



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

School:	Rochester Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) High School – Turnaround Model – Phase-in school replacing School of Engineering and Manufacturing at Edison and School of Imaging and Information Technology at Edison	School District:	Rochester City School District
Date of Site-Visit:	March 16, 2011 (Second Visit)	Members of Site-Visit Team:	LoriAnn Curtin, Andrew McGrath, Jennifer Span

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:

- District staff, school leadership and teachers reported they are currently operating under a collective bargaining agreement that expired in July, 2010. Negotiations are currently at an impasse, with arbitration meetings to take place during the month of March.
- During their focus group session, teachers stated they are aware of district efforts to develop an evaluation system based in part on student achievement data.
- Teachers indicated their awareness of the 20/20/60 evaluation structure, wherein twenty percent of their evaluation will be based on NYS state assessments, twenty percent on local assessments, and sixty percent on locally determined performance measures.
- Currently, the district continues to use its teacher evaluation system that includes formal observations for non-tenured teachers. Tenured teachers may choose between observations or approved learning projects.
- Rochester City School District is participating in the statewide development of a performance based compensation system through the Teacher Incentive Fund

(TIF) grant. Statewide meetings have occurred throughout the current school year.

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 Recommendations	<i>The district and school are implementing the plan based on the JIT recommendations. The recommendations of the JIT are addressed as delineated in the SIG application or Restructuring Plan, as applicable.</i>

Findings:

- Rochester STEM High School currently has \$74,000 of its SIG funding delineated for implementation of the Read 180 program. Other new schools in the district amended Read 180 budget totals, due to late arrival of the SIG funding from the New York State Education Department (SED), but STEM High School did not. The school has not yet implemented Read 180, but plans to begin training staff and purchasing materials for the Read 180 program during the summer.
- SED approved the Rochester district's amendment of SIG funding. This amendment moves/ decreases \$321,833 of STEM High School's funding, and increases/moves \$311,545 for a total decrease of \$10,288 in STEM High School's SIG funding.
- The district is on track to complete the other activities in accordance with the approved implementation plan.
- The Performance Plan Template is under development at the SED. Therefore, no evidence was requested during this on-site visit.
- As a new/phase-in school, Rochester STEM High School did not undergo a Joint Intervention Team review.

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:

- Professional development is monitored (monthly) by the administration during staff meetings. This is evidenced by the time allotment on the professional development calendar and monthly staff meeting notes.
- Teachers have been trained in the National Academy Foundation curriculum. This also includes the integration of Career and Technical Education (CTE) and core subject areas.
- Teachers have been trained in district benchmarks for ninth grade students.

- Teachers have been trained in Response to Intervention (RTI) operational Universal Tier I intervention strategies.
- All teachers have copies of and are adhering to the professional development plan. Professional development has been pre-planned from September 2010 to March 2011. Professional Development has been provided in the following areas, and is ongoing in each content area: special education and inclusion, technology (ongoing weekly), Smartboard, Netbook training, and Schooltown.
- Teachers have been trained to use Data Mate to inform instruction.
- Teachers have been trained in English as a second language (ESL) best practices for English language learners (ELL).
- Special Education teachers meet directly with the social worker and the case manager, and with students who have been identified to be at-risk of academic failure.
- Teachers have been trained in Project Lead the Way (PLTW) to encourage students at STEM through hands-on interactive inquiry based learning strategies.
- Teachers have been trained in Voicethread, an online learning tool that addresses student literacy.
- Regular professional development is conducted with staff to focus on best practices and to increase rigor in instruction. This was evidenced by the staff development attendance sheets.

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:

- During their focus group session, teachers stated they have common planning time built into their teaching day. This time allows staff members to analyze benchmark assessments, and adjust instruction based on the results.
- Specifically, analysis efforts range from miscue analysis of multiple choice questions to targeting individual students to see how well they are progressing by specific performance indicators.
- Benchmark assessments occur quarterly. The assessments are a combination of teacher/district-created, previously-offered state assessments, and commercial products.
- During focus group sessions, teachers, school leaders, and staff indicated the professional development they have received relating to Data Mate has improved their data analysis efforts.
- Data Mate is used primarily for English language arts and mathematics instruction. The system is currently being developed to incorporate science and social studies, as well as foreign languages.

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, 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:

- The Rochester STEM High School has implemented a longer school day, with hours from 7:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. In addition to the extended school day, the school building is open until 7:00 p.m. for after school activities.
- The curriculum is mapped and distributed to each teacher and staff member. Teachers keep copies of their curriculum in binders in their classroom. The curriculum is aligned with the NYS standards.
- Regular meetings are held with the STEM Design Team to plan and coordinate curriculum assessments and outcomes. This is evidenced by meeting attendance sheets.
- The SED site visit team witnessed evidence of rigor, relevance and pacing in classroom instruction. Students were actively engaged either independently or in cooperative groups.
- Professional development has been offered to staff on inquiry based learning. This was evident in various classrooms where students were engaged in inquiry-based learning activities. Classroom examples include fossil identification, photosynthesis and respiration, use of voice threading in Spanish.
- In each classroom, the rubrics for that particular subject and the NYS standards were posted. Each teacher referred to these assessment standards while teaching. The rubrics and standards that had been covered, were noted so the students were clear about which sequence was being covered.
- Classroom instruction is supported by the integration of technology into the instruction. This was evident by students using Net books (Home School and Voice thread) during class instruction.
- Instructional programs are in place to support SWDs and ELLs. STEM High School's current ELL population is 10.2% of total enrollment. Its population of SWDs is 14.8%.
- The SED site visit team observed curriculum maps and standards posted in each classroom.

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>

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Findings:

- The percentage of students with disabilities enrolled in the Rochester STEM High School mirrors the demographics represented in the district. The school administration has chosen the full-inclusion model of instruction for students with disabilities (SWD). The SED site visit team did not specifically observe any SWDs while on the site visit.
- Counselors and teachers use the Response to Intervention operational universal Tier I intervention strategies for students who are having difficulty in the classroom. The SED site visit team witnessed these strategies being used during the site visit.
- Students have access to the Student Support Center. This center supports the entire student campus.
- Students who are in need of academic enrichment attend an extended day program to receive tutorial assistance.
- Counselors and the school psychologist meet together as teams to case manage students having difficulties.
- All students have the opportunity to participate in various activities such as Robotics, Career Awareness Month, and Summer Camp at the Rochester Institute of Technology. These activities are presented after-school, on weekends and during the summer.

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

Findings:

- The district hired the principal during the summer of 2010, and deemed her qualified to successfully lead the turnaround school.
- Parents interviewed reported the principal creates connections to families and is supportive of the students in the school.
- Teachers are supportive of the school’s leadership and reported the leadership provides ample opportunities for professional development and enrichment. They characterized the principal as driven, student-centered, and proactive.
- The principal and the leadership team stated they participate in all of the professional development opportunities provided to the staff. In addition, the principal participates in the Rochester Leadership Academy (RLA) once a month. Those meetings cover topics of concern. In addition, the principal stated she attends meetings with all of the zone chiefs and principals once per month.
- The principal stated this year she attended the National Leadership Academy in Philadelphia, the National Principals’ Leadership Institute in NYC and the National Association for Career and Technical Education in Nevada.
- The school currently uses its assistant principal to fill the role of school improvement manager. The assistant principal’s salary is paid through the SIG.

- The school has partnerships with the following organizations: the National Academy Foundation, Grace United Methodist Church, ITT (once International Telephone and Telegraph) Industries, and M/E Engineering, Inc.
- The school has a school-based planning team which meets approximately once a month. The majority of staff is on the team, and the team also includes students and parents. Minutes from these meetings were submitted to the SED site visit team.
- The school also has a STEM High School design team that meets approximately monthly. The design team contributes to the work of the instructional team and it includes partners, staff, and students. Minutes from these meetings were submitted to the SED site visit team.

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:

- During their focus group session, students indicated they feel the school is safe, orderly, and conducive to learning. This was corroborated by the site visit team through classroom and hallway observations.
- Teachers indicated, and students confirmed, there is a common theme throughout the school that promotes higher academic and behavioral expectations.
- During their focus group session, teachers indicated common planning time and shared classrooms have led to on-going and effective collaboration. Teachers indicated they share lessons with their 'roommates' and take part in informal peer teaching reviews. Common planning has allowed for lesson reviews, instructional planning, and student progress monitoring.
- The SED site visit team met with several of the school's external/community-based partners from the National Academy Foundation, the Grace United Methodist Church, ITT industries, and M/E Engineering. Each partner organization voiced a commitment to the school for implementation of current services, a wish to continue partnering, and a desire to examine avenues for furthering their efforts for improving student outcomes.

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:

- Through focus group interviews, document review, and classroom observations it appears the district is using SIG funding to support the implementation of a phase-out/turnaround model during the current school year.
- The district provided written documentation of several other funding sources being used to implement the chosen/approved intervention model at Rochester STEM High School. The additional funding sources include the following:
 - General funds - \$967,463
 - English Language Learning funds - \$23,797
 - Extracurricular Activities funds - \$1,790
 - District Initiative Budgets - \$250
 - Contract for Excellence – Extended Day Program funds - \$8,590
 - Title IIA funds - \$494
 - Title I – Parent Component - \$1,545
 - Title I – AIS Services – \$61,230
 - Title I Stimulus Parent Engagement - \$492
 - Title I Stimulus LEA Improvement - \$11,246
 - SIG District - \$107,050

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:

- The district has provided the principal with operational flexibility regarding the school’s budget. Each school in the district now receives their budget based on Equitable Student Funding (ESF) formulas.
- The principal stated she has operational flexibility to choose her staff via a screening and interview process
- The principal has additional operational flexibility to develop the master schedule and to plan professional development for her staff.
- The principal stated her first level of fiscal support is through the budget office. She also stated she receives support from her zone chief, who is in the building once a week for either a walk-through or to attend meetings and professional development. In addition, the principal stated that she participates in meetings with her zone chief every Thursday.
- The principal stated the central office is available to offer additional support whenever it is needed.
- District leaders stated the school is supported in the following ways:
 - The principal gets direct support from the zone chief. The zone chief acts as the principal’s direct supervisor, provides support for assistant principals, and is in ongoing communication with the principal. The district staff stated the zone chief spends one day a week at the district office and spends the rest of the week in the schools. The zone chief’s purpose

- is to create a common language in schools. Once monthly, the zone chief conducts a meeting with all of the principals in the zone.
- The principals involved with the new schools replacing the phase out schools, meet regularly.
 - District leaders stated the district's instructional leaders are in schools all the time, and occasionally serve as substitute teachers in the school buildings.
- As stated earlier, as a new/phase-in school, Rochester STEM High School did not undergo a Joint Intervention Team review.

Summary:

The State Education Department three-member site-visit team conducted a full-day site visit at Rochester STEM High School on March 16, 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. 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 Turnaround Model as possible.

The next site visit to Rochester STEM High School will be during the fall of 2011.