreign language teachers are required to submit weekly planning logs.
- *GoogleDocs* is used to give bi-weekly reports to the guidance department on each student's weekly performance.
- Cohort transcript information is analyzed and credit recovery options are provided to students based upon this analysis. The school employs *Odyssey Software* for online courses for credit recovery.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING	
Increased Learning Time	<i>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.</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, an extended day program with tutoring has been instituted. Students who are in danger of failing or who have fallen behind are invited by the guidance counselor to 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.
- The school day has been lengthened on Monday through Thursday. There has been no change to the duration of the school day on Friday or length of the school year.
- The assistant principals for supervision are working on creating curriculum maps for ELA and social studies. The curriculum map between ELA and social studies is on target to be completed by June. The work on creating curriculum maps is being driven by a CFN initiative that is specifically geared to alignment, entitled: "Creating Curriculum Maps to Align with the Common Core Standards."
- The school has implemented an extended day and Saturday sessions that intended to be linked to needs assessments. The SED site visit team observed limited evidence of the use of data to inform instruction.
- 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.
- Classes at all grade levels were observed and found to be largely teacher led. Classrooms were clean and well organized. Students were unevenly engaged in the lessons. Some teachers observed asked open-ended questions and students voluntarily displayed their knowledge of the subject matter.
- Instruction was uneven throughout the school. There was no evidence of active learning taking place in one room where students were sleeping, text messaging, dancing and shouting. The teacher remained at the front of the classroom for most of the lesson but had only the attention of a few students.
- Students also reported instruction is uneven. They indicated the teachers do not make math and science fun or interesting. One student added even though some of the classes are boring, they learn something new each day.
- The classrooms were mixed in the amount and quality of student work posted throughout the classroom.
- High-level math instruction was provided to students in a large, spacious classroom. Students were focused and on task. The teacher demonstrated strong content knowledge and high expectations for all students by seeking wide participation while using the SmartBoard.
- A small population of English language learners (ELL); 22 students are enrolled in the English as a second language (ESL) class. There is a stand-alone ESL class, which meets for one period per day. The students also have a double period for ELA. The ESL teacher provides support to the core teachers.
- The administrative focus group reported that supports are in place for students with disabilities (SWD). The school has 22% of the population with IEPs. A team

teaching approach is used for SWD using collaborative team teaching (CTT). There are 30 co-teachers in this program.

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

Findings:

- The school has a guidance counselor dedicated to dealing with student attendance with the help of eight paraprofessionals and student aides. About 200 students with serious attendance problems have been identified. These students are tracked on a daily basis. These students meet with the counselor on a weekly to bi-weekly basis.
- The school has a social worker on site three days a week. A drug and alcohol counselor is on staff as well as grade-level guidance counselors.
- The school also has 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, plan and present parent information sessions, invite theater groups to present at the school and plan college tours that include overnight trips for juniors.
- Students participate in Saturday School. Trips to the city are a frequent part of the program.

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

Findings:

- The principal was assigned to this school in late summer of 2010. She was previously a teacher and then an assistant principal at the school many years ago before it was designated as a failing school.
- A school improvement manager has not been hired by the district. The school is represented by staff from the newly developed turnaround office.

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
Environment is Conducive to Learning	<i>The school is safe, orderly and academically oriented. Supervision is sufficient, respectful and consistent.</i>

Shared Vision	<i>School staff understands the focus/ vision of the school's improvement efforts and supports them in a consistent and effective manner.</i>
Collaboration	<i>Administrators, teachers and staff communicate openly, positively and effectively. Professional learning communities exist and affect improvement efforts.</i>
Parent Involvement	<i>Strategies are being implemented to increase the involvement and contributions of parents.</i>
External/Community-Based Partners	<i>Strategies are being implemented to increase the involvement and contributions of community partners.</i>

Findings:

- The students and administrative staff indicated the school climate has changed over the last semester. The principal has worked to establish a caring professional school climate, while working to establish a new standard and a new school culture.
- Students reported in previous years, students left the school from all exits; they took extended lunch periods; they hung out in the hallway; skipped classes; etc. The new principal set up and enforced consequences to change this behavior.

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

Findings:

- School leaders indicated they are using an integration of funds to implement the intervention model. They have received a \$68,000 loan for 1003(G) monies from NYCDoE for salaries only.

DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT	
District Support Provides Operational Flexibility to the School	<i>The LEA provides or is planning to provide the school operational flexibility (such as regarding staffing, calendars/time and budgeting).</i>
District has a systemic plan for intervention 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, William E. Grady Vocational High School 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 a new principal, who formerly served as assistant principal at the school several years ago before the school was designated as failing.

SUMMARY:

The State Education Department four-member site visit team conducted a full-day visit at William E. Grady Vocational High School on January 4, 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 implementation of the transformation model. It 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.

An extended day program is in use, along with tutoring and Saturday school, for struggling students. Data used to inform instruction is very limited. It is mainly used to prepare seating charts to form heterogeneous work partners, pairing a strong student with a struggling student, for informal peer tutoring. Professional Development is ongoing and in development.

The climate during passing times between classes was generally pleasant and business-like. Students were polite to visitors. High levels of rigor and effective classroom management strategies were uneven and highly variable. Evidence of effective teaching and engaged learning was uneven. The culinary arts program was impressive; students cooked and served an excellent meal for the administrative focus group and the monitoring team.

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