



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

School:	Delaware Academy School – Transformation Model	School District:	Syracuse City School District
Date of Site-Visit:	March 8, 2011 (Second Visit)	Members of Site-Visit Team:	Andrew McGrath, LoriAnn Curtin, 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 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:

- During their focus group session, teachers stated there have been on-going discussions regarding the development of a teacher evaluation system that is linked to student assessment. They were not aware of the details of this project. Teachers indicated they are currently using the same teacher evaluation system as last year.
- Currently, non-tenured teachers are evaluated based on twice yearly formal observations. Tenured teachers are given the choice between evaluations based on observations and an evaluation based on the completion of a project.
- Teachers stated their current collective bargaining agreement does not end until June 2012.
- The principal indicated she is eligible for a financial incentive that is linked to efforts specific to the school's turn around efforts.
- In preparation for the 2010-11 school year, all teachers and principals interviewed for their current positions.

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	<i>The district and school are implementing the plan based on the JIT</i>

Recommendations	<i>recommendations. The recommendations of the JIT are addressed as delineated in the SIG application or Restructuring Plan, as applicable.</i>
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Findings:

- Teachers have not been trained in the use of the data dashboard. The program is not fully operational. The district is currently developing the system.
- According to teachers interviewed; and confirmed by classroom observations, the school has received a significant amount of technology, which includes Smart Boards and document cameras.
- Not every teacher has received a net book, as delineated in the SIG application. Some of the net books delivered to the school are not functional throughout the building. Subsequently, school leaders changed the plan to instead provide all classroom teachers with a laptop computer. Currently, some teachers have old laptops, and instructional coaches were each given one of the working net books.
- The school improvement grant (SIG), designated \$4000 for the implementation of a school uniform policy. The school uniform policy is outlined in the SIG grant. Students interviewed stated they have to purchase the school uniforms. Students also stated these uniforms only have to be worn on Wednesdays which is Community Day.
- Teachers report the extended school day began on October 15th, 2010. Teachers receive additional pay for the extension in their work contract.

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:

- According to school leaders and teachers interviewed, it appears the school is continuing to implement the job-embedded professional development that was delineated in the SIG 1003 (g) application. This is supported by the PD calendar. Professional development includes:
 - Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP);
 - Expeditionary Learning (EL);
 - Special Education;
 - ELA and math data analysis; and
 - Correct Math.
- The school leaders reported certain professional development opportunities were changed to the morning schedule, as they need additional time for full implementation for the entire school year.
- School leaders and teachers interviewed stated skills learned during professional development are monitored and analyzed through administrative walk-throughs. Administrators expect to observe skills taught in PD to be used in the classroom. Teachers are provided timely feedback from administrators after walk-throughs.
- EL professional development is embedded through the use of EL consultants. These consultants provide model teaching and lab-site 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:

- Data coaches began their work in the school in July, 2010. The principal indicated that she is actively involved in their work and regularly attends grade level data meetings.
- DIBELS, ACUITY, and math common assessments are administered, but on differing schedules. Additionally, coaches create tests with teachers. These tests include open-ended questions that teachers score. The assessment results are analyzed to adjust instructional practices.
- According to teachers, data meetings are held with the principal on a regular basis - approximately every six weeks.
- Mock NYS math and ELA assessments were conducted in January, 2011 and subsequently analyzed to determine student growth and necessary changes to instructional efforts.

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, 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:

- As stated above, the extended school day began on October 15, 2010. The day is sixty minutes longer than in other elementary schools in the district. Teachers stated the extended learning time has been effectively used for academic intervention services and for the completion of academic projects.
- Teachers stated in addition to the extended school day program, more than eighty percent of Delaware Academy students participate in the *Say Yes to Education* after-school program.
- No evidence of a mapped and paced curriculum was available during the on-site visit. However, district officials stated they have curriculum and pacing maps, and they are currently revising these to align them with the Common Core Standards.
- The SED site visit team saw the following examples of how curricular decisions are linked to student needs:

- Data meetings to discuss the implementation of intervention services;
- Placement of students in acceleration classes;
- A bilingual kindergarten;
- English as a second language (ESL) classes, both pull-outs and push-ins;
- Placement of co-teaching teams;
- Ninety minute blocks for English language arts; and
- Expeditionary learning as a school wide school improvement system.
- The SED site visit team saw inconsistent levels of rigor during classroom observations. Teachers interviewed stated they would like more professional development on developing rigor in their classrooms.
- As listed above, some supports are in place to meet the needs of English language learners (ELL) and students with disabilities (SWD). One parent interviewed stated her child was learning Spanish and English at the same time, and she expressed a desire for her child to receive more intense ELL services.

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:

- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) - PBIS has not yet been operationalized throughout the school. It is expected to be introduced on March 9, 2011.
- According to staff and students, students receive awards for exhibiting positive behavior, good listening skills, and academic achievement.
- Accessible student support services (health clinic, counseling, social work) have designated classroom space inside the building.
- Enrichment opportunities are available for students (Peaceful People, Community Day, and EL crew meetings) during the school day and integrated into the schedule.
- School trips have been incorporated to expose students to opportunities to explore community resources (i.e., libraries, museums, etc.).
- During their focus group session, students indicated they were aware of their benchmark targets and were provided with daily instruction to help them achieve or exceed their goals.

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	<i>The school is utilizing its Building Leadership Team to implement the</i>

Findings:

- The principal indicated professional development is available to her through district offerings and a summer institute at Syracuse University.
- School leadership indicated the union makes funds available for professional development opportunities.
- According to school leadership, SIG funds were set aside for attendance at the Expeditionary Learning national conference.
- During their focus group session, school leaders indicated their administrative duties have been adjusted to allow for increased time in classrooms. Teachers confirmed they are receiving an appropriate amount of classroom contact and feedback.
- School leaders stated they have many opportunities to attend professional development. Additionally, they also attend monthly administrative K-8 meetings with the superintendent, and leadership academy meetings. Principals attend these meetings in the morning, and vice principals attend in the afternoon. Additionally, the district has mentoring meetings for new principals.
- The school principal stated the district has a summer leadership institute that is required. It is two days long.
- The administrative team stated they attend other professional development on their own time, and are not reimbursed monetarily. Additionally, it is difficult to attend professional development during the school day, as that leaves the building understaffed with leaders.
- Administrators stated there is no mandate to attend other professional development.

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:

- Parents interviewed indicated that access to school activities held during the day is limited or non-existent.
- During their focus groups session, parents expressed the opinion there has been minimal communication from the school regarding the school's initiatives or events/activities in support of their child.
- The parent liaison indicated that plans for integrating more community-based organizations (Lowe's, Say Yes, a local bank, and others) will take additional time prior to implementation.
- Parent liaisons indicated plans for a parent-teacher organization (PTO) meeting with community organizations that will take place March 31, 2011 as the kickoff meeting for on-going communication.
- Students interviewed feel the school is safe. Through the Peaceful People program, they understand how to be better citizens within the school building.

The Peaceful People program director conducts classroom instruction and individual mediations.

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:

- JIT funds, along with SIG 1003(g) funds were used to purchase additional technology, allowing for Smart Boards in every classroom and extra computers in the lab.
- The SIG 1003(g) FS-10 shows other federal, state and district funds are being used to implement the transformation model in the following ways:
 - Hiring of 1.0 FTE Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) coach, and 1.0 FTE literacy instructional support coach;
 - The Urban Teacher Calendar initiative;
 - Title IIA, IID, III Part A LEP initiatives;
 - Implementation of the Say Yes to Education program;
 - Syracuse City School District general funds for teachers to participate in School Leadership Team meetings outside of the school day;
 - SIG 1003 (a) funds to contract with an educational expert to evaluate instructional programs; and
 - 21st Century Community Schools for after school enrichment.

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

Findings:

- Leadership indicated they receive timely and appropriate support from the district office.
- The Director of School Reform and the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction work directly with school leadership to monitor and adjust the school's improvement efforts. District staff provided the site visit team with documentation outlining current and future adjustments to the school's improvement plan.

- The district has presented an organized and transparent plan for school improvement at Delaware Academy School, which incorporates recommendations from the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) report.
- The leadership team, consisting of a principal and two assistant principals, was new to the school but not the district.

Summary:

The State Education Department three member site visit team conducted a full-day site visit at Delaware Academy School on March 8, 2011. Although the visit was brief, the team was able to acquire information about the school's efforts to implement their reform model for improving student learning.

The site visit team observed a number of programs and initiatives that appear to provide the school with the opportunity to make progress towards improved student achievement. The school leadership team is visible and supportive, and the school improvement manager is actively involved in the school improvement efforts. Numerous community partners are working collaboratively with the school, and the teaching staff is proactive and student-centered.

Staff, students, parents and educational partners all spoke positively of the school's efforts to improve student achievement. District and school staff were candid with their comments and highly cooperative throughout the PLA monitoring process. The school and the district appear to be working together to coordinate their efforts and implement as much of their Transformation Model as possible.

The next site visit to Delaware Academy School will be during the Fall of 2011.