



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

Progress Review Report — 2011-2012

School:	New Design Middle School	School District:	Community School District (CSD) 5
Date of Site Visit:	December 7, 2011	Team Member	Dr. Kathryn A Ahern

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School Principal: Daniel Black

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SIM /SIL: N/A

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Grade Configuration: 6

Total Enrollment: 113

Area of PLA identification: N/A

Identified subgroups: N/A

Circle school 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) 411	2. Community of Unity
3. Casita Maria	4. City Science
5. Lit Life	

STAFFING	
Organization and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is led by a principal and assistant principal. Hereafter they will be referred to as the school administrative team, or “the team.” • The principal was newly appointed to plan and open the school in July 2011. • The principal is supported in day-to-day activities by two office assistants who serve in a non-supervisory organizational support capacity. • The school employs one English language arts (ELA) teacher, one math teacher, four special education teachers and one bilingual teacher. • Ten teachers are employed at the school.
Teacher Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school administrative team 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) 411 has employed a consultant to work with the school to implement the Danielson observation rubric. • Each teacher will receive at least two formal observations with evaluation. • The team has planned to make eight informal observations for each teacher throughout the year. • Informal “walk-throughs” occur weekly made possible by the small size of the school. Teachers are provided with informal verbal and e-mail feedback within 48 hours.

PLANNING	
Student Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average daily attendance rate to date was 95 percent. • No students have been identified as long-term absentees (LTA). • Two or three students have been identified with multiple absences and another 10-15 with chronic tardiness problems • The school has an attendance teacher provided by CFN 411 who follows up on any student attendance issues.
Student Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a school-wide incentive program called <i>Choice Report</i>. Students receive a point in recognition of responsible behavior or exemplary responses during group or individual activities and lose points for failure to act appropriately or complete work as expected. One student is appointed by the teacher in each class to add or subtract points on the class laptop computer. • Students meet daily in small groups for reading and advisory activities.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school administrative team and the teacher use the <i>Choice Report</i> to monitor for academic intervention. The program has been successful in keeping students in school and on track academically. • Students monitor their <i>Choice Reports</i> and conference with teachers and the school administrative team regularly during the reading and advisory session. • Parents receive weekly reports of their student’s progress.
Teacher Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher absences to date have been insignificant. • The principal commented the teachers were extraordinarily dedicated to the students.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)	
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school reported it takes a holistic view of students. This vision is supported through the organization of all students into groups that coach students on reading which also has an advisory function. A small group of students meets with one teacher throughout the academic year. • Teachers meet daily during a common planning period for lesson planning, “grade level problem-solving” and data analysis during this time. • The teachers have a dedicated professional development (PD) session after

	<p>school each Thursday for which they receive per-session pay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student needs are identified during dedicated “kid talks” 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 the school administrative team collaborate to plan PD activities • The principal requests feedback on the PD through informal conversations and teacher-written reflection. Both teachers and the principal said that most activities at the school were tied to the ongoing PD program. • Teachers are appreciative of the reflective practices that have resulted in excellent quality PD.
Instructional and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has the support of CFN 411, Community of Unity and Lit Life for any academic programs and resource needs. • City Science provides a support program for the science teacher.
Monitoring and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal conversations and data analysis of student academic progress were reported as means by which the principal oversees the PD programs. • The school administrative team and faculty work in seven-week cycles of unit planning, assessment and data analysis followed by informal conversations and informal and formal observations to determine the efficacy of the teaching plans.

DATA ANALYSIS	
Data that Informs Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school uses the NYCDoE database <i>ARIS</i> for some student data. • The school is working to create in-house assessments that the principal then analyzes and monitors for academic rigor. The principal checks that the assessments match the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLC) and the curriculum. • The school uses <i>Smart Bulletin</i> to assess the benchmarks it has developed for both reading and writing. <i>Smart Bulletin</i> develops software to customer specifications for “smart phones.” • The school administrative team uses <i>GoogleDocs</i> to collect information on each item tested. The team creates reports and gives teachers a detailed analysis that shows overall class performance and individual student mastery of test items. • Teachers hold regular data meetings. The data meeting then is followed by planning for remediation and academic intervention for students.
Data & Student Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of each unit after the assessments have been analyzed, the teachers and school administrative team build interventions into the next unit of study. • Teachers reflect, brainstorm, research 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 before school daily. Classes begin at 8:15 am and end at 3:15 pm. • The school uses a flexible scheduling strategy with classes that vary in length based on the needs of students enrolled in the school. The principal believes this supports the needs of the large SWD population. • School is dismissed at 2:35 pm on Friday. • Enrichment activities are scheduled after school in the building from 3:20 pm – 5:00 pm Monday through Thursday. • The school shares the building with another middle school and two charter schools for grades K-8 and 9-12. All students enter the building through one

	<p>entrance. The different schools have a designated area for their students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are not allowed to bring cell phones or other electronic devices into the building. Each school enforces their own policy on electronic devices. • The principal was observed greeting all students from his school by name at the security checkpoint. • The principal escorted the students the short distance from the door to the section of the first floor where the school is housed. Students from other schools must cross through the hallway designated for New Design Middle School to get to the cafeteria for both breakfast and lunch.
Mapped & Paced Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ELA curriculum mapping to include the CCLS performance tasks has been completed. • The teachers are working to include the CCLS performance tasks in math. • The teachers developed 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 posted in prominent places in each classroom. • 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"> • Teachers and the 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 are being developed and revised in an ongoing manner.
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 in the integrated co-teaching classrooms and in a few other classes. • A class was observed where students were being instructed in Spanish. The principal and some of the teachers at the school speak fluent Spanish. • About half the classrooms had interactive white boards and teachers supplied with them 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, but somewhat uneven between the classrooms. The levels of challenge and remediation appeared to be appropriately stimulating for students.
ELL/SWD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a 10% ELL population, with Spanish speakers dominating this group. • The school has a bilingual teacher and ELLs are taught in Spanish during focused lessons during the day. • The school provides integrated co-teaching classes in ELA, math, science and social studies for SWD, which comprise about 30% of the school's population. • 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 the reading and advisory structure. One teacher has a small group of students they advise for 35 minutes Monday through Thursday. • Teachers reported that some of the common planning sessions are devoted to

	<p>“kid talk.” This time is used to identify students who have either academic or social issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers noted they discuss strategies and resources to use in working with the student as part of the “kid talk” sessions.
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 reading and advisory structure practices at the school, students have opportunities to address concerns before they escalate into unmanageable situations. The school works with Community of Unity to provide a wellness center at the school. The school’s code of conduct is addressed through the <i>Choice Report</i> with regular conferences with students, teachers and school administrators on behavior management goals along with academic goals mentioned earlier in the report.
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. College and career explorations, leadership development and service learning are built into the structure of some of the curriculum units. The school, because of its small size, currently has a small number of enrichment activities. They include an after school arts program and a co-ed basketball program.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	
Effective Leadership and Principal Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal holds consistently high expectations for all students and these expectations are communicated respectfully and professionally. 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.
Leadership Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal reported that he is a graduate of the New Leaders for New Schools program and that the program provided him with a mentor. The principal from New Design High School also acts as a mentor according to the principal.
School Improvement Manager/External Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school reported they receive support from CFN 411. The school improvement manager (SIM) is not currently part of the NYCDoe model for schools 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 assistant principal, the UFT representative, and the director of school culture (the director of the Wellness Center). The building has a council comprised of representatives from each of the schools housed in the building. The group was preparing to begin meeting on a monthly basis.

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
Environment is Conducive to Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teachers reported the safe, supportive 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. 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers step outside their classrooms to supervise during passing time and greet students by name as they enter the room.
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 reported a parent-teacher organization exists. 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 reported an excellent working relationship with CFN 411. No consultant was available for interview on the date of the school visit. The Community of Unity provides a consultant to run the school's Wellness Center.

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, New Design Middle School received the SIG funds in early October.
Use of Other Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school receives full NYCDoE support. The principal has received a small planning grant to plan the bilingual program in the summer of 2011 for \$15,000.

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 New Design Middle 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 sixth grade and plans to add one new grade over the next three years until it serves students in grades 6-8. The NYSED Site Visit Team member was able to ascertain information about the school's efforts to implement its mission through extensive conversations with the principal, direct observation and document review.

The principal, assistant 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 in the school's office. 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 *Choice Report* with clear-cut action plans for academic achievement for each student. Teachers and students confer regularly in "reading and advisory groups" to review and refine these plans.

The school has network support from CFN 411. Community of Unity has provided support for the school to develop a wellness center and Casita Maria provides an after school arts program. 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 mission.