



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

<b>School:</b>	Hughes Collaborative School – Transformation Model	<b>School District:</b>	Syracuse City School District
<b>Date of Site-Visit:</b>	March 9, 2011  (Second visit)	<b>Members of Site-Visit Team:</b>	LoriAnn Curtin, Major Capers, Andrew McGrath

<b>STAFFING</b>	
<b>Collective Bargaining</b>	<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>
<b>Teacher Evaluations linked to Student Performance</b>	<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>
<b>Identify and Reward staff or Remediate/Remove Staff</b>	<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>
<b>Implementation of Strategies to Recruit, Place, and Retain Qualified Staff</b>	<i>Activities are funded to recruit, place, and/or retain highly qualified teachers.</i>

**Findings:**

- Teachers and district leaders stated the district is in the process of creating team work with the teachers' union to develop a teacher evaluation system based at least 20% on student performance. Teachers stated their collective bargaining agreement will not expire until June of 2012. It is their understanding no changes will be made to the collective bargaining agreement until that time.
- The principal indicated she is eligible for a financial incentive based on the success of the turnaround efforts of the school.
- Syracuse City School District is participating in the statewide development of a performance based compensation system through the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant.

<b>PLANNING</b>	
<b>Implementation of Timeline</b>	<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>
<b>Performance Targets</b>	<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>
<b>Implementation of JIT</b>	<i>The district and school are implementing the plan based on the JIT</i>

<b>Recommendations</b>	<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:**

- School leaders and teachers stated March 9, 2011 would be the first day of the extended school day program which will add forty-five minutes to the beginning school day. Sixth grade students will receive forty-five minutes of additional instruction five days per week. This program was initially intended to benefit fifth through seventh graders, but due to district bussing issues it is only being offered to sixth graders.
- Staff members indicated a full-time attendance assistant has been hired.
- Through interviews and classroom observations, the New York State Education Department (SED) site visit team determined that the Collaborative Coaching and learning (CCL) model is being implemented.
- Teachers and school leaders indicated grade level looping is still planned for the 2011-2012 school year. For example, sixth grade teachers will loop up to seventh grade. Details of this plan will be determined at the close of the school year.
- All technology ordered for the building has arrived. Through discussions with staff and through observations it appears net books are being used as a tool for sharing feedback from the administrative team, taking attendance, completing report cards, and for email. Teachers store large word documents on thumb-drives.
- The performance targets template is still under development at the State Education Department; therefore, no evidence was requested during this on-site visit.
- The implementation plan was found to be aligned with the Joint Intervention team (JIT) recommendations at the time the School Improvement Grant (SIG) application was approved.

<b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<b>Quality, On-going, Job-embedded Professional Development</b>	<i>Implementing job-embedded professional development, as defined by the USED, and as approved by NYSED.</i>
<b>Supportive of Instructional Needs</b>	<i>All professional development is researched based and supportive of the instructional needs of the school.</i>
<b>Monitoring and Analysis</b>	<i>Professional development is monitored and analyzed to ensure staff participation and classroom implementation.</i>

**Findings:**

- Through interviews and observations, the SED site visit team determined Hughes Collaborative School is implementing the following job-embedded professional development:
  - Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP);
  - Collaborative Coaching and learning model (CCL); and
  - Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS).
- As stated in the monitoring report from the first site visit, the professional development programs mentioned above are research-based and are supportive of the instructional needs of the school.
- School leaders and support staff are included in all professional development trainings offered to the teaching staff.
- Formative assessment training will take place in September 2011.

- *Take One!* training, the first step in National Board Certification, has been given to hundred percent of the teaching staff. Teachers stated this training has taught them to be more reflective regarding their teaching practices, has helped them with the planning process, and has helped them to create more academically rigorous lessons. Some of the teaching staff will go on to pursue full board certification. The building leadership noted that Hughes is the only school in the nation where hundred percent of the staff are completing *Take One!* training. Additionally, the school's literacy coaches were trained to be facilitators for this program.
- Teachers stated they have been offered opportunities to attend training on the use of Smart Boards and net books. In addition, the district's technology department also worked with the Hughes staff on the placement and use of the technology. Teachers will also be offered training on the use of the document cameras.
- Pre-kindergarten teachers did not get net books, Smart Boards or document cameras.
- School leaders stated professional development is monitored and analyzed through administrative walk-throughs and through the integration of *Take One!* concepts, CCL, and SIOP. The administrative team has designated coaches to help with this integration.
- Administrators stated as they conduct walk-throughs, they look for components of professional development and also check lesson plan books and provide immediate feedback to teachers via their net books.

<b>DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
<b>Data to Inform Instructional Programming</b>	<i>Data is used to identify and implement research-based instructional programs that are aligned with state standards</i>
<b>Data for Instructional Decisions for Student Achievement</b>	<i>A system is being implemented which allows for the continuous use of data to make instructional decisions for students.</i>

#### **Findings:**

- Student status meetings are held weekly to discuss student data and to make informed instructional decisions. Some examples of data sources are: the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Acuity Math, common assessments in English language arts and mathematics, and Scholastic Reading Inventories.
- Teachers, school leaders and district leaders reported the district's data dashboard is an online system that will allow school staff to look at student information including, attendance, academic performance, and other data. The system is live now, but not all teachers have access at this time. All school leaders have been trained in the use of the system, and Hughes teaching staff had one training opportunity regarding the dashboard. Eventually, all district staff will be trained in the use of the data dashboard and will have access to it. In addition, parents will also have access to information about their own students.
- School leaders reported there are forty minutes of common planning time devoted to discussing how data can be used to inform instruction.
- The staff has created a professional development meeting room that displays student data by grade, student and status (red, yellow and green). The display is used to track student growth, and assist the teaching staff in making instructional decisions.

<b>CURRICULUM AND TEACHING</b>	
<b>Increased Learning Time</b>	<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>
<b>Mapped and Paced Curriculum</b>	<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>
<b>Instructional Programming is Linked to Needs Assessment</b>	<i>Curricular decisions have been made to meet the needs of all students.</i>
<b>Effective Teaching</b>	<i>There is evidence of rigor, relevance, pacing, and alignment of curriculum to State Standards, and student engagement from Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT).</i>
<b>ELL/SWD</b>	<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:

- School leaders reported in addition to the newly extended school day for all sixth grade students, the school has increased learning time for all students by reducing transitions, by infusing literacy in all core content areas, and by instituting a Kindergarten through seventh grade after school program. Over hundred families make use of this after school program, which is staffed by Hughes teachers for the first hour, and then by Dunbar Association staff for the second hour. The first hour is spent on academics, and the second hour with the Dunbar Association is focused more on enrichment activities.
- The administrative team and teachers stated the extended day for sixth graders is a tutorial period. Some students complete the Fast Forward program; some work on the Wilson program, and all participate in literacy circles. Approximately forty-six students receive almost an hour of additional instructional time.
- The principal reported another way the school has extended learning time for all students is by deleting the morning meeting and instead beginning instruction immediately, and by starting dismissal later in the day.
- The administrative team stated teachers have district level curriculum binders in all core content areas for all grades. These curriculum maps include pacing guides and instructional resources.
- According to school leaders and teachers interviewed during the site visit, the following curricular decisions have been made to meet the needs of all students:
  - Student status meetings are held to adjust instruction and to help in planning to meet the needs of individual students.
  - After the necessary screening, English as a Second Language (ESL) services are being provided to seventy-six students. In addition, ESL teachers work with classroom teachers to co-plan and co-teach differentiated lessons.
  - Teachers have forty minutes of common planning time daily. This time is also used for student status meetings or to observe other teachers modeling lessons.
  - Literacy coaches co-plan for the CCL program.
  - There is a consultant teacher model in place at every grade level to meet the needs of students with disabilities (SWD). In addition, a teaching assistant and resource teacher work with consultant teachers. Each team has a consultant teacher on the team, and they meet with guidance counselors to ensure the appropriate scheduling is in place.

- The school has two 12:1:3 classrooms. The students with disabilities in these classrooms are involved in a variety of school activities.
- All students with disabilities are included in the student status charts when staff consider and design academic interventions to meet the needs of all students.

<b>STUDENT SUPPORT</b>	
<b>Additional Support</b>	<i>Students are receiving extra academic and developmental support based on student need (AIS, character development, PBIS).</i>
<b>Counseling</b>	<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>
<b>Enrichment Opportunities</b>	<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 Read Naturally, Earobics, and Fast Forward programs are being used as Academic Intervention Programs (AIS) for struggling readers.
- The school leadership team reported that there are weekly forty-five minute student status meetings with all staff, as students work on AIS with substitute teachers.
- The school leaders reported math intervention groups are taking place in the mornings, based on student status groups.
- All teachers interviewed agree that the attendance liaison is helping to raise attendance. The current attendance rate is about ninety-two percent. The attendance assistant sends letters home and makes phone calls if students have attendance issues. Additionally, teachers stated raising the attendance rate is a team effort. In addition, the social worker has helped put targeted attendance plans in place if there is an issue. The attendance assistant is the first person the kids see in the morning. The attendance liaison also makes home visits, works with siblings to get translation, and works with the refugee center.
- The school partners are: Dunbar association, One-Hundred Black Men, and Krause Hospital. The partners interviewed reported their partnerships are providing support, tutoring, mentoring and academic enrichment. The school leaders reported the summer school program is expected to be half day, and will provide a staff ratio of one staff member for every fifteen students.
- PBIS training started in September and it has helped to improve student behavior. There are still students who need tier three and four interventions, but everyone is receiving support. School leaders reported a student who had twenty-three referrals last year, now has just one referral. Early identification of students is also seen as a benefit of this program. PBIS is constantly re-evaluated for its effectiveness.
- The One-Hundred Black Men partner also stated they implement a one to one and group mentoring program for students. The One-Hundred Black Men of Syracuse provide workshops on life skills, social and emotional skills, moral character, work ethic and lifelong learning.
- As stated above, school leaders report an afternoon program for sixth graders began recently.
- The 21<sup>st</sup> Century extended day program provides academic enrichment to 100 students.

<b>TRANSFORMATIONAL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP</b>	
<b>Effective Leadership</b>	<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>
<b>Leadership Development</b>	<i>School leaders receive appropriate and timely professional development. Mentoring or coaching programs are in place and effective.</i>
<b>School Improvement Manager/External Providers</b>	<i>The school is being guided and informed by its partnership with its School Improvement Manager or external provider.</i>
<b>Building Level Leadership Team</b>	<i>The school is utilizing its Building Leadership Team to implement the intervention model.</i>

**Findings:**

- School leaders stated they have received all of the training other school staff has received, this includes: SIOP, Power Point, and Smart Board training, and also monthly Response to Intervention (RTI) and special education training.
- The principal and school leaders reported attending leadership development sessions at Syracuse University and at the School Administrators Association of New York State. The principal has also attended three of the six sessions offered so far at the New Leadership Training Academy.
- School leaders stated they attend district leadership training provided one half day per month on different topics, such as formative assessment and budget training.
- School leaders reported attending monthly administrator meetings for K-8 principals. Relevant topics are covered; one topic example offered was the issue of the effects of gang violence in school communities.

<b>SCHOOL CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>	
<b>Environment is Conducive to Learning</b>	<i>The school is safe, orderly and academically-oriented. Supervision is sufficient, respectful and consistent.</i>
<b>Shared Vision</b>	<i>School staff understands the focus/ vision of the school's improvement efforts and supports them in a consistent and effective manner.</i>
<b>Collaboration</b>	<i>Administrators, teachers and staff communicate openly, positively and effectively. Professional learning communities exist and affect improvement efforts.</i>
<b>Parent Involvement</b>	<i>Strategies are being implemented to increase the involvement and contributions of parents.</i>
<b>External/Community-Based Partners</b>	<i>Strategies are being implemented to increase the involvement and contributions of community partners.</i>

**Findings:**

- The site visit team observed the school remains well-maintained. In most classrooms observed, teachers and students were focused on assignments.
- The parents reported involvement has increased in the Parent Teacher Association; however the next step is to begin to hold elections to positions.
- The parent liaison stated twenty-eight parents filled out a pledge to volunteer two hours of their time to provide support to the school. Nine parents fulfilled the obligation and volunteered two hours or more.
- Parents indicated they would like to see students take Spanish language lessons earlier in their elementary school career.
- Community partners reported they continue to work collaboratively and have good relationships with the school building staff members.

<b>OTHER FUNDING SOURCES</b>	
<b>Use of 1003(g) or 1003(a) grant funding</b>	<i>The LEA is using School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding to support the implementation of or planning for school intervention models.</i>
<b>Use of Other Funding Sources besides 1003 (g)</b>	<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 site visit team reviewed the SIG application’s fiscal statement and determined most of the items supported by 1003(g) funds are now in place. Staffing positions have been filled, professional development opportunities have been provided, and technology has been delivered and is being used by teachers in the building.
- The site visit team advised the district and school leaders to review their budgets to determine if amendments need to be made prior to the close of the school year.
- The SIG application’s fiscal statement delineates additional funding sources being used by the district to support the school's improvement efforts. Funding sources include, but are not limited to: Title I, IIA, IID and III funds, 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant funds, and Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant.

<b>DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<b>District Support Provides Operational Flexibility to the School</b>	<i>The LEA provides or is planning to provide the school operational flexibility (such as matters staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting).</i>
<b>District has a systemic plan for intervention and improvement</b>	<i>The LEA has incorporated all JIT recommendations and requirements of the SIG Application into the improvement plan for the school.</i>
<b>District has a plan to identify, recruit, place, and retain effective leadership</b>	<i>In accordance with SIG requirements, the LEA has a plan for hiring and retaining leadership.</i>

**Findings:**

- The school leadership reported the district staff assigned to work with the school offers continuous support. School leaders reported there has never been any time when they felt the district was not responsive to their requests.
- District staff indicated, and the school leadership confirmed, the working relationship between the school and the district has been collaborative, productive, timely, and based on the needs of the students and the school.

**Summary:**

The State Education Department three member site visit team conducted an on-site visit at Hughes Collaborative School on March 9, 2011. This was the second visit during the 2010-2011 school year. The site visit team was able to ascertain information

about the school's efforts to continue the implementation of their reform model for improved student learning.

The site visit team observed a number of programs and initiatives that appear to provide the school the opportunity to make progress towards improved student achievement.

Staff, students, parents and educational partners all spoke positively of the school's efforts to improve student achievement. District and school staff members 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 Hughes Collaborative School will be during the Fall of 2011.