



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

Progress Review Report — 2011-2012

School:	Bronx Bridges High School	School District:	Community School District (CSD) 8
Date of Site Visit:	November 4, 2011	Team Member	Dr. Kathryn A Ahern

Address: 1980 Lafayette Avenue, Room 309 Complex, Bronx, NY 10473

Principal Telephone: 718-829-2984 **Fax:** 718-829-2987

BEDS # 320800011432

School Principal: Pablo Villavicencio **E-mail address:** Villavicencio@schools.nyc.gov

SIM /SIL: N/A **E-mail address:** N/A

Grade Configuration: 9-10 **Total Enrollment:** 155

Area of PLA identification: N/A

Identified subgroups: N/A

Intervention model: Turnaround— Phase-In School –The principal was appointed on July 1, 2011.

The school’s community-based organization (CBO) partners, partnership support organizations (PSO) and major vendors:

1. Children First Network (CFN) 603	2. Good Shepherd Services
3. College for Every Student (CFES)	4. Ernst and Young, LLC

STAFFING	
Organization and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal was newly appointed to plan and open the school in 2010. The school is in its second year of operation. • There is currently no assistant principal at the school. The principal has a principal intern he mentors as part of the New Leaders for New Schools program. • There are two office assistants at the school who serve in a non-supervisory organizational support capacity. • The school employs five English language arts (ELA) teachers who have dual certification as English as a second language (ESL) teachers. • The school was originally planned as an ESL school to attract and to serve English language learners (ELL). • The school employs three math teachers and two special education teachers. • Twelve teachers are employed at the school. Of this total, two are employed per diem, one to assist with social studies and the other to assist with any French-speaking students.
Teacher Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal has received New York City Department of Education (NYCDoE) training to implement the Teacher Effectiveness Model rubric for teacher observations. The low inference observation model provides a rubric based on the Danielson model. • The Children First Network (CFN) 603 has employed a consultant from CUNY City Tech to work with the school to implement the Danielson observation rubric. • Each teacher will receive one formal observation per curriculum unit for a total of six formal observations with evaluation. Informal observations or “walk-throughs” occur weekly because of the small size of the school. Teachers are provided informal verbal and e-mail feedback within 48 hours.

PLANNING	
Student Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average daily attendance rate for September 2011 was 97 percent. • No students have been identified as long-term absentees (LTA). • The school employs an attendance teacher to follow up on any student attendance issues.
Student Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has social workers and social work interns on staff and counseling services provided by Good Shepherd Services (GSS). • Good Shepherd Services follows up with any student having attendance or academic issues to date been. If a student is absent more than two days, they receive a home visit.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date the results have been keeping students in school and on track academically. • Good Shepherd Services follows up with any student having attendance or academic issues. To date, according to the principal, if a student has been absent more than two days, students receive a home visit.
Teacher Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No teachers have been absent to date.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)	
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school takes a holistic view of students. All students are organized in “family advisory groups” which involves the same group of students meeting with one teacher throughout their academic career at the school. • Teachers meet daily during eighth period for common planning, professional development (PD) and data analysis. • Children First Network consultants have observed the teaching and learning

	<p>activities at the school, and followed up with recommending resources from <i>Research for Better Teaching</i> and for support in developing a group understanding of the Danielson observation model as it addresses teaching and learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student needs are identified during dedicated “kid talks” which are held weekly. • The principal and teachers reflect on and discuss student needs, then explore best practices and resources to respond effectively to those identified needs. • The teachers and principal work together to plan PD activities. Professional development takes place weekly during common planning time (CPT). • The principal requests feedback on the PD through informal conversations and teacher-written reflection. Most activities at the school are tied to the ongoing PD program. • Teachers are appreciative of the reflective practices that resulted in the excellent quality of the PD they received. • Professional development sessions and reflections are posted on the school's online portal, which are available to all teachers. The NYSED Site Visit Team member was given a temporary login to access the extensive resources and data the school posts online.
Instructional and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has the support of CFN 603 for any academic programs and needs. • The current focus at the school was to improve academic support for students with “severely interrupted formal education” or SIFE designation.
Monitoring and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal conversations, written reflections and data analysis of student academic progress were reported as means by which the principal oversees the PD programs.

DATA ANALYSIS	
Data that Informs Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has created in-house assessments and the principal analyzes and monitors them for academic rigor. The principal checks that the assessments match the Common Core learning standards (CCLS) and the curriculum • The school uses <i>Datatron</i> to scan and collect information on each item tested. The principal creates a report, which gives teachers a detailed analysis that shows overall class performance and individual student mastery of each item. • Teachers hold a “data meeting” at the end of each assessment cycle (the end of each unit). The data meeting then is followed by planning for remediation and academic intervention for students.
Data & Student Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers reflect and then plan for academic interventions and differentiation, deciding if the adjustment needs to be for the whole class or should target small groups of students, or even planning for an individual student. • The teachers and principal are immersed in rich data that influences all aspects of the teaching-learning enterprise.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING	
Learning Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast is served at the school from 8:00 to 8:30 am. Classes begin at 8:50 am and end at 3:40 pm. Each class lasts 48 minutes with a two minute passing time. • Targeted assistance and enrichment activities are scheduled 3:45 pm – 5:30 pm. • The school shares the building with at least seven other schools. All students enter the building through designated doors. The school shares an entrance with one other school. • All students must pass through metal detectors and pass their open backpacks and other bags through an airport-type security detector. Students are not allowed to bring cell phones or other electronic devices into the building. • The principal was observed greeting all students from his school by name at the security checkpoint. • Students were observed congregating in the breakfast and lunch area next to the

	<p>indoor security checkpoint. Students from another school were observed sharing the space, but students were seated at separate tables. The interactions appeared civil, but for the most part, students from both groups appeared to ignore those from another school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal escorted the students the short distance from the cafeteria to the section of the second floor where the school is housed.
Mapped & Paced Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers focus on using the CCLS in all subjects. The teachers develop performance tasks as part of the assessment of each unit of study. The performance tasks are accompanied by rubrics. Samples of these tasks and rubrics were available for review through the school's online portal. The use of these standards in the curriculum was evident in the daily lessons observed.
Instructional Programming Linked to Student Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teachers and principal hold a data meeting at the end of an assessment cycle to plan and prepare for differentiation and to organize academic interventions. The curriculum maps for the school have been posted online and are available for review in public files by anyone with online access. Parents of students at the school also have access to the public areas of the online resources. There is a specific focus on working with ELLs and the school employs teachers with specific ESL training. Those classes that are taught in Spanish have online materials available in that language.
Effective Teaching Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students were observed during several classes and many subjects by a NYSED Site Visit Team member. The use of interactive white boards was noted as a regular part of the daily routine. Several classes were observed where students were being instructed in Spanish. The principal and most of the teachers at the school speak fluent Spanish. One teacher has been employed on a per diem basis to work with French speaking students. Most teachers observed appeared to be skilled in using the technology and online resources effectively to motivate students to be engaged actively with the course content. Teachers were observed employing a variety of creative strategies and materials to engage students. The teachers made effective use of collaborative activities to engage students and to encourage them to remain on-task. Many levels of effective questioning were observed during some of the classroom visits. Significant differentiation was observed. The level of differentiation was distinctive and notable between the classrooms. Students and teachers in the same subjects were working on the same topics but the levels of challenge and remediation appeared to be appropriately stimulating for students.
ELL/SWD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school was founded with a mission to serve ELL. Several classes, including math and science are conducted by fluent Spanish speaking teachers. Teachers with ESL training work with non-native English speaking students in ELA classes. The school provides an integrated co-teaching class for math and one for ELA for students with disabilities (SWD). There are no self-contained classrooms in the school. All students are "mainstreamed" and special education teachers work with them in both the integrated co-teaching classes and on an individual basis.

STUDENT SUPPORT	
Additional Social/Emotional Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students are supported through a "family" advisory structure. One teacher has a small group of students they advise throughout the students' career at the school. Teachers have one common planning session every other week devoted to "kid talk." This time is used to identify any student having either academic or social issues. Teachers discuss strategies and resources to use in working with the

	<p>student as part of the “kid talk” sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periods 9 and 10 are scheduled from 3:45 pm to 5:30 pm daily and are used for targeted instructional support for students.
Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school shares the services of a school psychologist with the other schools in the building. • The school has full access to all NYCDoE drug and alcohol education and support services including the Sparks program. • Through the family advisory structure practices at the school, students have opportunities to address concerns before they escalate into unmanageable situations. • A two and one half-week summer PD program on <i>Youth Development and Lesson Planning</i> and <i>Guided Discipline</i> was very useful in heading off difficult circumstances and learning how to get students to talk about their problems before they escalate into confrontations between students and teachers.
Enrichment Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal and teachers are actively exploring “how to create a college-bound culture” among the students in their school. • Ninety-three percent of incoming students at the school have been identified as being in the “lowest one-third” in terms of academic achievement at the end of eighth grade. • Each family advisory group is named for a college, as well as every classroom has been given a college name. The college name is posted inside, outside the door, and in prominent places around every classroom. • College and career explorations, leadership development and service learning are built into the structure of some of the curriculum units. • The school has a “College for Every Student” (CFES) liaison. • The school currently has a small number of enrichment activities. They include community justice, hip-hop dance, poetry, journalism, drama and basketball.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	
Effective Leadership and Principal Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal has high expectations for all students and these expectations are communicated respectfully and professionally. • The principal described himself as “proactive, persistent, a problem-solver and builder who loves working with teenagers.” • The principal is a graduate of the New Leaders for New Schools and has a “coach” and mentor with whom he visits informally and who comes to the school about every four weeks. • The principal and teachers both pointed to the Principals Performance Review, prepared by all NYCDoE principals, as a source of informal conversations for goals and the focus of this academic year. • The principal stated his top priorities for this year are data analysis and curriculum planning, and linking them to regular discussions in school-wide “Town Hall meetings.” Students and teachers are expected to attend and parents are invited to these meetings.
Leadership Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal has received specialized support and training in the CCLS and in strategies for credit accumulation.
School Improvement Manager/External Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school receives support from CFN 603. • The school improvement manager is not part of the NYCDoE model for school receiving SIG funds for the Turnaround model, either for phase-in or phase-out schools.
Building Level Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The building leadership team consists of the principal, the principal intern and the two organization support staff assistants. • The group meets on a monthly basis and documents the meetings with agendas and meeting minutes on the school's online resource website. Copies of the meeting documents were provided to the NYSED Site Visit Team during online guest access.

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
Environment is Conducive to Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teachers and students reported the safe, supportive family advisory organizational structure ensured that each student had both academic and social support. • No parents were available for interview on the day of the NYSED team site visit. Social workers who offer student and family support were available to interview and reported that they had frequent contact with parents, especially with struggling students. • The activities in the hall during passing time showed that students wear their school uniform with pride and conduct themselves in a pleasant and business-like manner. • Teachers step outside their classrooms to supervise during passing time and greet students by name as they enter the room. • The principal regularly stations himself at the intersection the busiest hall for the school. • The principal was observed flagging down a few students not enrolled at the school and asking them their reason for traveling in that hall. The students were looking for the library, an area nearby that is shared among schools in the building. He noted he regularly redirects students not enrolled in the school to the appropriate areas of the building. The school has a strict policy of approaching all unknown persons in the hall to ascertain their purpose in the area.
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and the principal reported respectful communications and opportunities for informal conversation as being a key part of the school's culture.
Parent Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a parent-teacher organization. Evidence of its existence was verified in the online resource site with events calendars, newsletters and agendas. • No parents were available for the focus group interview on the day of the NYSED team site visit.
External/Community-Based Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has an excellent working relationship with CFN 603. No consultant was available for interview on the date of the school visit. The NYSED Site Visit Team member was able to discuss briefly the school's work with CFN 603 during a visit to another school served by the network. • College for Every Student has a liaison that works with the school but that individual was not available for interview on the day of the NYSED team site visit. • Good Shepherd Services provides the services of a social worker and two social work interns. They were observed briefly at the end of a group counseling session at the school. • The school reported Ernst and Young, LLC has a mentoring program with the school that will be started later in the school year.

BUDGET AND OTHER FUNDING SOURCES	
Budget Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a NYCDoe approved plan for the SIG funds.
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 \$300,000 for the 2011-12 school year. • As a phase-in school in the Turnaround model, Bronx Bridges High School received the SIG funds in early October, 2011.
Use of Other Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school receives full NYCDoe support. • The school is also eligible this year to Title I funds.

DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT	
District Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The principal indicated the NYCDOE provides ongoing support to the school.
JIT/SIG Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A

SUMMARY

The NYSED Site Visit Team member conducted just over a half-day visit at Bronx Bridges High School. Multiple conversations with the principal and supporting documentation resulted in a wealth of information on the Turnaround Model phase-in, school's program and mission. The school currently serves students in the ninth grade and a few students in the tenth grade, and plans to add one new grade over the next three years until it serves students in grades 9-12. The NYSED Site Visit Team member was able to ascertain information about the school's efforts to implement its mission through following its NYCDoE start-up proposal, direct observation and extensive document review. According to the school mission, it has been designed to work with English language learners, especially new immigrants, with an English as a second language focus.

The principal and teachers were observed interacting with students in a respectful and business-like manner and students appear to respond in kind. The school has a parent organization as documented on its online resources indicated. No parents were available on the day of the site visit for interview. Students perceive the school as a safe and supportive environment that is conducive to learning. There appears to be ample academic support for students and the school has clear-cut action plans for academic achievement for each student. Teachers and students confer regularly in "family advisory groups" to review and refine these plans.

The school has network support from CFN 603. Ernst and Young, LLC is scheduled to begin a mentoring program later in the school year. Good Shepherd Services is an active participant in supporting students. With the solid support provided by these partners, the principal and teachers are actively engaged in the strenuous process of building a school that is responsive to students' academic needs and faithful to its stated mission.