



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

Progress Review Report — 2011-2012

School:	Brooklyn Frontiers HS	School District:	Community School District (CSD) 15
Date of Site Visit:	February 2, 2012	Team Member(s)	Kalimah Geter

Address: 12 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201

Principal Telephone: (718)722-4727

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BEDS #: 331500011423

School Principal: Alona Cohen

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SIM /SIL: N/A

E-mail address: N/A

Grade Configuration: 9 to 12

Total Enrollment: 81

(Enrollment is offered to students who have been held back for two or more yrs. prior to Grade 9)

Circle area(s) of PLA identification: N/A

List all identified subgroups: N/A

Circle school intervention model:

Turnaround model – Phase-in school for Pacific High School

The school's community-based organization (CBO), Partnership support organization (PSO) partner(s) and major vendors:

1.	Good Shepherd Services	5.	iZone 360
2.	Afro-Cuban Jazz Alliance	6.	Children's First Network 561
3.	Issue Project Room		
4.	Groundswell		

STAFFING	
Organization and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the principal, the school employs three English language arts (ELA) teachers, two math teachers, three special education teachers and one English as a second language (ESL) teacher. • The school uses School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding for a part time ELA coach (whom will become the school's assistant principal for the 2012-13 school year) one social studies teacher and one literacy teacher. • All SIG approved positions have been filled.
Teacher Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal has developed a teacher improvement plan. Each teacher is required to participate in a self assessment which includes goal setting and focused conversations with the math and literacy coaches. The coaches assist teachers with developing and working toward achieving their goals. • The principal reported the school uses the Kim Marshall rubric for all teacher evaluations. • All teachers receiving evaluations are given evaluative ratings. • The principal and teachers participating in evaluations reported receiving written feedback within one to one and a half weeks after the evaluations. • According to the principal, each teacher will receive six formal evaluations before the end of the current 2011-12 school year.

PLANNING	
Student Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average daily student attendance rate was 84 percent at the time of the NYSED site visit. • During the NYSED site visit, the school provided a list of twenty-eight long term absentees. • The school has an attendance teacher who conducts home visits and parent meetings. • The school has a unique model which provides each student with an on-site coach from Grade 9 through 12. The student coach provides attendance support by contacting parents via telephone and conducting in-person meetings as intervention to support improved attendance.
Student Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school provides advisory support to all students twice weekly in small group settings. Student coaches facilitate these sessions and have a caseload of 20 students to provide a community approach and conduct meetings where students can address their feelings and concerns. • Student coaches meet as a team weekly to identify student challenges and to discuss ways to help students reach their goals.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the principal, all students who were once consecutively absent and were supported by the school's attendance interventions have been transitioned back into regular attendance at school. However, the school has noticed that from time to time these patterns of absence re-surface and require additional intervention. • In cases when the school must report families for educational neglect due to poor student attendance, students usually transition

	<p>back into regular attendance at school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school meets with parents to discuss attendance related issues and works with them to improve attendance. These meetings have usually led to students attending school on a regular basis.
Teacher Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average daily teacher attendance rate was 99 percent at the time of the NYSED site visit.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)	
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the principal and teachers, professional development (PD) takes place every Wednesday from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. • It was reported that topics generated for PD sessions are based on the NYCDoE’s instructional expectations, school-wide outcomes and through input from coaches and teachers. • Some of the PD topics that have guided the sessions have been: creating culture and climate; action research; academic interventions; student data; and delivery of instruction.
Instructional and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school employs one math coach and one ELA coach. Coaches support teachers instructionally through individual meetings, instructional modeling and classroom observations. • According to teachers, the school provides three types of literacy intervention. The Wilson Reading program is used for students who have been assessed at a grade one or two reading level. Students assessed at a fourth grade reading level are supported by the “Just Words” Wilson reading program. Students assessed at sixth and seventh grade reading levels are supported by the <i>Read 180</i>, credit bearing program. The Wilson programs are not credit bearing programs. • The principal reported Wilson Reading program coaches provide support to teachers several times per semester, while in-house coaches provide more frequent support to teachers. • The school’s social studies teacher receives PD through seminars provided by the <i>Facing History</i> organization.
Monitoring and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development is monitored and analyzed to ensure that teachers are implementing strategies in the classroom. Class visits are conducted by administrative staff and follow-up team meetings occur every Tuesday and Thursday during common planning time.

DATA ANALYSIS	
Data that Informs Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school administers the DRA2 assessment to assess student’s fluency and decoding skills in reading. This data is uploaded to the Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) and the reading tracker and is used to plan necessary academic interventions.
Data & Student Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the principal, the school collects data for academic progress from grade level assessments that are administered at the beginning and end of each school year, to measure academic growth. • The school uses <i>Powerschool</i>, to record benchmark data and progress. Every three weeks reports are generated to be distributed to students and parents. • <i>Powerschool</i> records student attendance period by period so that

	<p>each teacher is able to see student attendance data throughout individual school days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal reported parents have received guidance information regarding student progress reports and <i>Powerschool</i> reports so they would understand the information being distributed. • The school and its partner Good Shepherd Services analyzes data collected to assist teachers in utilizing what has been collected during instruction.
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CURRICULUM AND TEACHING	
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<p>Learning Time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The length of the school day for students is from 8:20 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. two days per week and from 8:20 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. two days per week. On Wednesdays, students are dismissed at 12:51 p.m. to allow teachers to participate in PD. • The school offers an “outcomes recovery” session every school day from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. This session provides students with extra help for specific assessments which students have not yet passed. • According to the principal and teachers, common planning time occurs on Tuesdays and Thursdays during seventh period. Teachers teaching in co-teaching settings receive scheduled common planning time everyday.
<p>Mapped & Paced Curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) have been implemented in ELA and math. • The school has designed school-wide outcomes based on the CCLS and college readiness skills. The outcomes are described in four focus areas: express, explore, extract, and extend.
<p>Instructional Programming Linked to Student Needs Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the principal, the curriculum is revised on an on-going basis according to student needs and outcomes. • The principal and teachers have created outcome maps regarding goals met and not met. Backwards planning has occurred after every school-wide academic assessment to revise curriculum areas as necessary.
<p>Effective Teaching Practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the NYSED site visit, most visited classrooms had student outcomes displayed on white boards. • During class visits, most teachers appeared to have a rapport with students, laughing and joking during instruction. • Teacher enthusiasm was uneven from one classroom to the next. • In several classrooms visited, instruction was relatable and engaged students; however, the instruction did not display a high level of challenge. • The NYSED Site Visit Team member observed the use of smartboard technology in most classrooms that were visited. • During some class visits, students were observed engaging in loud and disruptive conversation without the teacher addressing the behavior. • In most visited classrooms, students were allowed to yell out their answers without raising their hands. Oftentimes this led to students speaking over one another. Additionally, students were observed yelling out inappropriate language during classroom instruction without teacher response and re-direction.

ELL/SWD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with disabilities (SWD) are supported by the Wilson Reading program, instructional co-teaching (ICT) settings, Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETTS), and small class sizes of 16 to 17 students. • The school employs a guidance counselor who provides counseling services as required by student individualized education plans (IEP). If it is determined that a student is in need of more therapeutic counseling, referrals are made. • At the time of the NYSED site visit, the principal reported the school had hired a social worker that would begin the following week. • The school currently has one English language learner (ELL) enrolled. This student is supported by the ESL teacher. The student has been identified as an ELL for the past seven years and has not tested out through the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) due to deficiencies in literacy skills. The ESL teacher is working closely with this student in this area.
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STUDENT SUPPORT	
Additional Social/Emotional Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school offers extra academic and developmental supports based on student need such as the “outcomes recovery” and a math intensive and skills lab. • Students who participate in the math intensives program attend for two to three days per week, depending on their academic levels. A blended learning approach using the online APEX foundations program and self-paced small group instruction is used in this program. • Literacy interventions are offered daily during the fourth period. • Students who are assessed and show the need for more intensive counseling supports are referred to other counseling services.
Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school provides attendance outreach such as telephone calls to homes, family counseling referrals and individual student counseling. • Home visits are conducted when a student is absent three to four consecutive days without communication with the school. • Good Shepherd Services provides students and families with medical resources and referrals for housing benefits and home instruction for those families who are in need. • Meetings are conducted with families to problem solve and to build relationships to form a partnership with parents and the school. • Student coaches assist teachers regarding student behavior. If a student is displaying behavior that is problematic the student is allowed to request to meet with his/her coach. Students use coaches as a resource for support. • Student coaches support students by providing an environment that is open, comfortable and safe when the meetings are held so students can meet and discuss issues.

<p>Enrichment Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to students and teachers, the school offers elective courses and career readiness courses. • The school has a student leadership club which meets during after school hours. • The “Cook for Life” internship offers students a cooking internship at the South Brooklyn Community High School on Tuesdays from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The principal facilitates and participates in this program with students. • Students have participated in service learning activities that have conducted can food drives and have volunteered at neighborhood public elementary schools. • The school offers a Wednesday morning basketball free play session for students beginning at 7:30 a.m. The school also offers a student knitting club.
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<p>SCHOOL LEADERSHIP</p>	
<p>Effective Leadership and Principal Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal is evaluated by the district superintendent. She was assisted with goal setting by a coach from the Leadership Academy. • The Leadership Academy provides a coach for the principal who acts in the mentor role to provide goal setting assistance and on-going support and resources. The coach is a former transfer high school principal. • The principal is in constant contact with the coach from the NYCDoE Office of Post Secondary Readiness, whom she meets with at least once a week and via telephone discussions throughout each week.
<p>Leadership Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the principal, she has attended various PD sessions during the current 2011-12 school year. Through the Children’s First Network 561 (the network) affiliation with New Visions for New Schools, she has attended various technology PD sessions. The principal also attended a summer 2011 retreat facilitated by New Visions. • Additionally, the principal has attended “Google docs” trainings to assist in automating tasks, and the iZone 360 Program. • The principal reported that she attended a principal’s retreat in the fall of 2011. The retreat focused on teacher effectiveness, CCLS, and other instructional topics. • The principal has attended PD sessions facilitated by Good Shepherd Services regarding student support and youth development. • The school has adopted the Kim Marshall rubric for teacher evaluations. With the use of this rubric, the principal has attended several PD sessions with the rubric creator, Kim Marshall.
<p>School Improvement Manager/External Providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Building Level Leadership Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal reported the progress of the SIG implementation is reviewed once every other month. Participants in this process include the principal, New Visions representatives and the network

	<p>leader. In addition, another meeting is held monthly with the principal, network leader and the Leadership Academy coach to discuss next steps for implementation.</p>
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SCHOOL CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
Environment is Conducive to Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to students and teachers, the school provides a safe educational environment. • The school scans students upon entry to the building. The principal reported she requested school safety officers not to be in hallways during class changes. They are called upon only in emergency cases. • During the NYSED site visit, the principal provided a copy of the student handbook which included the expected student code of conduct.
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a professional learning community which explores multicultural issues relating to the school environment. This committee meets monthly. • According to the principal and teachers, administrators and the teaching staff have weekly PD sessions on instruction and school culture. • The principal reported there is an on-going action-research project taking place at the school that involves all staff members. This project focuses on students who are particularly challenging within the school environment. The group looks at what strategies have worked with these types of students and collaborates to identify what strategies can be attempted. • At the time of the visit, the school was in the process of developing a committee to explore school-wide outcomes and to refine those outcomes as necessary. This group includes the principal and four teachers.
Parent Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the NYSED site visit, the principal reported the school does not have a parent involvement plan. • There are four parent members on the school leadership team. • The school employs a community associate who coordinates Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings. The principal reported PTA meetings are not very well attended and involvement remains a challenge. • The school has plans to have more events showcasing student work and providing information regarding the school's grading system for parents. • During the 2011-12 school year, the school offered a family engagement workshop presenting student work from the "Dig It" technology course. Additionally, the school participated in a program that gives free computers to students and trains them on how to use them. Many families attended the event that introduced this program. • Parents reported they are pleased with the work of the principal and teachers. • According to parents, the school supports students by: implementing a curriculum to meet each student's needs; providing student coaches as an added level of support and encouragement for students; and providing information sessions

	to parents regarding new graduation requirements and successes and challenges of the school.
External/Community-Based Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the principal, the school partners with the <i>Afro-Cuban Jazz Alliance</i> who provides teaching artists to the school, developing the school's music program. • The school partners with the <i>Issue Project Room</i>, which are additional teaching artists who offer student internships in the field of music. • The school has a partnership with <i>Groundswell</i>, a community organization that creates murals. The partnership will work with twelve students during the 2011-12 school year to develop a mural to be displayed in a nearby neighborhood park. • The school partners with the NYCDoE iZone 360 program, which provides whole school design including the provision of computers and digital curricula to assist the school in developing detailed aspects of the program promoting school growth and development.

BUDGET AND OTHER FUNDING SOURCES	
Budget Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the time of the NYSED site visit, a SIG budget modification document was provided for review. SIG funds in the amount of \$7,669 were reallocated due to a selected vendor not being ARRA approved and to certain training activities being conducted during the regular school day.
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 was awarded \$200,000 for the 2011-12 school year. • All indicated actions outlined in the SIG application were being implemented at the time of the NYSED site visit.
Use of Other Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has received Title I funding in addition to SIG funding.

DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT	
District Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is supported by the Children's First Network 561 leader, who meets with school staff on a regular basis. Professional development and operational supports are provided. • The NYCDoE Office of Post-secondary Readiness also provides substantial support to the school. This office coordinates workshops for the English language arts teachers. Additionally, the office provided the school with 50 laptops for the 2011-12 school year and funded the school's Wilson Reading and Read 180 programs.
JIT/SIG Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

SUMMARY

The New York State Education Department conducted a full-day site visit to Brooklyn Frontiers High School on February 2, 2012. One NYSED site visit team member conducted the visit. Although the visit was brief, the team member was able to collect information about the school's efforts to continue the implementation of their reform model for improving student learning.

The NYSED site visit team member met with various stakeholders and reviewed initiatives that appeared to provide the school with the opportunity to make progress towards a high level of student achievement. School administrators were respectful and eager to implement the school's unique design while promoting rapid improvements in student performance. The school had a significant number of programs in place that seemed likely to support increased instructional rigor while also increasing student engagement and achievement.

Teachers meet once a week in professional development sessions to discuss student data and to learn about best practices and strategies to support student progress. The current principal has experience working in New York City transfer high schools which utilize similar instructional strategies used with the student population of Brooklyn Frontiers High School, whom have all been held back two or more years prior to Grade nine.

During the site visit, the school provided evidence to support the implementation of all approved SIG actions. District and school representatives were candid with their comments and highly cooperative throughout the PLA/Phase-in monitoring process. The school and the district appear to be working together to coordinate their efforts in the implementation of the Turnaround model.