



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

Progress Review Report — 2011-2012

School:	Isobel Rooney Middle School 80	School District:	Community School District (CSD) 10
Date of Site Visit:	February 29, 2012	Team Member(s)	Dr. Sharon Holder, Major Capers, Jennifer Span

Address: 149 East Mosholu Parkway, North Bronx, New York 10467

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BEDS #: 321000010080

School Principal: Lovey Mazique-Rivera **E-mail address:** lmaziqu@schools.nyc.gov

SIM /SAM: **E-mail address:**

Grade Configuration: 6-8 **Total Enrollment:** 652

Area(s) of PLA identification:

Identified subgroups: ELA, Math

Intervention model:

School's community-based organization (CBO) partner(s):

1.	Bronx Opera House	4.	
2.	Bronx DA	5.	
3.	Morning Side Center	6.	

STAFFING	
Organization and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school administrative team is comprised of the principal and three assistant principals. • The principal was appointed July 2004 • The school has hired a turnaround teacher who supports the work of the science department. In addition, this teacher provides mentoring and coaching to first year teachers, and acts as a facilitator to move the more experienced teachers in reflecting on their practice and student results. • A full time master teacher has been hired who serves as a math coach. This teacher teaches one class, co-teaches with a first year teacher and provides coaching to all teachers. The Master teacher supports: the development of rigorous math instruction for students, quality professional development (PD) for teachers in both academies, and assists teachers in differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all sub-groups during each project year.

Teacher Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The entire administrative team received New York City Department of Education (NYCDoE) training to implement the Teacher Effectiveness Model rubric for teacher observations. • During the months of September and October, 2011 the administrative team met with each teacher to create goals around the work of deepening teacher understanding regarding instructional best practices. According to the principal, teachers and administrators also discuss pedagogical practices. • Teachers will be observed six times during the 2011-2012 school year. At the time of the visit, teachers had been observed for two partials and one formal observation. • Teachers receive verbal feedback within 24-48 hours following the observation. If the teacher is absent, the post observation feedback is rescheduled. Thus, the teacher may receive the feedback after the 48 hour window. Teachers receive the written observation report within 7-10 school days.
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PLANNING	
Student Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average daily attendance rate at the time of the visit was 93 percent. • The school has identified four long term absentees. • According to school documents, attendance must be taken each day during A.M. homeroom and recorded on the attendance sheets.
Student Performance/ Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has purchased Achieve 3000, READ 180 and Study Island licenses so students will be able to work on improving individual reading and math skills that have been targeted based on review of student data. • The school has an extensive Saturday program which targets all student categories to prepare students to perform better on the State English language arts and math exams. • An analysis of the ELA State Exam and the NYSLEAT Exam were performed to identify and create a plan of action to address the needs of each identified group. For example, the school identified the number of students, in particular English language learners (ELL) and students with Disabilities (SWD), who missed scoring a level three or passing the NYSLEAT. A plan of action was developed to meet the specific needs of each student. • According to the principal, there are reports generated so instructional teams can monitor and assess if students are making progress in ELA and Math.
Teacher Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every two months teachers receive an attendance letter which includes their lateness and absences. The principal shares with the teacher the negative impact absences have on students. A protocol is followed, and after a certain number of absences the teacher meets with the principal and his/her union representative.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)	
<p>Professional Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development activities include the exchange of information with colleagues, attendance at workshops, inter-visitations between classrooms or schools and in schools supported by staff developers/coaches. • The administrative team participates in NYCDoE mandatory training on the new Teacher Evaluation system. According to the principal, since December 2011, the school has been assigned a teacher evaluation coach who works with the teachers and EPO personnel to ensure the administrative team, instructional coaches and teachers understand the Danielson’s rubric. The school has been using the rubric as part of the observation tool for the past three years. • The PD topics are derived from a collection of information including: teacher preference sheet survey, teacher end of the year interviews, observation reports and findings from student data, quality review and joint intervention team reports. • During the first week in August, the Children First Network (CFN) held a network-wide three day workshop in aligning the school’s curriculum units to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), ensuring research-based teaching methods and strategies are embedded in the units, and developing interim assessments for each grade subject and grade. • Abyssinian Development Corporation has accommodated additional periods for professional development that is aligned with the school’s comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning strategies and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies.
<p>Instruction and Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the principal, the instructional team re-interviewed all teachers during the month of June 2010 using a rigorous set of questions they had developed to determine if each of the teachers had the ability to improve the teaching and learning process during the 2011-2012 school year. • Each teacher is required to submit their weekly lesson plans for administrative review and receive immediate feedback to improve their understanding of creating standards-based lesson plans. • Several key support staff with experience and knowledge in Bilingual Education were hired as well as a full-time Reading/Writing coach, an Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and ELA teacher, and a full-time math coach. • During the 2011 summer, administrators and lead teachers participated in a variety of professional development training from Lehman College Math Institute regarding ELLS and Windward School training Institute regarding Students with Disabilities. Staff turn-keyed PD to content teachers.
<p>Monitoring and Analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff attendance is taken at all PD sessions. School administrators give participants assignments they must use in the classroom and then when they return to the next session they share their reflections on the process.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, school leaders have a monthly instructional meeting to ensure they are using observations to monitor use of instructional PD strategies.
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DATA ANALYSIS	
Data that Informs Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acuity, READ 180 and ACHIEVE are assessments the school uses regularly to inform instruction.
Data & Student Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle school 80 school leaders have revisited the accountability system to ensure all decisions made are based on evidence and the action plans designed are research based and drives instruction in the classroom to a higher quality of teaching practice and student learning. • Through the support of CFN, EPO, and consultants, a team of lead teachers and members of the staff are revising all rubrics used throughout the building. During the 2011-2012 school year, the school revised the informal and formal observation process to be aligned with the NYCDoE New Teachers Evaluation System. • According to the school principal and reflected in school documents, students are expected to use Art Costa's level questions in the classroom and understand which level of questions is being used. Each semester students are given a self-assessment sheet on which students are to keep track of their test scores. Parents are encouraged to review the information with their children. Students and parents also receive a progress report per semester so that parents are aware of missing assignments that students need to complete. • Students are given an opportunity to make up missing work. The English language learners (ELL) and students with disabilities (SWD) student population also have the ability to go online to the ACHIEVE 3000 website to monitor their progress in ELA. • The inquiry team meets to discuss targeted students and to review data from John Hopkins study of early predictors of school success to identify interventions and strategies to improve student attendance. • Analysis of the ELA State exam and the NYSLEAT exam are performed so school administrators and teachers can identify and create a plan of action to address the needs of all students. • All ELL and students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) attend ACHIEVE 3000 or READ 180 sessions either during or after the school day. The READ 180 data teacher also informs the English Department of student growth and areas of concern.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING	
Learning Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a seven period schedule, which begins at 8:20a.m. and ends at 3:17p.m. daily. • Each class meets for 42 minutes, with a three minute passing period. • Due to contractual issues, the school day has remained unchanged. However, the school expanded their afterschool and Saturday

	<p>programs to meet the needs of students, both academically and socially.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers meet in common planning time (CPT) weekly. Teams of teachers also meet before and after school.
Mapped & Paced Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During last summer, selected teachers and the administrative team participated in a series of workshops around the CCLS. This information was turn-keyed to the remaining staff. The Children First Network (CFN) and EPO specialists and coaches are collaborating with the content teams in revising the curricula to be in alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The curriculum has been revised to reflect ELA CCLS.
Instructional Programming Linked to Student Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The administrative team and the teachers have revised all content subjects to ensure the curriculum includes more reading/writing as well as ESL and Special Needs strategies. They are in the process of completing the revised curricula which is in alignment with the Core Standards. • The CFN and EPO instructional specialists and coaches and the PD specialist, using EPO data, collaborate with the school's content area teams in creating the units of study and sample exemplary lessons plans. Content specialists review all units of study prior to implementation.
Effective Teaching Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are using pacing guides to determine when topics will be taught. • Each classroom observed had an aim, objective, "Do Now" activity and the day's homework assignment prominently posted either on the chalkboard, on poster paper or on the inactive whiteboards. • Students observed during several different ELA classes appeared to be engaged, and some students were sitting quietly holding books. • Several teachers used an exit question prior to students leaving the classroom. • Teachers asked questions which required students to look at their notes to answer the questions. • The level of questioning and probing for understanding by teachers was observed to be uneven. Some teachers asked numerous questions which required more than recall or simple one-word responses.
ELL/SWD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff received PD to support ELLs and SWD. • The school is exploring use of Holt McDougal textbook series to support ELLs and SWD. • Read 180 and Achieve 3000 is being used to support ELLs and SWD.

STUDENT SUPPORT	
Additional Social/Emotional Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student support team reviews student information to determine support students needs. • Students are receiving additional support from guidance counselors, teacher advisors, and social workers and school

	<p>psychologists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers meet to discuss student academic and social needs. • Students stated teachers are very supportive and are available to provide additional advisement and tutoring. • Teachers are working with students to set reading and writing goals and students feel this has real value to help them improve their test scores. • Students reported they believe tutoring is helpful and available to help support their academic progress. • Students are benefiting from hearing from experienced guest speakers who discuss topics that are important to them (e.g., Scared Straight). • Students voiced their concern regarding lack of elevators for handicapped students, graffiti in bathrooms, lack of gym time and the need for more and new textbooks.
Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance services provide extra social/emotional support to students in the areas of education and career counseling, social work, psychology, attendance and behavior. • Students reported guidance and counseling staff are supportive, confidential and objectives • Students mentioned they are beginning to discuss career plans.
Enrichment Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students have a student council that meets regularly (Mondays) to discuss student issues. The student council can express their concerns to the principal. • Students would like more opportunities to participate in summer internships and/or apprenticeships. • Students would like to have more technology in the building (e.g., Smart Boards).

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	
Effective Leadership and Principal Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal has been a school leader for eight years. • The instructional team is provided with many opportunities to develop as school leaders. Both principal and assistant principals attend leadership seminars on a bimonthly basis, receive one-on-one coaching regarding effective leadership for improved student learning, and monthly SQR/Inquiry Team coordination and walkthroughs. • According to the principal, there is a work plan that aligns all the various partners' responsibilities and products to be produced. • The principal and AP's are evaluated annually.
Leadership Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal indicated she and her team receive on-going support from the external partners on the attributes of an effective school leader. • The EPO director schedules meetings with the principal and the cabinet separately to discuss data, including walkthrough findings, in-house and NYCDoE assessment results, PD training and budget compliance leadership issues. These meetings occur every 5-10 days depending on the length of the school week. • Various components of the plan are reviewed and revised either weekly or biweekly to ensure that the school is moving in the right

	direction for improved student learning and principal development.
Building Level Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school leadership team meets weekly to discuss the specific needs of each student. • Weekly meetings occur to address the various instructional, PD and school improvement grant compliance progress.

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
Environment is Conducive to Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the time of the NYSED team site visit, the building appeared to be safe and conducive to learning. Students were not observed roaming the hallways, and classroom behavior was appropriate and respectful. • School leaders, teachers, students and parents commented that the school is safe and there are few disruptions. • The principal indicated he meets with staff to discuss safety and review incident data. • The school has an anti-bullying campaign and students discussed the importance of continuing this discussion.
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and school leaders meet to discuss the implementation of the school improvement grant (SIG) and to discuss instruction, assessment and data related to student progress. • Parents and students agreed school leaders and teachers are very supportive and communicate in an open and professional manner. • Parents indicated they participate on the school leadership team.
Parent Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a parent coordinator who was interviewed and provided detailed information regarding services provided to parents. • The parent coordinator provided information to the NYSED Site Visit Team member regarding the types of translation services that are provided for parents. • The parent coordinator coordinates workshops based on input from parents and is working to improve parent involvement. • Parents interviewed requested additional information on the plan to restructure the school and are concerned about the possible loss of staff they believe to be effective.
External/Community-Based Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The external partner organization (EPO) is Abyssinian Development Corporation (ADC). They are working to provide PD to support building the capacity of the school leadership team and teachers to successfully implement school reform strategies. • Professional development topics include study groups, training sessions, inter-visitations and learning walks. • The ADC is also providing support with a focus on instructional strategies, literacy, curriculum development, lesson planning and pacing guides.

BUDGET AND OTHER FUNDING SOURCES	
Budget Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is waiting for final approval of the School Improvement Grant (SIG). The principal would like to implement their reform model in the final quarter of the school year.

Use of 1003(g) or 1003(a) grant funding	<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 received \$900,000 for the 2011-12 school year.
Use of Other Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is unclear what additional funding is being used to implement the school reform model.

DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT	
District Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Network is providing services to the school and has eight instructional staff working with teachers in the building. The Network is also scheduling school inter-visitations where school leaders can learn strategies from schools that are showing promise.
JIT/SIG Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations of the joint intervention team (JIT) and the requirements of the SIG application appear to be appropriately aligned.

Summary

The NYSED Site Visit Team conducted a one-day visit at Isobel Rooney Middle School 80. Multiple conversations with school leaders and supporting documentation resulted in a wealth of information regarding the school’s reform model. The school serves 652 students in the sixth through eighth grades. The NYSED Site Visit Team was able to collect information about the school’s efforts to implement its mission through extensive conversations with the principal, assistant principals, teachers, parents, students, direct classroom observations and document reviews.

Some positive initiatives that were noted include the monitoring of teacher attendance every two months, the monitoring of PD strategies being implemented in the classroom and the revision of all rubrics used throughout the building. Additionally, students believe the various supports provided to them, including tutoring and the setting of goals, are helping to support their academic progress.

School leaders appear to have positive relationships with teachers, students’ parents/caregivers and other district administrators. They indicated they are focused and eager to promote rapid improvement to increase student achievement. The leadership team revisits the accountability system to ensure all educational decisions made are based on evidence and the action plans designed are researched based and drives instruction in the classroom to a higher quality of teaching practice and student learning.