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

School:	Franklin D. Roosevelt High School – Transformation Model	School District:	New York City Department of Education District # 20
Date of Site-Visit:	April 12, 2011 (Second Visit)	Members of Site-Visit Team:	Andrew McGrath, LoriAnn Curtin, Susan Gibbons, Patrick Roche

STAFFING	
Collective Bargaining	*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.*
Teacher Evaluations linked to Student Performance	*Teacher evaluations linked to student performance have been put into place. The system and data used must be consistent with State APPR system.*
Identify and Reward staff or Remediate/Remove Staff	*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).*
Implementation of Strategies to Recruit, Place, and Retain Qualified Staff	*Activities are funded to recruit, place, and/or retain highly qualified teachers.*

Findings:
- In their focus group session, school leaders stated the school implemented a new teacher effectiveness rubric in early February 2011. Information gathered from observations is entered into a database/tracker. The tracker allows the principal and assistant principals to input and analyze qualitative data on observations.
- The teacher effectiveness rubric is based loosely on the Danielson model and was developed by the New York City Department of Education (NYCDoE), United Federation of Teachers (UFT) and the teacher effectiveness committee. The fourth domain - Professional Responsibilities – was still under negotiation with the teachers' union at the time of the site visit.
- According to school leaders and the school improvement liaison, the eleven NYCDoE transformation schools of the 2010-11 school year were piloting the teacher effectiveness rubric at the time of the site visit.
- School leaders stated every teacher in the building would be observed at least once by June, using the new system. Teachers were only being rated on pedagogy during the 2010-11 school year. The school plans to use student growth and student performance in teacher evaluations starting in September, 2011.

- School leaders stated the principal and the assistant principals have conducted observations, and department heads also observe the non-tenured teachers. The principal observes all probationary teachers at least once each school year.
- During their focus group session, teachers stated they have had multiple meetings about the teacher evaluation system and the common core standards. Teachers acknowledged the understanding that their evaluations would be based in part on student data, but were not sure of specifics.
- Brienza's Academic Achievement continues to work with identified teachers to improve specific instructional practices.
- School leaders indicated they will be included in the hiring process for staff funded through the School Improvement Grant (SIG).

PLANNING	
Implementation of Timeline	*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.*
Performance Targets	*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.)*
Implementation of JIT Recommendations	*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.*

Findings:
- According to the network leader, SIG funding was made available to the school in February, 2011. As a result, the school used local funds to initiate much of the work delineated in its original improvement plan. An amended draft budget was presented to the site visit team, along with a corresponding budget narrative. School leaders and the network team stated they were not aware of the current approval status of the amended budget.
- The network leader, school leadership and the school leadership team (SLT) have worked together throughout the school year to monitor and adjust the school improvement plan with respect to the limited funding timeline.
- During their focus group session, team leaders confirmed Turn Around for Children was unable to meet the commitments of the grant. Their services were removed from the fiscal statement. The Jewish Board and the Chinese American Council will assume some of these student support services. Additional funds will be used to purchase instructional software.
- According to school leaders and teachers, master teachers meet with teachers on a daily basis. They teach four periods rather than five, and offer new teaching and classroom management techniques to their colleagues.
- According to the principal, the network leaders wrote much of the grant for the 2010-2011 school year, as the current principal had not yet been hired. However, the principal stated that he has had a large part in writing the 2011-2012 SIG application.
- The school received a Quality Review by NYCDoE in March, 2011. Feedback found within this report was used in developing the 2011-12 school improvement plan.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	

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

Findings:
- Australia United States Services in Education (AUSSIE) was on-site ten days this semester. Their focus is to work with the collaborative teaching teams in math and social studies. They assist in sharing best practices regarding teaching partnerships through peer reviews, observations and planning.
- At the end of the term, teachers were surveyed about professional development needs and the effectiveness of the inquiry groups. The principal reported that some trends were emerging, such as increased attendance at professional development activities and more interdisciplinary planning.
- According to school leaders, this year teachers have professional development opportunities on Saturdays. They are developing performance based assessments and grading systems for them. These will be rolled out next year for measuring student achievement.
- Teachers are writing assessments in their inquiry teams for the four core subjects, according to school leaders. Four or five teachers, including one lead and one from each subject area, participate in weekend curriculum development. Professional development is provided by part time F-status (per diem) educators. The focus is to create capacity and then turnkey.
- The school has established partnerships with AUSSIE, Mercy College, Achieve 3000, Teaching Matters and Brienza to deliver on-site embedded training for the staff. Examples of these initiatives include differentiated instruction, literacy across the disciplines, rigor/relevance of instruction, and consulting services to the math department.

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

Findings:
- Assessments of English language learners (ELL) take place twice each year to guide instruction between administrations of the New York State English as a Second Language Test (NYSESLAT).
- Teachers and assistant principals have written common assessments in math, social studies, science and English language arts (ELA). Identified teachers participated in professional development regarding the creation and grading of performance-based assessments. This was sponsored by the teacher effectiveness committee. Training is intended to build school-wide capacity, and promote turnkey opportunities.

- Seventy-two days of professional development on the use of educational data have been slated for delivery by F-status educators employed by NYCDoE.
- Dedicated time for inquiry teams began in February and takes place after early dismissal each Friday. Teams consist of an assistant principal and several teachers. Each teacher develops a list of five or six struggling students based on relevant data.
- Currently, freshman and sophomore "blocks" act as grade level teams to plan across the curriculum, analyze student data and support student needs. Each block consists of teachers and a guidance counselor. Students are scheduled as a cohort and tracked throughout the year by the block during their common planning time.

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

Findings:
- Students reported the new block programs for freshman and sophomores keep students together for the most part of the day. They further expressed their opinion that students do better when they know each other.
- Students stated there is more group work in class than before, which to them makes more sense and provides a better overall understanding of the material. Students like the break-out work, which they describe as summarizing, visualizing, questioning, and predicting. These activities speak to increased rigor of instruction, and evidence of more thorough planning on the part of teachers.
- Differentiated instruction was observed in a number of classrooms, along with specific accommodations for ESL students.
- The SED site visit team observed that ESL students received extra response time in class. Students indicated that there are "many" second language students - two full classrooms of thirty each. ESL students expressed their support of the teaching staff, indicating that additional English classes are available to help them adjust to life in the United States.
- Teachers were observed having individual problem-solving discussions with students.
- The Center for Applied Linguistics provides instructional support for ELLs. Next fall, there will be an ESL teacher who will provide professional development for staff, and will collaborate with classroom teachers.
- The ELL coordinator indicated the SIG process has been good for the school. Teachers and leaders learned a great deal about the school and its students; and realized the need to move ahead.

STUDENT SUPPORT	
Additional Support	*Students are receiving extra academic and developmental support based on student need (AIS, character development, PBIS).*
Counseling	*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)*
Enrichment Opportunities	*Students have opportunities to participate in academic and social enrichment activities during and after the school day and during the summer.*

Findings:

- Students reported the availability of clubs, teams, advanced classes, electives, and a homework club. These groups meet before and after school.
- Regents exam tutoring is available by subject area on Saturdays, and about 40 students attend each week. Teachers from the school conduct these classes.
- Students stated that teachers are available before and after school, during lunch, and during students' free periods. It was stated that teachers are available "all the time" for student help.
- Students reported advanced placement (AP) classes are challenging, and students need to put in additional effort to be successful.
- Counseling and guidance services include a Relationship Abuse Program (RAP) social worker, and a Chinese counselor to serve the high Chinese population at the school. One student said, "There is a counselor embedded in every teacher."
- There appeared to be mutually respectful relationships between teachers and students, as observed in classes and hallways. Parents reported that teachers dedicate their time to the students, and they really care about them. There is support for student needs, and guidance counselors are in touch with parents directly to help.
- In their junior year, students identify potential colleges with the help of counselors. According to students, the school's counselors provide "tons of help with college applications." Additionally, individual interviews with a counselor are provided for each junior class student.
- Parents reported the school is implementing new initiatives throughout the building. The freshman and sophomore academies are helping students transition from junior high school to senior high. The school provides extra classes for students who are falling behind.

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

Findings:

- The principal stated he continues to be mentored by the district Leadership Academy bi-monthly and by a retired F-status principal weekly. Together, they provide "another set of eyes" for observing, sharing information and brainstorming.
- During their focus group session, teachers indicated the administration is respectful and supportive. Teachers further stated school leaders are student-positive, and entertain any ideas brought to them that could lead to improvements within the school community.
- The principal has been with the school since 1983. He was a teacher for seventeen years, and spent ten years as assistant principal. This is his first year as principal, and he said he feels well-supported by the network.
- The school has a large and well-coordinated leadership team which consists of assistant principals and department heads. Leadership of the school is shared and collaborative.

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

Findings:
- During their focus group session, students reported that security at the school has tightened over the last few years, so it is now a safe school. School security officers address problems right away. Cell phones are "not to be seen," and must be kept out of sight if carried in school.
- Students report some of their parents chose the school because of the setting, the neighborhood, and the activities provided by the school. Some had family members who attended this school and were successful.
- The principal reported that parent involvement has been less than what they want because of the following factors:
    - o Both parents in the student's home work;
    - o Other family needs take precedence;
    - o There is only one parent; and
    - o Many immigrant parents are reluctant to attend school events.
- During their focus group session, parents spoke highly of the teachers' availability and willingness to communicate, indicating that staff will respond immediately when contacted. Additionally, parents stated teachers will often take the initiative and call parents with questions, concerns or compliments.
- Opportunities for parent involvement include:
    - o Workshops in developing parenting skills, communicating with teenagers, and English as a second language;
    - o A library computer room for parents (part of the ARIS system);
    - o Translators are brought into meetings to help with paperwork; and
    - o Free computer classes.

- The parent organization has been in existence about six years, and provides workshops and fundraisers for the school community. Family events are organized as well, including a highly successful multicultural festival.
- The SED site visit team observed that hallways were clear of students and quiet during class periods. Supervision in the hallways was appropriate and respectful. The classrooms that were observed appeared full and students were fully engaged in their lessons.
- Teachers reported there is high staff morale in the building due to the support they receive from the school's leaders, and that staff share the responsibility in carrying out the school's improvement efforts.
- Teachers and leaders stated freshmen and sophomore class teachers participate on teams called "blocks." Specifics include:
    - Blocks work with students for a year at a time.
    - Students are blocked based on their grade and homerooms. They have honors blocks, mainstream blocks, a business block, and are discussing a possible ELL block for next year.
    - There are three freshman blocks of approximately 150 students each.
    - Teachers who work with the freshman block will work with a new block of freshman students the following year.
    - Teachers on the same student block work together to ensure that students are supported academically and personally. Teachers report that the student blocks have helped to improve attendance and decrease tardiness.
- The principal stated the school is attempting to increase parent involvement by working with the Chinese council and the Jewish board. They will focus on social work services, parent outreach and attendance.
- Based on the focus group session with external and community-based partners, it appears that the school has developed a coordinated network of partners offering a variety of services. Partners include, but are not limited to:
    - AUSSIE, which provides on-site, embedded PD relating to classroom instruction and behavioral management;
    - Mercy College, which provides mentoring and consulting services to the math department;
    - Achieve 3000, which is a web-based tool for teachers across content areas to implicitly teach literacy;
    - Brienza's Academic Achievement, which provides supplemental education services (SES) for students and professional development for identified staff; and
    - Teaching Matters, Inc., which provides professional development in unit/lesson plan development around differentiated instruction.

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES	
Use of 1003(g) or 1003(a) grant funding	*The LEA is using School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding to support the implementation of or planning for school intervention models.*
Use of Other Funding Sources besides 1003 (g)	*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.*

Findings:
- During their focus group session, school leaders stated general school funds were used to begin school improvement initiatives. SIG funding was not released to the school until February, 2011.

- School leaders provided the site visit team with a draft version of the school's amended fiscal statement. A corresponding budget narrative was supplied as well. Together, these documents confirm that funds are being used to support the implementation of the school's transformation model.
- As previously mentioned, school and network representatives were not aware of the current approval status of the amended budget.
- Teachers and leaders stated the school has continued to offer project-based Saturday classes using the school's SIFE (students with interrupted formal education) grant.
- The school's math, ELA and science departments applied for and were awarded a school-wide technology grant for one million dollars. This grant will be used to increase capacity and improve the instructional uses of technology throughout the entire high school.

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

Findings:
- School leaders report a collaborative relationship with network staff. It was stated that the network representatives are on-site on a regular basis.
- During their focus group session, school leaders stated the network leader is the school's "conduit" for district support from NYCDoE. The network leader assists school leaders and coordinates school partnership efforts.
- Network and district representatives have also been working with staff from the eleven NYCDoE transformation schools, providing professional development for teacher effectiveness evaluations. The schools have been meeting together for mutual support, school improvement planning, and student assessment training.
- The teacher effectiveness committee began initial work in October, and has been heavily involved in the year two planning of the SIG.
- As previously mentioned, the school received a Quality Review by NYCDoE in March, 2011. Information contained within was used in developing the 2011-12 school improvement plan.
- The school's principal stated he has been actively involved in the writing of the 2011-12 school improvement plan and SIG grant application. The network leaders wrote much of the 2010-11 improvement plan and grant application prior to the hiring of the principal.
- The Office of Portfolio Planning assigned a liaison to the school. In addition to work being done at this school, the school improvement liaison represents numerous NYCDoE schools in accountability as a school improvement manager. According to school leaders, the school improvement liaison had not yet worked with the school on site.

Summary:

The State Education Department four member site visit team conducted a full-day site visit at Franklin D. Roosevelt High School on April 12, 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 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 visible and supportive, and the network is actively involved in the school improvement efforts. Numerous external 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 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.

The next site visit to Franklin D. Roosevelt High School will be during the Fall of 2011.