



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

Progress Review Report — 2011-2012

School:	Corcoran High School Transformation Model	School District:	Syracuse CSD
Date of Site Visit:	November 3, 2011	Team Member(s)	Major Capers and Andrew McGrath

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School Principal: Mr. Leo Cosgrove

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Grade Configuration: 9-12

Total Enrollments: Approximately 1,387

Area(s) of PLA identification: ELA, Mathematics and Graduate rates.

List all identified subgroups: ELA-All students and subgroups; Mathematics- All students and subgroups
 Graduation- All students and subgroups. See latest report card for details.

Intervention model: Transformation

List the school's community-based organization (CBO) partner(s)

1.	Syracuse-Say Yes to Education	4.	Upward Bound Program
2.	Hillside Work –Scholarship Connection	5.	
3.	Liberty Partnership Program –Onondaga C.C.	6.	

STAFFING	
Organization and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following positions were filled using School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Instructional Coaches for literacy and math (0.5 FTE and 0.5 FTE) ○ Core teachers in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics (2.0 FTE) ○ School Improvement Manager (1.0 FTE) ○ Attendance/Student Affairs Deans (2.0 FTE) • Two substitute teachers originally proposed in the SIG application were removed due to budget reductions. • Teachers receive a one-sixth salary increase for teaching an extra instructional block each day. • The school has created a Ninth Grade Academy which includes Talent Development, Pre-International Baccalaureate, and Advancement via Individualized Determination classes for ninth grade students. The school has established a pathway for students to enter two smaller learning communities. • The school has not yet identified specific college prep focus and/or themes for the two academies.
Teacher Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal and the assistant principals are responsible for formal and informal teacher evaluations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders are expected to spend 100 minutes each day in classrooms. • The leadership team is highly visible in classrooms. Teachers have been observed informally two to three times thus far, and the feed back they receive is constructive and timely. • The leadership team uses the district walk-through tool to collect information and provide feedback. Additionally, the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) is being used until the new evaluation system is in place.
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PLANNING	
Student Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student average daily attendance is approximately 91%. • The school graduation rate is listed in the implementation plan as 58% for the 2005 student cohort. • There is an attendance team that is providing outreach to students who have attendance issues. Data is reviewed and attendance staff conducts home visits when necessary. Tardiness was also identified as an issue that still needs to be addressed.
Student Performance/ Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School data is reviewed during common planning and school leadership meetings to identify students who need extra academic and behavioral support. • Quality assessments are used to evaluate student performance and subsequent academic support.
Teacher Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher attendance is approximately 90%. Teachers are evaluated and provided feedback regarding their attendance.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)	
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During their focus group session, teachers indicated PD sessions are more focused this year, targeted, consistent and responsive to staff and student needs. • Staff is using <i>Driven by Data</i> by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo and <i>Teach like a Champion</i> by Doug Lemov as references to support their work with data. • Two afternoons of each week are devoted to PD. One day is academy-focused, while the other day is dedicated to content-related planning and development. • Teachers and school leaders have received on-going PD regarding Understand by Design (UbD), Collaborative Coaching and differentiated instruction. • Teachers would like to receive additional PD on differentiation, and Response to Intervention (RTI). • Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) have started; however, several components have not yet been completed.
Instruction and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional coaches and core teachers in ELA/math provide instructional support to teachers. • School leaders, teachers and counselors are receiving PD in the areas of data assessment, UbD, collaborative coaching and PBIS. • Teachers and administrators are beginning to work on common core standards in ELA.
Monitoring and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information acquired during walk-through observations is used to inform instructional practices related to professional development offerings. • School leaders reported the redesign, school leadership and data review teams meet to discuss the implementation of the school improvement grant.

DATA ANALYSIS	
Data that Informs Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments are created by teachers, analyzed using Scantron scoring machine and student results are reviewed. • Teachers use Regents examination rubrics to assess and analyze written responses. The exams are linked to the New York State Standards and based on previously-used Regents exam questions. • School leaders provided a sample of the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that is being developed for each ninth and tenth grade student, based on the RTI model. ILP's are not yet completed for all students' grades ninth to twelfth.
Data & Student Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data dashboard was not yet operational. • Staff has created district wide interim assessments linked to New York State

	<p>standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school leadership committee, site-driven management team, school safety and other committees meet to discuss academic and behavioral data. • School leaders stated that data drive instruction helps teachers identify instructional changes and behavioral interventions.
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CURRICULUM AND TEACHING	
Learning Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders and teachers reported adding flexible time to the schedule so students can receive additional instruction before and after school and on Saturdays. • Classes were expanded to 80 minutes. Students are aware this additional time is made available two to three days per week to support them after school.
Mapped & Paced Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding by Design (UbD) is used to help teachers design curriculum units, develop assessments and adjust classroom instruction. • Work is being conducted to align the curriculum with the common core standards. To date, ELA is aligned with common core; however common core standards are not yet completed in other content areas.
Instructional Programming Linked to Student Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NYSED Site Visit Team observed teachers using common instructional practices in their classrooms. The “Do It Now” ticket at the door, small group, and lesson plans were all practices being used in many classrooms. • Teachers have common planning time to meet by department to plan lessons, analyze data and discuss student performance. • Full implementation of the 4-Tier RTI Framework is expected to be completed over the next three years.
Effective Teaching Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NYSED Site Visit Team observed consistent implementation of UbD teaching and lesson design principles in many classrooms visited. • Students have responded favorably to the consistency of UbD practice throughout the building. Students know what to expect in each class, as instructional practice follows a similar pattern which allows for more effective use of the teaching period. • The school has several pieces of computer equipment ordered but not yet in place to support instruction. • School leaders and teachers emphasized the need for updating the building infrastructure as current wiring for phones and computers are not compatible for use with new equipment.
ELL/SWD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Language Learners (ELL) and Students with Disabilities (SWD) staff will participate in the development of the Individualized Learning Plans. • Several English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers interviewed stated there is a high student/teacher ratio in several classes which makes teaching challenging. • There is a part time ESL teacher; however teachers believe there is a need for a full time teacher based on the additional needs of students.

STUDENT SUPPORT	
Additional Social/Emotional Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students receive extra academic and developmental support from teachers and counselors. • School leaders, teachers and guidance counselors are implementing the PBIS plan. • The Dean of student’s attendance and student deans are now hired and provide extra support to students. • Students are aware and participate in the Plato credit recovery program. • Students feel supported by teachers, guidance counselors and administration. • At the time of the NYSED team site visit the Say Yes to Education – Syracuse program had not begun. • The school is in the process of developing student leadership groups (e.g., 100 Black Men). • The graduation specialist was hired and provides counseling to at risk students to help them graduate. This support has helped many students graduate last year.
Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are receiving guidance, social work services, academic and counseling support from school community partners.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NYSED Site Visit Team interviewed Hillside and Liberty Partnership partners,

	who provided an overview of the academic/tutoring and counseling services they provide to students.
Enrichment Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students reported they have opportunities to participate in enrichment programs. Students can participate in the W.E.B. DuBois National Honor Society, International Baccalaureate, Syracuse University Project Advance, and State University of New York programs. • The school is recruiting mentors for a mentoring program. • Students and parents reported enrichment opportunities are now made available to more students.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	
Effective Leadership and Principal Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers, students and parents reported school leadership is respectful and has developed a collaborative environment. • School leaders have participated in PD training on teacher evaluations, data, UbD, PBIS and district leadership training sessions. • The principal mentoring program is not yet operational as the district is reviewing changes to this program. Teachers and Vice Principal's are assigned mentors.
Leadership Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders provided the NYSED Site Visit Team with a PD calendar that outlines training being provided for staff this year. • School leaders are participating in leadership opportunities offered by the district and State. • The school leadership team meets regularly to discuss school structure and issues related to the School Improvement Grant (SIG). • Parents and students indicated the school leadership is working hard to improve the overall leadership within the school.
School Improvement Manager/External Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school hired a School Improvement Manager (SIM) to assume non-instructional responsibilities and oversee the implementation of the school improvement plan. • The SIM was previously employed by the district as an administrative intern at the school, and thus possesses the necessary experience to successfully perform his current responsibilities.
Building Level Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During their focus group sessions, parents, students and teachers reported the school leadership team is highly committed to the entire school community. Their efforts are seen as respectful, collaborative, and focused on increased student achievement.

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
Environment is Conducive to Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NYSED Site Visit Team observed teacher and student interactions that were respectful, pro-active, and based on high expectations. • Students suggested the need for certain improvements to classrooms and common areas such as, painting walls, repairing lockers, replacing bathroom stall doors, and repairing/replacing old desks and chairs. • The NYSED Site Visit Team observed students actively participating in classes, and an overall atmosphere that was conducive to learning. • Teachers, school leaders and students expressed frustration regarding the lack of technology within the school. • According to parents, students, teachers and school leaders all agreed the ninth grade academy is a supportive environment that helped new students transition into the high school. • The NYSED Site Visit Team observed students engaged in instruction, with teachers using a variety of teacher methods, and interactive lessons. In many classrooms students work was observed displayed on the walls.
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders are working to collaborate and coordinate school and community services. • School partners (e.g., Hillside) are working collaboratively with school leaders to design and modify program(s) to meet the needs of students.
Parent Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents reported school leaders and counseling staff are very supportive. • Parents would like to have a Parent Liaison on site, parent room and newsletter

	to improve communication and to support parent initiatives.
External/Community-Based Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NYSED Site Visit Team met with school partners to discuss programs services that are being provided to students and it appears that programs have begun implementation as outlined in the plan.

BUDGET AND OTHER FUNDING SOURCES	
Budget Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the time of the site visit, no budget modifications had been made to the 1003(g) SIG fiscal statement.
Use of 1003(g) or 1003(a) grant funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As previously noted, approximately \$215,000 in technology purchases are not currently being used as a result of electrical issues in the building. The school is receiving \$1,711,245 million in SIG funding.
Use of Other Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has committed approximately \$642,881 (for this year) in other funding allocated to support and sustain the school's improvement efforts.

DISTRICT SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT	
District Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School leaders and teachers reported the district has provided appropriate support to assist the school's improvement efforts. Teachers, leaders, parents and students expressed their frustration regarding the delay, on the district's part, to address capital improvements to the school.
JIT/SIG Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school improvement plan and the implementation thereof are aligned to many of the recommendations found within the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) report.

Summary

The NYSED Site Visit Team conducted a full-day visit at Corcoran High School on November 2, 2011. The team was able to collect information about the school's efforts to begin the implementation of their reform model for improving student learning. Staff, students, and parents all spoke positively of the school's efforts to improve student achievement and behavior

The NYSED Site Visit Team met with various stakeholders and reviewed initiatives that appear to provide the school with the opportunity to make progress towards improved student achievement. The school leadership team is responsive and eager to promote rapid improvements in student performance.

District and school representatives 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.

Teachers and school leaders are pro-active, collaborative and consistent in their efforts to improve student achievement. School administrators and teachers are working together to improve instructional practices in the classroom, and promote higher expectations for all students. Administrators and teachers meet regularly in common planning time to analyze student data, plan instructional strategies, and develop common assessments. Parents are involved in the planning process; however would like to see improved communication with school staff, establish a parent room and school newsletter.

There are several infrastructure issues, related to the installation of technology that prohibits the school from having the ability to use technology to support instruction.