School:	Fowler High School – Transformation Model	School District:	Syracuse City School District
Date of Site-Visit:	March 9, 2011 (Second Visit)	Members of Site-Visit Team:	Major Capers, Owen Donovan, Pat Roche, Jennifer Span

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:

- The school leadership team reported teachers' collective bargaining agreement ends June 2012 and discussions are ongoing and progress is being made.
- Staff stated their discussions are beginning to take place regarding how evaluations will be linked to student performance.
- School leaders reported the growth model for teacher evaluations continues to be developed with the Syracuse City School District and the Syracuse Teachers' Association.
- The Persistently Lowest Achieving (PLA) site visit team observed that most staff positions planned for in the School Implementation Grant (SIG) application are filled, and there a several positions that need to be filled.
- School leaders reported fourteen staff members participated in the *Take One* program. Teachers are working on videotapes to review classroom practice.
- School leaders reported, as during last visit, the contract is in place for teachers to receive financial incentives based on extended teaching time.
- School leaders reported a social worker position was filled and the school has hired two mental health counselors and a dropout prevention counselor to provide additional support to students.

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:
- The principal reported the scope of the school improvement plan has proved challenging as there are many initiatives that are being implemented concurrently.
- The leadership team stated the Sheltered Instruction and Observation Protocol (SIOP) program is in place.
- School leaders reported teachers are working with students for an extra block (6 rather than 5) during the day and receive a one/sixth salary increase.
- School leaders reported the school continues to use the peer coaching and the Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) model.
- The district leaders and the school staff reported they have now received the technology (e.g., 28 net books). The technology is being used for attendance, class grade reporting, internet searches, and can be used in various school settings.
- Teachers and school leadership reported students have Individualized Learning Plans. The learning plan information is collected in several binders and eventually will be collected into one document to display a student profile.
- The leadership team reported they are making progress in implementing the Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) for all ninth graders and most tenth graders and need to activate the plan online. Grade eleven and twelve ILPs are next to be completed.
- The leadership team stated talent development coaches and literacy instruction coaches are not yet hired.
- The school partners interviewed did not clearly explain their role in the development of the school improvement plan.
- The district/school documents reviewed were found to be aligned with the Joint Intervention Team (JIT) recommendations at the time the school improvement grant application was approved.

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:
- The school leadership stated teacher professional development (PD) is coordinated and supported by the Instructional Support Teacher (IST).
- Teachers reported the PD is challenging and sometimes "overwhelming." Teachers recommended hiring a second IST.

- Teachers reported the expectation to use PD information is clear. They are required to bring plan books to all sessions and construction lesson plans to apply what they learn.
- School leaders reported SIOP training started October 20, 2010.
- School leaders also reported Response to Intervention (RTI) is in place for the ninth grade and training is being provided to specific grade levels. All Grade nine and ten teams are trained and use a progress monitoring process in collaboration with a special education teacher to teach SWDs.
- School leaders reported the talent development coaches and building literacy instructional coach are in place and have defined schedules for professional development and observations.
- School leaders reported the Collaborative Coaching and Learning model is established, as well as the peer coaching model. Fourteen teachers are currently committed to working with this model.
- Instructional support teachers, teachers, and school leaders reported that they worked together to conduct classroom observations when a district observation was cancelled.
- Teachers stated Fowler has implemented small learning communities with multiple professional development sessions for teachers. Teachers reported they are satisfied with the various professional development offerings.
- The school leadership reported they have not yet met regarding the school's *Courageous Conversation about Race* initiative.
- The school leadership provided a descriptive summary of their professional development plan and has continued to evaluate staff use of PD strategies in the classroom.
- The implementation plan stated and the leadership team confirmed that thirty hours of SIOP training started on October 20, 2010 and continues as a mandated professional development. At the time of the visit, training was focused on strategies, interaction, practice and application.
- The leadership team reported teaching staff continues to participate in formative assessment trainings.

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:
- School leaders and teachers reported the data dashboard is not yet fully operational at the school level. It has been introduced to teachers, but teachers have not yet received training in how to use the system.
- The school leadership team reported teacher teams are in place to monitor data related to attendance, credits accrued, passing rates and behavior.
- Documentation regarding the Grade nine Talent Development Summary was provided by school leaders and reviewed by SED staff.
- School leaders provided the SED site visit team with data a binder containing analyses of the January, 2011 Regents examinations.
- Teachers reported they employ a benchmark matrix with testing items to determine if students are meeting benchmarks. The leadership team provided binders confirming this data was available for teacher use.

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.*
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:

- The site visit team observed teachers' postings of Collaborative Coaching and Learning targets and success criteria in all classrooms.
- The site visit team observed several teachers using "ticket out the door'' assessments.
- The school leadership team reported the district has developed a mapped and paced written curriculum that is available for some grades; however the written curriculum needs to be completed for all grades.
- The PLA site visit team observed learning objectives were displayed and that instruction was aligned to NYS standards. In most classrooms students were engaged in the teacher directed and self-directed activities.
- The school leadership team reported that ILP's have been developed for grade 9 students, but need to be completed for grades ten through twelve students.
- The school's implementation plan stated the next phase of the district's Four-Tier Framework (RTI) model will be grade level specific.
- The school leadership reported special education teachers have participated in training in specific content areas based on the district's new prioritized curriculum.
- Teachers stated the John Hopkins Talent Development program is fully implemented and Grade nine and ten students have more time on task for English and math.
- Teachers reported they believe mentoring has showed mixed results. Mentors provide assistance with homework, and practice reading exams with students.
- Teachers stated over sixty percent of ELL students receive tutoring after school.
- Teachers reported student scores from Gates McGenity, Scholastic Reading and Fast Forward are all monitored throughout the year; however it was not clearly explained how this data was used to inform instruction.
- The leadership team stated student academic and behavioral information will be included in a student's ILP and this information will be used to determine how staff will address the needs of students.
- Students reported they participated in project based learning activities and found the mentoring block useful in getting tutoring support from teachers.
- The site visit team observed classrooms and the Syracuse University Project Advance (SUPA) classes showed instructional rigor; however several classrooms observed showed low instructional rigor.
- Site visit team member observed two special education classes where students were not in attendance, and the teacher stated students do not come.

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 in need are receiving Academic Intervention Services (AIS) during the school day based on their Regents exam performance.
- Students reported they feel safer at Fowler as there are less fights. Some students stated teachers teach only to "those who want to learn".
- The Hillside Work Scholarship Program provides two social workers and two mental health workers provide services to students.
- Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) are not yet operational. Year One of the implementation phase was scheduled to start July 2010-March 2011.
- Fowler is working with the refugee center to provide translation services via phone and print. The center also provides support to English as a second language (ESL) students and families.
- Students and teachers reported student tardiness and absences are issues in the school. Students stated they are late or absent due to bus problems.
- School leaders stated the Extended Day Learning Program (EDLP) is operational and the challenge is to increase student attendance.
- Teachers reported they are working with students to address tardiness.
- Students stated they were unaware of ILP's and their intended use.
- Students reported they have access to the Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) program that is operational at Fowler.
- Parents and teachers stated there is a highly effective college counselor whose position will be eliminated. The concern was expressed that students would no longer have this valuable service.
- Students reported they still do not have books to take home, and some textbooks are old. This was documented in the October 2010 SED site visit report.
- Students reported they are able to take college level courses; however some students stated advanced classes have low enrollment and guidance counselors do not push in or advise students to take advance classes.
- School staff indicated the Liberty Partnership Program (LPP) focuses on preparing students for postsecondary education or employment.

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:
- Staff and parents continue to report feeling supported by the new school leaders.
- Parents and students reported the principal changed the environment of the school making it safer and more focused on learning.
- School partners and teachers reported the leadership team is visible in hallways and classrooms and maintains open communication.
- The leadership team reported they receive professional development through School Administrators Association of New York (SAANYS), "Take One," and SIOP training. However, they feel that more technology PD and technical assistance from district instructional technology staff would be beneficial.

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:
- Students and parents interviewed reported the school climate is safe. However, it was reported gang activity in the community indirectly affects the school climate in a negative manner.
- The parents and students stated they believe because of potential gang activity in the surrounding community fewer students stay after school for tutoring and are becoming frustrated with administrators and teachers who they believe are not addressing the issue of violence against students.
- School partners and leadership team reported open and regular communication between the partners and school staff. Parents stated guidance staff are active and make referrals and recommendations to students and parents.
- Parents reported the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) has been reactivated. The PTO is beginning to be more responsive to the needs of parents. In the future, they will reschedule meetings that are cancelled due to inclement weather.
- Partners reported being supported by school leadership and staff.
- Parents stated they are concerned that a guidance position that supports students interested in applying for college will be lost and they see this position as valuable and would like to see it continue.
- Several parents still expressed concerns regarding services for ESL students, especially related class sizes and types of differentiation services provided.
- During their focus group session, partners indicated two academic and social support groups (e.g., Hillside, Liberty Partnerships) serve over 200 students. The graduation rate for these students is close to hundred percent.
- Partners reported they are not involved in the school improvement planning process.

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES	
Use of 1003(g) or	*The LEA is using School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding to support the*

1003(a) grant funding	*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:
- The LEA is using the SIG funding of approximately $5.8 million to support the transformation model at Fowler High School over three years.
- The approved FS-10 for the Fowler 1003(g) grant shows that approximately $1.4 million of other Federal or State allocations are committed over the next three years to directly support school improvement efforts at Fowler High School.
- The district was asked to review expenditures to determine if they need to make amendment(s) to budget prior to the end of the school year.

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 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:
- The leadership team reported the district is responsive and supportive. They helped Fowler re-designate funds for eleventh and twelfth graders. They maintain open communication and in general provide what you need.
- School leaders stated the district's Office of School Reform conducts monitoring site visits and shares results with the leadership team.
- School leaders reported the Office of School Reform has limited staff to service all Syracuse PLA schools. The district office recently cancelled a scheduled monitoring visit at Fowler.
- Teachers reported they were not aware of the Office of School Reform having a presence at the school since the fall walk-through.
- The school leadership analysis of data shows that the percentage of ELL students at Fowler is significantly higher than other Syracuse schools, and students placed in the school do not always live within the proximity of the school.

Summary:

The SED four member review team conducted a full-day site visit at the Fowler High School on March 9, 2011. The team was able to interview parents, teachers, administrators, parents and partners. The team also reviewed building specific documentation, data binders, and observed classrooms. As a result we compiled information to determine the extent to which the school has made efforts toward

progress in the implementation of the transformation reform model to improve student learning.

The next site visit to Fowler High School will be in the Fall of 2011.

Please contact Major Capers, if you have any questions regarding this report or reapplication process.