



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

***Progress Review Report — 2011-2012***

<b>School:</b>	Newtown High School	<b>School District:</b>	Community School District (CSD) 28
<b>Date of Site Visit:</b>	March 15, 2012	<b>Team Member(s)</b>	Kalimah Geter and Major Capers

**Address:** 4801 90th Street, Flushing, NY 11373

**Principal Telephone:** (718) 595-8400

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**BEDS #:** 342400011455

**School Principal:** John Ficalora

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**SIM:** Michael Adin

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**Grade Configuration:** 9 to 12

**Total Enrollment:** 2,507

**PLA identification:** Graduation, ELA and Math

**Identified subgroups:** All Students

**Intervention model:**

Re-start — The Educational Partnership Organization (EPO) is Johns Hopkins University/Diplomas Now. The current principal is in his twentieth year as principal of the school and the effective date of his tenure was August 1992.

**School's community-based organization (CBO), partnership support organization (PSO) partners and major vendors:**

1.	Queens Community House	6.	Queensboro Community College
2.	Kiwanis After School Program	7.	Laguardia Community College
3.	Read Foundation	8.	REACH
4.	Target	9.	Children's First Network 201
5.	Johns Hopkins/Diplomas Now		

<b>STAFFING</b>	
<b>Organization and Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principal was appointed in August 1992. He has been the school leader for 20 years.</li> <li>• The school employs nineteen English language arts (ELA) teachers, twenty math teachers, fourteen special education teachers and nine English as a second language (ESL) teachers.</li> <li>• The school has twelve guidance counselors on staff.</li> <li>• During the 2011-12 school year, the school hired one ESL master teacher using School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds.</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principal works with the talent coach regarding teacher evaluations and the use of the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching (Danielson Framework).</li> <li>• The principal and assistant principals have attended professional development (PD) sessions facilitated by the NYCDoE and the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) regarding the Danielson Framework.</li> <li>• According to school administrators, each teacher will receive two to six observations each school year.</li> <li>• Teachers meet with their supervisor after each observation and are also given written feedback for each formal observation within one week of the observation.</li> </ul>

<b>PLANNING</b>	
<b>Student Enrollment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The average daily student attendance rate was 85 percent at the time of the NYSED site visit.</li> <li>• The school has two attendance teachers who conduct home visits and three attendance coordinators who facilitate the work with students to support improvement.</li> <li>• Additionally, the school has four school aides who make phone calls to student homes regarding attendance.</li> <li>• Each small learning community (SLC) has a teacher who works with students on attendance issues.</li> <li>• The Johns Hopkins University/Diplomas Now (EPO) City Year program works with ninth grade students who have attendance and academic concerns.</li> <li>• According to school administrators, the EPO has helped the school implement an early warning indicator (EWI) system to focus on students with attendance concerns and interventions.</li> <li>• The graduation rate for the 2010-11 school year was approximately 62.4 percent.</li> </ul>
<b>Student Performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school sends postcards to homes of students who have two consecutive, unexcused absences to remind them to return to school.</li> <li>• Students who are absent each day receive a recorded telephone call on the evening of the absence.</li> <li>• The EWI system assists teachers and administrators with identifying students who require interventions.</li> <li>• The school leader and teachers review student assessments to determine extra academic and behavior supports according to student needs.</li> </ul>

<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes of interventions are reported to the principal monthly through data reports.</li> <li>• The school has an inquiry team that meets once a month to discuss individual students and how the interventions are impacting student progress.</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher Attendance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher attendance was at 98 percent at the time of the NYSED site visit.</li> <li>• Teacher attendance was not a noted concern of school administrators.</li> </ul>

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)**

<b>Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers reported they received training regarding the instructional co-teaching model.</li> <li>• The school received professional development (PD) from the Heart of Change program, focused on classroom management issues.</li> <li>• English as a second language (ESL) teachers reported receiving content area PD and Regents prep PD for English language learners (ELL).</li> <li>• Teacher receive common planning time (CPT) everyday of the school week.</li> <li>• According to school administrators, monthly faculty meetings are conducted which include a PD component regarding the Danielson Framework and strategies to engage students in learning.</li> <li>• Special education teachers reported receiving PD regarding instructional support services and understanding students individualized learning plans (IEP).</li> <li>• The EPO has provided PD regarding curriculum and strategic reading.</li> <li>• The EPO provides PD at least once a month regarding the EWI system and its norms and protocols.</li> <li>• The network conducts PD to each SLC two days out of each month.</li> <li>• Teachers have received PD regarding the use of smartboards in the classroom.</li> <li>• Teachers are using interim assessments and review results at weekly EWI meetings held during common planning times for SLC groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Instructional and Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional instructional support for teachers is provided if supervisors identify the need. The AUSSIE representative and the appropriate assistant principal provides one on one assistance as necessary.</li> <li>• Teachers who have received unsatisfactory ratings from instructional observations receive UFT “PIP” support and “PIP Plus” support from the NYCDoE.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher implementation of PD strategies is monitored through assistant principal daily classroom walkthroughs and scheduled observations.</li> <li>• Professional development sessions focus on one Danielson Framework competency at a time. Walkthroughs following usually focus on the implementation of that competency.</li> </ul>

<b>DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
<b>Data that Informs Instruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Twice monthly, teachers input data and student progress into the Daedalus system and this is discussed during weekly EWI meetings.</li> <li>• The school uses the Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) to identify the number of credits students have and to review student Regents examination scores.</li> <li>• Each SLC has one teacher who is responsible for data collection and distribution.</li> <li>• The school has a full time data coordinator on staff.</li> <li>• The assistant principal for each department receives monthly scholarship reports and monthly progress in testing score percentages by individual teacher.</li> <li>• Results from the ACUITY assessments, ELA , math and ESL assessments are monitored by computerized reporting systems.</li> <li>• The Automate the School (ATS) data system is used to monitor attendance, subgroup data, class lists and department passing rates.</li> <li>• Daedalus is used to allow teachers direct access to student transcripts and Regents test scores.</li> </ul>
<b>Data &amp; Student Achievement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data analysis takes place in SLC groups and the data specialist facilitates the analysis process.</li> <li>• Data is retrieved and EWI information is analyzed every two weeks. This information includes data on attendance, behavior and academics.</li> <li>• Marking period data is analyzed in the middle of each marking period.</li> <li>• Teachers reported the data manager provided training to teachers regarding the use of data. He also trained teachers on the use of Datacation and Schedules.</li> <li>• Teachers use the Datacation online grade book which allows them to see student progress reports. Students also have access to their progress reports by using individualized codes.</li> </ul>
<b>CURRICULUM AND TEACHING</b>	
<b>Learning Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The length of the school day for students follows three sessions. The first session begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 2:09 p.m. for grades 11 and 12. The second session begins at 8:20 a.m. and ends at 3:51 p.m. For grade nine students. The last session begins at 9:12 a.m. and ends at 3:51 p.m. for tenth grade students.</li> <li>• Teachers participate in CPT everyday of the school week.</li> </ul>
<b>Mapped &amp; Paced Curriculum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School administrators reported the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) has been implemented for ELA and mathematics.</li> </ul>
<b>Instructional Programming Linked to Student Needs Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is using Acuity assessments in ELA, math and ESL to provide assessments by class period to teachers.</li> <li>• ACUITY assessments are conducted three times each school year.</li> <li>• The school also uses Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) to determine changes in cohort groups and LAB-R data to determine placement of incoming ELLs.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Effective Teaching Practices</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School administrators assign mentors to new teachers to support their instruction and growth.</li> <li>• Teachers were observed using the integrated co-teaching model.</li> <li>• Students were observed using technology to access information and complete assignments.</li> <li>• Teachers were observed using differentiated instruction, formative assessments, effective questioning techniques and effective teaching practices.</li> <li>• Teachers are using the Achieve 3000 online curriculum to enhance student ELA skills.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ELL/SWD</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has a master teacher who provides support to the ELL population.</li> <li>• Teachers are using the Achieve 3000, an online reading/writing program, to provide support to ELLs, students with disabilities (SWD) and general education students.</li> <li>• The school has established an additional class, whereby two teachers provide support to ELL students. These students have three periods of ESL and an additional content areas class.</li> <li>• School leaders and teachers reported the school has an additional class for Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) to build basic skills in English.</li> </ul>

<p><b>SCHOOL LEADERSHIP</b></p>	
<p><b>Effective Leadership and Principal Evaluation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the time of the NYSED site visit the principal reported completing and submitting the Principal Progress Review to his superintendent for evaluation purposes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leadership Development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School administrators have participated in Danielson Framework PD provided by the NYCDoE.</li> <li>• The Children’s First Network 201 (the network) also provided school administrators with PD regarding the Danielson Framework.</li> <li>• Assistant principals reported attending monthly PD sessions with the network.</li> </ul>
<p><b>School Improvement Manager/External Providers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principal reported the school improvement liaison (SIL) had provided support regarding SIG implementation and classroom procedures during the month of December 2011.</li> <li>• At the time of the NYSED site visit, the newly assigned school improvement manager (SIM) was present for a brief introduction but had not began working with the school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Building Level Leadership Team</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the principal, the cabinet meets weekly to discuss SIG implementation and to plan next steps.</li> </ul>

<b>STUDENT SUPPORT</b>	
<b>Additional Social/Emotional Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school-based support team reviews student information to determine supports needed for the student body.</li> <li>• Students receive additional support from guidance counselors, teacher advisors, social workers and school psychologists.</li> <li>• Teachers meet daily to discuss student academic and social needs.</li> <li>• The school has partnered with City Year to provide SAT preparation, mentoring and tutoring.</li> <li>• At the time of the NYSED site visit, the school did not report the use of the Response to Intervention program.</li> </ul>
<b>Counseling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City Year program works with ninth grade students providing after school activities and supports. City Year also works in classrooms as assistants to teachers, supporting students as needed.</li> <li>• The school has ten guidance counselors and two assigned teacher reserved (ATR) guidance counselors providing support to students in need.</li> <li>• Guidance counselors and school psychologists provide group and individual counseling for students regarding life skills, how to apply for college, freshman seminar topics and fighting against violence and bullying.</li> <li>• Guidance services provide extra social/emotional support to students in the areas of education and career counseling, social work, psychology, attendance and behavior.</li> <li>• The school has a college advisor to help students think about college issues. A financial aid night is conducted each semester.</li> <li>• According to school administrators, the school has a SPARK drug and alcohol abuse prevention counselor that works with students identified as at-risk for these issues.</li> <li>• The pupil personnel team meets regularly to discuss suspensions and the on-site detention room.</li> <li>• Students reported guidance counseling is very strong as students have seen their counselors and have developed a post-secondary and graduation plan.</li> <li>• The guidance department has established goals to raise graduation, attendance and college application rates.</li> </ul>
<b>Enrichment Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principal reported the school has every sports team except for football and swimming.</li> <li>• The school has a Mu Alpha Theta club which provides tutoring to students during the school day.</li> <li>• Students can participate in the National Honor Society.</li> <li>• The school offers advanced placement classes in Chinese, Spanish, math, social studies and English.</li> <li>• The school has two career and technical education programs, architecture and business.</li> <li>• Students can receive six to nine college credits through the school's partnership with Queensboro Community College.</li> <li>• Students have the opportunity to take five certification courses for Microsoft Office programs.</li> <li>• The school has a student leadership institute that meets six Saturdays throughout the school year.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers reported the school conducts an after school program in Spanish for ELL students.</li> <li>• Students can participate in community service at local nursing homes.</li> <li>• The school has a music group that performs at local nursing homes during the holidays.</li> <li>• Students participate in community services at Elmhurst Hospital during the holidays, sponsored by Kiwanis International.</li> <li>• The school has a student government that meets regularly to discuss student issues. The student government meets with the principal to discuss their needs.</li> <li>• The Queens Community House provides a youth development program for students. This program has been in the school for eight years and provides trips to students who are struggling with attendance and have low ELA scores.</li> <li>• Students reported participating in college fairs and visits.</li> <li>• Twenty-two students participate in the Upward Bound Program and counselors and teachers are considering starting an ASPIRA leadership program for students.</li> <li>• Students would like to have band and more opportunities to participate in internships.</li> <li>• The EPO Diplomas Now program has established a team to work with students to set goals based on their attendance, behavior and course performance. Teachers and the Diplomas Now team work with students to develop student achievement plans.</li> <li>• The school provides a credit recovery and independent studies program to help students accumulate credits.</li> <li>• The school conducts a Saturday academy to help students improve on the Regents exams.</li> </ul>
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**SCHOOL CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

<p><b>Environment is Conducive to Learning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the time of the NYSED site visit, the building appeared to be safe and conducive to learning. Students were observed engaged in their work, and classroom behavior was appropriate and respectful.</li> <li>• School leaders, teachers, students and parents commented safety had improved and there are fewer suspensions and incidents occurring.</li> <li>• School leaders stated the school is designated as a non-scanning school and this confirms the school has a good safety record.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Collaboration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers use CPT to collaborate with administrators and coaches.</li> <li>• School leaders and teachers collaborate with the EPO and Sunnyside Community Services and the network staff to receive necessary training and support.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parent Involvement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has a full time parent coordinator.</li> <li>• The school offers ESL classes for parents on Saturdays.</li> <li>• Workshops regarding college preparation and financial aid have occurred to inform parents of these opportunities.</li> <li>• The school has an operating Parent Teachers Association (PTA) with monthly meetings.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the 2011-12 school year a town hall meeting was conducted for the parents of students with disabilities (SWD).</li> <li>• Parents receive a newsletter that provides information regarding parent-teacher conferences, tutoring for students and helpful websites.</li> <li>• The Parent Coordinator plans events and workshops based on parent needs. Parent meetings have provided information on school changes, ELL information, nutrition and financial aid.</li> <li>• The parent coordinator and parents stated parent involvement is very high at this school and parents are represented on the school leadership team.</li> <li>• The school has a monthly list of parent involvement activities that is shared with parents.</li> </ul>
<b>External/Community-Based Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has a partnership with LaGuardia Community College. Students can take courses in psychology, sociology and college algebra.</li> <li>• The school also partners with Queensboro Community College. Students can use the school's library and take courses in business and engineering.</li> <li>• The school is working to develop additional community partnerships so students can participate in internships at local businesses.</li> <li>• Sunnyside Community Services provides counseling support to students.</li> </ul>

<b>DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<b>District Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The network provides on-going monthly PD for teachers and school administrators.</li> <li>• The network also provides supports in the areas of student attendance, security, human resources, budget and special education compliance.</li> <li>• According to school administrators, the network provides PD in the areas of teacher effectiveness, data, classroom management and curriculum development.</li> </ul>
<b>JIT/SIG Alignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many of the JIT recommendations appear to be aligned with the SIG application.</li> </ul>

<b>BUDGET AND OTHER FUNDING SOURCES</b>	
<b>Budget Modifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the time of the NYSED site visit, modifications to the SIG had not been made.</li> </ul>
<b>Use of 1003(g) or 1003(a) grant funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the NYSED document entitled "<i>New York State Improvement Grant (1003g) Cohort 1 and 2 Awarded Amounts</i>," the school was awarded \$1,800,000 for the 2011-12 school year.</li> <li>• The following actions, as per the SIG application, were not yet implemented at the time of the visit:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The ASCD staff development in differentiated Instruction and curriculum mapping.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Hiring of a math master teacher.</li> <li>3. Purchasing of Mac Air notebooks to facilitate frequent observations and tracking teacher growth.</li> <li>4. The JDL Horizons curriculum writing in social studies, English, math and science.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Use of Other Funding</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 I and School Success Granted) to carry out the school-wide strategies.</li> </ul>

**SUMMARY**

The NYSED Site Visit Team conducted a full-day site visit to Newtown High School on March 15, 2012. Although the visit was brief, the team was able to ascertain information about the school’s efforts to begin the implementation of their reform model for improving student learning.

The NYSED Site Visit Team met with various stakeholders and reviewed initiatives that appear to provide the school with the opportunity to make progress towards improved student achievement. School administrators are respectful and eager to promote rapid improvements in student performance; however, several deficiencies in the implementation of approved SIG actions were noted.

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

1. The ASCD staff development in differentiated Instruction and curriculum mapping.
2. Hiring of a mathematics master teacher.
3. Purchasing of Mac Air notebooks to facilitate frequent observations and tracking teacher growth.
4. The JDL Horizons curriculum writing in social studies, English, math and science.