



Office of Innovative School Models

**Persistently Lowest Achieving (PLA) Schools
School Improvement Grant (SIG)
Monitoring Report**

School:	Hughes Collaborative School – Transformation Model	School District:	Syracuse CSD
Date of Site-Visit:	October 15, 2010	Members of Site-Visit Team:	Major Capers, LoriAnn Curtin, Andrew McGrath

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 work day, 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 teachers.</i>

Findings:

- According to teachers interviewed, no further discussions/negotiations regarding revision to the teachers' collective bargaining agreement have taken place.
- Teachers stated that their contract will not expire until July of 2012.
- Staff stated that there is no further information available to them regarding how their evaluations will be linked to student performance.
- Teachers have heard preliminary information regarding education law 3012 (c).
- Teachers reported that they were all interviewed/re-interviewed for their positions prior to the beginning of the school year.
- The PLA site visit team observed that all new staff positions planned for in the SIG have been filled. The Attendance Assistant was set to begin on October 18, 2010.
- According to district leaders, the district was approved to receive the State Teacher Incentive Grant (STIG), which requires a great deal of cooperation with the teacher's union. Meetings have already taken place.
- Further evidence regarding rewarding or remediating staff was not requested during the on-site visit.

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:

- Due to bussing issues, the extended school day has not yet begun. This was stated by school leaders and confirmed by district staff.
- The attendance assistant was not on site yet. It was reported that the person filling the position will start on October 18, 2010.
- School leaders stated that the school has not begun implementing the Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) model, but they have received professional development in CCL. Additional professional development regarding CCL was expected at the October 20, 2010 staff development day.
- Teachers stated that certain cohorts of students will loop into the 2011-2012 school year, with the teachers they have during the 2010-1011 school year.
- The district leaders and school staff reported that all of the technology that was ordered for the building has not yet been received. Currently, the technology is being inventoried and labeled at the district office.
- District staff reported that the full-time parent liaison has been hired.
- The Performance Plan Template is under development at the State Education Department (SED). Therefore, no evidence was requested during this on-site visit.
- The plan was found to be aligned with the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) recommendations at the time the School Improvement Grant Application was approved.

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:

- All school staff reported that they have received training in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), and some training on Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL).
- Both SIOP and CCL are research based and supportive of the instructional needs of the school (as indicated in the school's JIT report).
- It was reported that staff would be receiving *Take One!* training in the near future.
- No evidence was collected regarding how the school would ensure that staff is implementing the professional development received.
- The teaching staff stated that they are in need of technology training and support.

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:

- At the time of the on-site visit, the “Data Dashboard” was not operational. It has been introduced to teachers, but they have not been trained in how to use the system.
- According to teachers, they have been collecting data in multiple ways, including: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Scholastic Reading Inventories (SRI), and Acuity.
- Teachers and district staff reported that weekly data meetings are taking place to inform instructional decision-making.
- Teachers stated that the meetings were student specific and end-point directed. If/when the extended day initiative begins, teachers will use some of that additional time to conduct data analysis.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING	
Increased Learning Time	<i>The school has implemented a longer school day, week, or school year to significantly increase 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>
Effective Teaching	<i>There is evidence of rigor, relevance, pacing, and 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 teachers, the school has mapped and paced curricula available for some grades via the district office.
- Classrooms observed by the PLA site visit team displayed learning objectives and instruction that is aligned to NYS Standards.
- In most classrooms students were highly engaged in the teacher directed and self-directed activities observed.
- According to the JIT recommendations, ELL teachers needed common planning time to ensure collaboration with general and special education teachers. Teachers reported that common planning time among grade levels happens daily, but no evidence was collected regarding whether or not ELL teachers have common time with general and special education teachers.
- During the visit, no evidence was gathered regarding necessary supports for ELLs and SWDs. That will be one of the major areas of focus for the PLA site visit team’s next visit.

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 and after the school day and during the summer.</i>

Findings:

- It was observed that students in need are receiving Academic Intervention Services (AIS) during the school day.
- Students reported feeling supported by the new administration at Hughes.
- Specific evidence regarding counseling services or enrichment opportunities was not requested during this on-site visit. These areas will be a focus for the next on-site visit.

TRANSFORMATIONAL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	
Effective Leadership	<i>The school leader has the experience and skills needed to successfully implement 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 intervention model.</i>

Findings:

- The school leader was interviewed and hired for the position at Hughes during the summer of 2010 because they were deemed to have the necessary experience and skills.
- Staff reported that the new school principal allows them to facilitate meetings and share leadership responsibilities.
- Staff reported that they are supported by the new school leaders, and they reported having respect for the new leaders.
- Teachers stated that there is a consistency of expectations from the new school leaders this school year.
- No evidence was collected regarding professional development that is solely offered to the school leaders. However, it appears that all school leaders received the same professional development that the teachers received.
- A School Improvement Manager was not hired for this school, however, the district established an Office of School Reform, and teachers reported that the director of that office is highly visible in the school, and conducts classroom walk-throughs frequently.
- The Director of the Office of School Reform meets frequently with the school leaders to help ensure that the school's intervention model is implemented as approved.

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:

- It was observed that the school is very clean and well maintained. It had many attractive, academically-oriented bulletin boards acting as “silent teachers.” Supervision in the hallways was sufficient. Students were not seen roaming the hallways. Students were mostly quiet and respectful in the hallways. Most classrooms observed were conducive to learning with few disruptions.
- Teaching staff displayed positive morale and enthusiasm for the new initiatives in the building.
- The parent liaison is implementing the plan to engage parents. For example, a newly formed Home-School Connection group meets regularly and operates like a Parent-Teacher-Student Association.
- No evidence was collected during this visit regarding collaboration with community-based partners.

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:

- The LEA is using SIG funds to support the transformation model at Hughes Elementary. According to the budget documents, the district has committed approximately \$5.5 million over the next three years to directly support school improvement efforts in its three PLA schools.
- The PLA site visit team cross-checked the school's FS-10 with staff lists and programs that are expected to be in place. Items that are “off-track” are listed in the “Planning” section above.
- According to the approved FS-10 for the Hughes 1003(g) grant, other funding sources are being used to support the school's intervention model. Title I, Title IIA, Title IID and Title III funds are being directed to the school to support school improvement initiatives.

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:

- No evidence was collected during this site visit regarding “operational flexibility”.
- It was observed that the district is providing direct support to the school through the Director of School Reform. According to school and district staff, the Director of School Reform is ensuring fidelity of implementation of the School Improvement Grant through frequent meetings and classroom walk-throughs.
- As stated above, the district hired the Hughes principal during the summer of 2010.

Summary:

The PLA team conducted a half-day site visit at the Hughes Collaborative School on October 15, 2010. Although the visit was brief, the PLA team was able to ascertain information about the school’s efforts to begin the implementation of their reform model for improved student learning.

The next site visit conducted will be a full day review and will focus on findings related to: 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.