



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

School:	Vanguard Collegiate High School – Turnaround Model – Phase In school – replacing Bioscience and Health Careers High School at Franklin and International Finance and Economic Development Careers High School at Franklin	School District:	Rochester CSD
Date of Site-Visit:	March 15, 2011 (Second Visit)	Members of Site-Visit Team:	LoriAnn Curtin, Kathryn Ahern, Alice Roberson

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 teachers.</i>

Findings:

- Teachers interviewed stated they are unaware of negotiations regarding revising their collective bargaining agreement, which is currently expired.
- Teachers reported they are not currently evaluated based on student performance or student growth. Non-tenured teachers are evaluated three times per year, fall, winter, and spring.
- The principal stated she is conducting evaluations by observing students to see if they are engaged in the academic lesson and activities.
- The school leaders indicated the school does not have a clear and transparent process for identifying staff for rewards and remediation.
- The school's budget shows it has funds to use for recruiting highly qualified staff.

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 principal provided the SED site visit team with an updated implementation plan showing which activities have already been implemented, and which are soon to be implemented.
- Under Code 15 of their budget, the school planned to hire a full-time classroom specialist. This position was not filled until November due to late arrival of funds from SED.
- The school has not yet hired the counselor substitutes delineated in Code 15.
- A vertical team teacher position delineated under Code 15 will not be hired until the summer; however, the end date for this grant is June 30, 2011.
- The district amended the school's budget for Read 180. The original Read 180 total in Code 40 was \$74,000, and the district decreased/amended the amount by \$50,000. The principal stated the remaining funds will be used to train and prepare for the implementation of Read 180 in the 2011-2012 school year.
- Under Code 45, the school has \$40,000 budgeted for music materials. The principal stated keyboards were purchased for student use, but other materials have yet to be purchased.
- The district is on track to complete the other activities in accordance with the approved implementation plan.
- The Performance Plan Template is under development at the State Education Department (SED). Therefore, no evidence was requested during this on-site visit.
- As a new/phase-in school, Vanguard Collegiate High School did not undergo a Joint Intervention Team review.

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 principal stated, and the professional development calendar shows the faculty is conducting collegial circles using the books, Working on the Work and Teach Like a Champion.

- The school submitted an extensive professional development calendar of research-based professional development supportive of the instructional needs of the school.
- The principal stated professional development is monitored using walk-through tools that include elements of the skills learned during professional development.

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:

- District leaders stated there is an expectation that a data person has been identified at each school building; and there is also a data specialist in each of the four zones.
- The staff handbook consists of a “Look 2 Learning” data collection form for staff walk-throughs which captures quality instructional practices learned from professional development.
- The SED site visit team saw the following evidence of assessment tools being used to inform instruction: district benchmark data, Regents data, PSAT Summary of Answers, Skills-SOAS, and *Datacation*.
- The benchmark data provided is the same graph display as the previous visit. No additional benchmarks or data provided since the last visit.

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>
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:

- The school has an extended day two days per week for 1.5 hours, which started on November 30, 2010, which will continue until the end of the school year in June. About one-third of the school’s students make use of the extended day program. Tuesday is devoted to math and science, and Thursday is focused on ELA and social studies. Planning time in between is used to plan for differentiation of instruction and provide extra help for students in need.

- The district has completed extensive work on the Rochester Curriculum. This system includes: curriculum which is aligned to NYS Learning Standards; instructional resources; media clips; lesson plans; lesson plan adaptations for differentiation; a curriculum pacing calendar; benchmark assessments; and subsequent data. The curriculum is written for ELA and mathematics in grades 3 through 9. Curriculum in grades K-2 is currently being developed. Science and Social Studies curriculum is currently under development, as well. Additionally, district staff members are in the process of comparing the Rochester Curriculum to the Common Core Standards.
- Extensive data analysis by SRI Scholastic of the NER Benchmarks, conducted in both ELA and math two times this year, compared the performance of students from the school compared to the performance of all students in the district.
- In math, Vanguard students outperformed the district in all categories on average by 4% on Benchmark 1 and 9% on Benchmark 2.
- In ELA, the students in the school performed an average 2.7% below the district in all categories of Benchmark 1 than the district, but outperformed the district on Benchmark 2 by an average of 9.8%.
- The school has a detailed action plan specifying how the faculty plan to work together with students to ensure at least eighty-five percent of the ninth grade class will complete the year with an eighty-five percent passing rate.

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:

- The principal stated the school has a full-time school counselor. This position is paid for through the SIG 1003g funding.
- The school has a staff member assigned .5FTE to focus on a *Personal Behavior Intervention System* (PBIS).
- The leadership team, in consultation with the staff has decided the program *Restorative Justice* would be a better choice for the school.
- The school has a half-time teacher on assignment with special education certification.
- Teachers and staff reported, in addition to the academic intervention services offered, extracurricular enrichment opportunities for students that include sports teams such as track, basketball and soccer. Students at Vanguard participate on the Franklin school's sports teams. Other extracurricular activities include glee club, art club, and the American Red Cross Leadership program, to name a few.
- Academic intervention services occur during the day using *Aventa* for pro-active recovery, rather than only for credit recovery. It is used to help students with chronic absences catch up and for re-teaching concepts. The school is using internal assessment data to identify which students need it. At the time of the monitoring visit, it was in use for five students.
- In May 2011, the school plans to offer Saturday school from 9 A.M. to noon for Regents exam review. Six teachers will be needed to staff the program.

- During the student focus groups, students remarked teachers are available before school, after school, and during lunch to assist students with their studies.
- Students were able to recite the core mission of the school “EPIC” which stands for Excellence, Passion, Integrity and Community.
- Students recite and are aware of the 6 P’s – Prompt, Positive, Prepared, Participate, Polite, and Professional.
- The students receive regular advisement regarding grades and college attendance.

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 district hired the principal during the summer of 2010, as they deemed her qualified to successfully lead the school.
- The principal and the leadership team stated that they participate in all of the professional development opportunities the staff participates in.
- In addition, the principal participates in the Rochester Leadership Academy (RLA) once a month. Those meetings cover topics of concern. The principal stated she has a mentor through the RLA, as well. In addition, she attends meetings with all of the zone chiefs and principals once per month.
- The school’s budget includes a full-time School Implementation Manager. The person filling this position is also referred to as the Assistant Principal.
- The school is being guided by a partnership with College Board and a College Board consultant is in the building several days per week.

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:

- During student focus group interviews, students stated that they felt the uniforms provided a professional atmosphere and eliminated the typical teen distraction regarding clothing.

- The students felt the school was safe and a high expectation for learning was apparent.
- During the parent focus group (1 parent present + parent liaison), it was evident the school is struggling to get parents involved. Multiple events and field trips have been planned for students and parents, to increase participation.
- Parents have access to daily assignments and grades via the web portal, Parent Connect.
- Students mentioned during March, April, and May Madness students are randomly assigned to teams and receive points per class, each day of the week. The winning team receives a prize at the end of the month. This fosters a collaborative environment and brings students and teachers together for the shared vision of academic success.
- The predominate external partner providing academic support is the College Board (Springboard). However, the parent liaison indicated there was on-going dialogue to garner more support from community organizations.

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:

- Through focus group interviews, document review, and classroom observations it appears obvious the district is using SIG funding to support the implementation of a “phase-out”/turnaround model during the current school year.
- The district provided written documentation of several other funding sources being used to implement the chosen/approved intervention model at Vanguard High School. The additional funding sources include the following:
 - General funds - \$584,149
 - English Language Learning funds - \$121,381
 - SFSF Early College HIS - \$71,914
 - Extracurricular Activities funds - \$1,119
 - Contract for Excellence – Extended Day Program funds - \$5,369
 - Title IIA funds - \$41,200
 - Title I Stimulus LEA Improvement - \$9,914
 - SIG District - \$102,999

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 matters 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,	<i>In accordance with SIG requirements, the LEA has a plan for hiring and retaining leadership.</i>

Findings:

- The district has provided the principal with operational flexibility regarding the school's budget. Each school in the district now receives their budget based on Equitable Student Funding formulas.
- The principal stated she has operational flexibility to choose her staff via a screening and interview process; and currently, over 250 district employees requested transfer into Vanguard Collegiate High School. She is currently screening applicants.
- The principal has additional operational flexibility to develop the master schedule and to plan professional development for her staff.
- The principal feels supported by the district office via the help of the zone chief, the Office of Human Capital Initiatives, and the Budget Office. In addition, the district's instructional directors helped her to order research-based resources. She can call them with any instructional questions and request assistance on-site. She was able to order the Keystone and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol programs for English as Second Language (ESL) students with the help of the instructional directors.
- District leaders stated the school is supported in the following ways:
 - The principal gets direct support from the zone chief. The zone chief acts as the principal's direct supervisor and also provides support for assistant principals, and is in ongoing communication with the principal. The district staff stated the zone chief only spends 1 day a week in central office and spends the rest of the week in the schools. The zone chiefs' purpose is to create a common language in schools. Once monthly, the zone chief pulls together a meeting with all of the principals in their zone.
 - The principals involved with the new schools replacing the phase out schools, meet regularly.
 - District leaders state that the district's instructional leaders are in schools all the time, and occasionally serve as substitute teachers in the school buildings.
- As stated earlier, as a new/phase-in school, Vanguard Collegiate High School did not undergo a Joint Intervention Team review.

Summary:

The State Education Department three member site visit team conducted an on-site visit at Vanguard Collegiate High School on March 15, 2011. This was the second visit during the 2010-2011 school year. The site visit team was able to acquire information about the school's efforts to continue the implementation of their reform model for improved student learning.

The school has been able to implement a substantial number of actions submitted on the School Improvement Grant. The counselor substitutes have not been hired, nor has the vertical team teacher. Music materials have not yet been purchased.

Assessment tool use, aside from district benchmarks and Regents data, are not in evidence in planning for instruction at the school. No additional benchmark data has been provided since the last monitoring visit.

The district has completed extensive work in revising the curriculum. The district staff is in the process of comparing the Rochester Curriculum to the Common Core Standards.

The school environment is pleasant and teachers and students all affirm that the school leaders are approachable and competent and the school as a whole is focused on academic success. The teachers added that teaching at this school is a “joyful” experience.

The next site visit to Vanguard Collegiate High School will be in the Fall of 2011.