



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

Progress Review Report — 2011-2012

School:	Jamaica High School	School District:	Community School District (CSD) 28
Date of Site Visit:	February 9, 2012	Team Member(s)	Dr Sharon Holder, Andrew McGrath, Kalimah Geter

Address: 167-01 Gothic Drive, Jamaica, NY 11432

Principal Telephone: (718) 739-5942

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BEDS #: 342800011470

School Principal: Walter G. Acham
 Enric Kendall

E-mail address: wacham@schools.nyc.gov
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SIM /SAM: N/A

E-mail address: N/A

Grade Configuration: 10 to 12

Total Enrollment: 555

PLA identification: ELA, Math, Graduation

Identified subgroups: A, B, H, SWD, ELL

Intervention model:

Phase Out/Turnaround Model – At the time of the visit, the principal had recently retired. A current assistant principal was designated as the new acting principal.

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

1.	Queens Community House	4.	
2.		5.	
3.		6.	

STAFFING

Organization and Structure

- The administrative team is comprised of a principal designee and seven assistant principals. Prior to his position, the principal designee was an assistant principal of mathematics for eleven years at Jamaica High School.
- The former principal's last day at the school was on January 29, 2012.
- There are four English language arts teachers, eight special education teachers, and three English as a second language (ESL) teachers.
- The grade configuration for the school is 10 to 12. The school is in the process of being phased out.
- Staffing has been impacted in the following ways:
 - Many teachers transferred out after the school was named a phase out school
 - Enrichment and elective classes have been reduced or eliminated
 - Instructional support for struggling students has been significantly reduced.

<p>Teacher Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders and teachers reported formal and informal observations are based on Essential Elements of Instruction framework. • Two to four informal observations are scheduled for all teachers each semester. Feedback comes in the form of post-observation meetings. Teachers stated the feedback they receive is constructive. • Informal observations and the feedback are directly related to school-wide initiatives and/or professional development (PD) sessions. The observations and feedback are intended to promote instructional consistency throughout the school. • Formal observations include: a pre-lesson meeting and lesson plan review, formal observation of a teaching lesson and a follow-up meeting to review the results of the observation.
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<p>PLANNING</p>	
<p>Student Enrollment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average daily attendance for students was 84 percent at the time of the NYSED team site visit. • Teachers and school leaders identified the following as interventions to improve student attendance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher outreach to truancy prone students ○ The attendance team makes calls and visits to the homes of students ○ Automated “phone blast” of telephone calls to all student homes ○ Parent outreach via electronic correspondence ○ <i>Skedula</i>, an online service, is accessible by parents to track student attendance on a daily basis • Reflected in the Self-Review Report of the school are 47 potential long-term student absentees.
<p>Student Performance/ Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are identified for additional supports based on academic performance, credit accrual and attendance. • PLATO distance learning has been implemented to provide students with additional opportunities to accrue credits. • After school classes are also implemented to provide students the opportunity to recover credit for failed courses.
<p>Teacher Attendance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher attendance is not perceived to be an issue that specifically affects the implementation of the school improvement plan. • The average daily attendance for teachers was 86% at the time of the NYSED team site visit.

<p>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)</p>	
<p>Professional Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The network achievement coach is on-site regularly to work with specific teachers in an effort to improve the delivery of instruction and analysis of student data. • Teachers receive PD related to instructional technology and methods for implementing it in the classroom. However, teachers have little to no classroom technology available to them for use. • The network has provided PD on using the Data Tool for targeted groups/cohorts for lesson planning and academic intervention. • Administrators and teachers have received PD on the Chancellor’s Regulations, Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), PLATO, Skedula and Achieve 3000.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators responsible for teacher evaluations were provided with PD related to Danielson Frame Work, Datacation, SKEDULA, and data analysis to identify learning trends and at risk populations. • Professional development topics have been selected in response to the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) recommendations. • According to the December 16, 2011 Self-Review Report, topics were selected based on recommendations from the Transition Support Network level and assessments of scholarship reports.
<p>Instruction and Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following findings are based on information ascertained from various stakeholders including parents, teachers, students, administrators as well as school and district documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No honors or advance placement classes are offered to students ○ The school no longer offers calculus, chemistry or physics ○ Only three electives are offered to students: Law, Accounting and Latin American Literature. Prior to the implementation of the phase out model, elective courses offered to students were: African American Literature, Film, Geography, Forensics, Sociology, Psychology, Computer classes (Word, Excel, visual basic, PowerPoint) and Creative Writing ○ Off-track classes, which were offered to students not meeting Regents requirements, are no longer available ○ Students are not able to complete specialty programs: Business, Computer Science, Engineering and Finance Institutes, or Art Institutes ○ Students are not offered SAT prep courses ○ Two teachers, who are not certified in special education, are teaching students with disabilities. • The school uses data to drive and improve instructional outcomes.
<p>Monitoring and Analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflected in Jamaica High School December 16, 2012 Self-Review Report, PD is mandated and attendance is taken at each session. Follow-up on classroom implementation occurs through informal and formal observations.

<p>DATA ANALYSIS</p>	
<p>Data that Informs Instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following data collection systems are used to analyze student information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) ○ <i>Datacation</i> ○ <i>Acuity</i> ○ <i>Skedula</i>, an online service, is accessible by teachers and parents to track student achievement information • Teachers use their own assessments to monitor student understanding and subsequently adjust classroom instruction. • Teachers do not use periodic common assessments to collaborate with their colleagues. They consult with their colleagues on an informal basis.
<p>Data & Student Achievement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student achievement data was prominently displayed in the main hallway. Individual student identification numbers corresponded with subject specific percentage ratings highlighted in the colors of red, yellow or green. • Network representatives developed data reporting spreadsheets which are used by staff and students to track achievement data. The NYSED Site

	Visit Team observed students viewing this information throughout the day.
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CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

Learning Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The length of the school day for students is from 8:21a.m. to 2:47p.m. Each class meets for 44 minutes. • The school provides an after school program Monday through Friday from 3:00p.m. to 5:00p.m. The program is offered to ELLs for tutoring in all subject areas. Student participation is voluntary. • The school does not offer enrichment activities for the general education population. • The school does not offer common planning time (CPT) for general education subject area teachers. English as a second language teachers participate in common planning sessions five days per week during the seventh period. Agenda and attendance records for these sessions were reviewed during the NYSED team site visit.
Mapped & Paced Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CCLS were rolled out in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics in PD sessions during the summer of 2011. Teacher attendance sheets for the PD sessions were provided to the NYSED Site Visit Team.
Instructional Programming Linked to Student Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers expressed frustration regarding staffing reductions and class composition. Students below proficiency are grouped with students above proficiency. • Few enrichment opportunities are available to students capable of advanced coursework as a result of lower enrollment rates and staff reductions. • Academic intervention services (AIS) are held during and after school program. During their focus group session, students reported they were not aware of such opportunities • School administrators reported the mathematics and ELA curriculum have undergone revisions based on student needs, as indicated through assessment data. Curriculum revision is on-going and involves assistant principals and teachers meeting informally and during department meetings. • A “boot camp” program is being planned for the spring semester during spring recess week, which will allow students to make up credits for physical education and lab requirements.
Effective Teaching Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NYSED Site Visit Team conducted classroom visits throughout the school and observed the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Appropriate pacing and on-going checks for understanding ○ Effective classroom management ○ Large class sizes with few behavioral disruptions ○ Appropriate and respectful dialogue between teachers and students ○ Limited to no use of instructional technology ○ Engaging and appropriate instruction for ELLs ○ Flexibility and responsiveness in instruction toward student needs ○ Encouraging and supportive language use toward students • Teachers have received training in the use of instructional technology. However, smart boards have not been installed in classrooms. • In most classrooms visited, clear aims were displayed and teachers clearly explained task objectives to students. • Teachers were observed making relevant, real-life connections to lesson

	<p>content which seemed to assist students in acquiring lesson objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction did not seem challenging and thought provoking in many of the classrooms visited. • Two teachers, not certified in special education, are teaching students with disabilities.
ELL/SWD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school offers an after school program which includes academic intervention services (AIS), tutoring, credit recovery and College Now classes. During the student focus group session, students reported they were not aware of these opportunities. • English language learners (ELL) receive support through the Achieve 3000 computer-based program which allows students to move from one reading level to the next through the mastery of a series of reading passages and comprehension assessments.

STUDENT SUPPORT	
Additional Social/Emotional Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school offers academic supports such as a partnership with the <i>Cooperative Technical High School</i> which allows special education students to attend off-site vocational training in the areas of carpentry, plumbing, welding and technology. • There are two guidance counselors on staff at the school. One guidance counselor handled a caseload of 700 students from September 2011 to December 2011. The second guidance counselor, who is responsible for servicing the needs of the special education population at the school, was assigned a caseload of 215 students which included general education and special education students, in December 2011.
Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guidance counselors provide limited counseling targeted toward students who are in visible distress. The school does not have a protocol for students to request counseling and walk-ins are often turned away due to the demands of other responsibilities which are carried out by guidance counselors (ex. student programming, transcript analysis, Regents exam registration and extended day planning and registration). • Guidance counselors reported students are not receiving needed counseling at a time when they are emotionally affected by news of the school's closing and related topics. • The Queens Community House supports specific groups of at-risk students regarding attendance issues, homework help and credit recovery.
Enrichment Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school offers a PLATO program which offers a menu of student enrichment activities and programs including advanced placement courses. The school has offered enrichment programs in the past to students, but currently does not. • The school has a college advisor who facilitated a college night in the fall semester and has plans for additional college planning events and career fairs during the spring semester. • The school has a student Key Club which participates in service projects that focus on giving back to the surrounding community.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	
Effective Leadership and Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The former principal provided leadership to Jamaica High School from September 2007 to January 2012. • At the time of the NYSED team site visit, the current principal was

Evaluation	<p>identified as the principal designee. Prior to his new position; he was an assistant principal of mathematics for eleven years at Jamaica High School.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal is evaluated once a year • There is no formal mentoring program for principals who have served as principal for one or more years. • The former principal incorporated feedback from observations from support and supervisory staff into consideration for implementation of the school's improvement plan.
Leadership Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not clear what PD has been provided to school leaders related to effective leadership. • The network did provide limited PD towards the latter part of the term on disaggregating student data by cohort.
Building Level Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet meetings are held weekly to discuss students' performances and needs. • All pedagogical issues are reviewed in a daily morning brief.

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
Environment is Conducive to Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school shares the building with four other schools. • At the time of the NYSED team site visit, the school appeared to be clean, safe and conducive to learning. In some areas of the building, teachers were visible in hallways and common areas. Classrooms were managed appropriately to promote a positive learning environment. • The school building appears to have ample security. • During class period transitions, some hallways were crowded with little adult supervision. Students were observed standing around in small clusters without evidence of urgency to move to the next class in a timely manner. • Teachers and school leaders reported student behavior has improved significantly since the school was listed as a persistently dangerous school in 2007.
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals of the four schools cooperate and collaborate in a positive manner. Efforts have been made to coordinate a building-wide student dance. Athletic teams are comprised of students from all schools within the building. • There was limited evidence indicating schools within the building were attempting to pool their resources to provide enrichment opportunities for all students. Two students are taking physics with Gateway High School, six students are in drama/theater with Queens Collegiate High School and Public Schools Athletic League activities are shared. Different bell schedules make it difficult to collaborate. • There are several professional communities within the school including the school leadership team and the United Federation of Teachers consultation committee. Both groups conduct monthly meetings and additional meetings when emergencies arise.
Parent Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Parent Association meets once a month. • Monthly newsletters are distributed to parents informing them of school-wide events and initiatives. • The school does not currently have a parent coordinator or parent volunteers on staff.

External/ Community-Based Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the time of the NYSED team site visit, the school had one on-site partnership with Queens Community House. This organization offers the school support with at-risk student groups in need of attendance support, homework help and credit recovery. • The school has plans to begin a partnership with the <i>20/20 Visions</i> organization which will facilitate an arts program on Fridays for students interested in the performing arts of theater and the spoken word.
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BUDGET AND OTHER FUNDING SOURCES	
Budget Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Improvement Grant (SIG) modifications are not necessary as the school is receiving no SIG funds during the 2011-12 school years.
Use of 1003(g) or 1003(a) grant funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No 1003(g) funds are being given to the Phase-out schools. NYCDoE is providing funding through other sources.
Use of Other Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is using NYCDoE funds, in coordination with other school resources, including Fair Student Funding and applicable federal or state grants for the school (e.g., Title III LEP, Title I SWP School Success Granted) to carry out the school-wide strategies. It is unclear how much funding the school received for the 2011-12 school year.

DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT	
District Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school receives technical assistance from the Transition Support Network to carry out its activities and address instructional and operational issues that are unique to a school that is in the process of phasing out.
JIT/SIG Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was not evidence that the school was implementing the recommendations in the JIT Report.

SUMMARY

The three-member NYSED Site Visit Team conducted a full-day visit at Jamaica High School on February 9, 2012. Although the visit was brief, the team was able to ascertain information about the school's efforts to continue to provide a quality educational program to students enrolled in grades 10 through 12.

The site visit included interviews with school administrators, teachers, students, parents and school partners; classroom observations of the teaching and learning process; and a review of school and district documents.

The NYSED team met with varied stakeholders who expressed concern regarding the lack of support and technical assistance they received from the NYCDoE to improve student learning at the phase out school. Issues raised but not limited to include the following:

- No honors or advance placement classes are offered to students
- The school no longer offers calculus, chemistry, or physics
- Only three electives are offered to students
- Off –track classes are no longer available
- Students are not offered SAT pre courses
- Students are not able to complete specialty programs such as Business, Computer Science, Engineering and Finance Institutes or Art Institutes
- Two teachers are not certified in the subject area they are teaching

The NYSED Site Visit Team will conduct a second visit to Jamaica High School prior to the end of the school year. The primary focus will be on the educational programs provided to improve student learning.



May 21, 2012

Sharon Holder
New York State Education Department
Office of Innovative School Models
89 Washington Avenue
Room 465 EBA
Albany, New York 11234

Dear Sharon Holder,

I am writing to respond to the findings in the draft PLA monitoring report for Jamaica High School dated March 7, 2012.

The NYSED team met with varied stakeholders who expressed concern regarding the lack of support and technical assistance they received from the New York City Department of education to improve student learning at the school. Issues raised but not limited to include the following.

Statement 1: No honors or advance placement classes are offered to students.

Statement 2: The school no longer offers calculus, chemistry, or physics

Response to Statements 1 & 2

Consistent with the SED-approved phase out of Jamaica, the enrollment at Jamaica High School is decreasing and as a result, it had to reduce the number of course offerings for students. In order to provide students with access to honors and AP classes, the principal has established a partnership with Gateway HS which is located on the Jamaica HS campus. This partnership will allow Jamaica HS students who qualify based upon academic performance, to take AP and honors classes through Gateway HS for the 2012-2013 school year. In order to create this transition Jamaica HS is in the process of modifying their bell and period schedule to coordinate with Gateway HS. This modified bell and period schedule will be in place for the 2012-2013 school years. Presently, Jamaica High School has two students taking physics with Gateway to Science High School, and two “College Now” classes in English.

In addition Jamaica HS presently has instituted a zero period English, Math & Social Studies honor class for students.

Statement 3: Only three electives are offered to students.

Statement 4: Off-track classes are no longer available.

Statement 6: Students are not able to complete specialty programs such as Business, Computer Science, Engineering and Finance Institutes or Art Institutes.

Response to Statements 3, 4 and 6

Consistent with the phase out, Jamaica High School has re-configured its student programming to meet the needs of a smaller student population. As such, the former Law, Business and Computer tracks do not exist as they did. These tracks included specific sequences of classes within each respective discipline. Currently students have access to the following electives: (*HL4-Family law (4sections)*, *HL6-Civil Law (2sections)*, *HL8-Constitution Law (1section)*, also *BB4PA – Accounting (1 section)*.) These electives are offered first to seniors and then to the rest of the school community.

Statement 5: Students are not offered SAT pre courses.

Response to Statement 5

Jamaica High School began SAT prep Saturday March 24th, 2012, leading up to the actual SAT exam. Zero period SAT program was not possible because teachers were not available. Other shared programs with Gateway HS are under discussion for the 2012-2013 school year; this collaboration will include SAT preparation.

Statement 7: Two teachers are not certified in the subject area they are teaching.

Response to Statement 7

Throughout the phase-out process, Jamaica HS will continue to lose staffing positions each year. The network has created a budget line to hire a Special Education teacher. Four candidates were interviewed to date, but none had the math background that the administration believes is necessary for the vacancy position. The school has interviews scheduled for other candidates.

Action Plan for 2011-2012 SY

Since the NYSED visit on February 9th, 2012 the school has addressed some of the feedback given to them at the exit conference. Listed below are some steps Jamaica HS has already taken:

1. The school has instituted common planning periods by department once per week for all content areas.
2. The school utilizes a data system where by the guiding message is “going green” Through this data system student grades are color coded to denote specific levels. If a student grade is highlighted in green they have mastered the concepts being assessed. Student grades are present on a spreadsheet and are displayed in the school.
3. Teachers are actively using the student data from the data system to monitor, evaluate and re-adjust classroom lessons and student work product.
4. Enrichment opportunities are provided to students through online programs such as PLATO
5. The school has received a grant to outfit the school with 7 new SMART Boards as well as to purchase laptops for teachers. Installation and training on the use of smart board may not be possible until early June (according to the vendor).
6. Jamaica HS will produce a brochure for students and parents about all the enrichment opportunities available in the school.

Action Plan for 2012-2013 SY

Listed below are some steps Jamaica HS is planning to take for the 2012-2013 school year:

- Jamaica HS is planning to create a master curriculum committee comprised a guidance counselor, and four teachers representatives from each core curriculum content area. The function of this committee will be to evaluate curriculum, transcripts and work to support the individual common planning teams and produce gains in graduation as well as student progress and performance.
- Jamaica HS will re-adjust their school schedule to allow for two block lunch periods, whereby the teachers will have common planning time. This will also afford teachers the ability to engage in cross curricula planning conversations with staff.
- Jamaica HS will create a common planning calendar monthly.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Edward Hui
Executive Director, Office of School Development
Division of Portfolio Planning