

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

# Final Report



<b>BEDS Code</b>	331900011504
<b>School Name</b>	High School for Civil Rights and Law
<b>School Address</b>	400 Pennsylvania Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11207
<b>District Name</b>	NYCDOE CSD 19
<b>Principal</b>	Dr. Michael Steele
<b>Dates of Visit</b>	February 26-28, 2019



## Purpose Of The Visit

This school was identified as needing additional support by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Because of this identification, NYSED arranged for an Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) to visit the school. The visit is intended to help the school identify areas of need that are making long-term success a challenge and provide several visible Quick Wins that can be accomplished and demonstrate the school’s commitment to improvement.

The report provides a critical lens to help the school best focus its efforts.

## School Performance

New York State uses multiple indicators to determine the identification status of schools across the state. For each of these indicators, schools receive a number of 1 (lowest), 2, 3, or 4 (highest) that corresponds with how the school performed in relation to either other schools and/or performance targets. More information about how these levels are determined can be found at: <http://www.nysed.gov/accountability/essa-accountability-designation-materials>

The most recent results for the “All Students” group at the school are as follows:

### High School Performance Indicators

4 Yr Grad. Rate <67%	Composite Performance Achievement Level	Average of 4-, 5-, and 6-year Graduation Rate Levels	Combined Composite Performance Achievement and Graduation Rate Level	English Language Proficiency Level	Average ELA and Math Academic Progress Level	Chronic Absenteeism Level	College, Career, Civic, Readiness (CCCR) Level
No	1	1	1	-	1	2	1

High School for Civil Rights and Law serves 245 students in grades nine to twelve.

## Information About The Visit

- The visit was led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from NYSED. The team also included a district representative and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The team visited a total of ten classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited eight classrooms with the principal during the visit.
- Team members conducted interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- Team members examined documents provided by the school including lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.

## Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. The school has established a successful athletic program that competes for league championships annually. Students and staff interviewed by the team recognized these programs as a source of pride for the school. Several students shared that they chose to attend the school for its athletic programs. The principal estimated that student enrollment for the 2018-19 school year has increased by five percent due to the promotion of the athletic programs.
2. School leaders and teachers have established an environment conducive for learning. When conducting class visits, the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) noted that students in classrooms behaved in an orderly fashion and complied with teachers' requests. Due to the implementation of restorative practices, the number of disciplinary referrals in the 2018-19 school year has decreased by 17 percent compared to the same period last school year.
3. The team observed that students demonstrated a sense of belonging and appeared to connect well with their peers. The school's social environment was characterized by students conversing in a respectful manner at all times. Students reported that they enjoy coming to school to see their friends. They shared that the teachers' 5:30:10 instructional model that was introduced this school year encourages discussions with their friends, which makes learning fun.

## Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

### Systems for Improvement

- **The school should consider infusing the theme of civil rights and law throughout classroom instruction.** The 2018-19 School Comprehensive Education Plan SCEP states that civil rights and law themes would be infused throughout all content areas, particularly in civil rights and law classes including extended day programming. However, in classroom visits, the IIT noted that civil rights and law themes were not infused in any observed classes. The school has ten students who participate in the school's debate team and youth law club; however, these programs are conducted as after-school programs.
- **The school will need to devise an effective system to support students who are not passing Regents exams.** The principal shared that two programs, one conducted afterschool and the other on Saturdays, were instituted to assist students who need support in passing Regents exams. However, the principal noted that students' participation in these programs is poor due to competing programs such as athletic activities. On average, fewer than ten students attend the after-school Regents preparation program, and fewer than 15 students attend the Saturday program. The principal reported that he incentivizes attendance to weekend sessions by providing students with pizza.
- **The school should clarify the instructional focus.** School leaders stated that the instructional focus for the 2018-19 school year includes vocabulary development, guided discussions, and student engagement. In addition, when conducting classroom visits, the IIT observed that posters in classrooms addressed the 5:30:10 instructional model, 3-2-1 strategies, and depth of knowledge (DOK) questioning strategies. However, teachers reported that new initiatives are introduced each year and that there is no closure to the previous year's instructional initiatives. As a result, the team noted evidence of the existence of previous initiatives that

are still being exercised by teachers throughout the school. When reviewing the professional development (PD) plan, the team noted that 5:30:10 strategies were covered once in September 2018, and the current PD plan did not include the focal topics stated by school leaders. Staff members responsible for coordinating PD activities reported that they create the PD plan without receiving input from school leaders.

## Leadership and Organization at the School

- **School leaders will need a systematic process for providing teachers with feedback aligned to the school's goals.** Although the 5:30:10 instructional model is an initiative for the 2018-19 school year, 60 percent of the observation feedback reviewed by the IIT did not include language addressing the use of 5:30:10. Further, feedback from school leaders did not include actionable steps.
- **School leaders will need to adopt a system that evaluates the effectiveness of the 5:30:10 initiative.** Teachers shared that the 5:30:10 instructional model restricts their creativity as each instructional lesson or activity cannot extend beyond ten minutes. As challenges emerged with the implementation of this initiative, school leaders did not provide PD or feedback to address the instructional challenges. The team's review of written observation feedback revealed that school leaders do not provide specific feedback related to 5:30:10 instructional model. Teachers noted that they receive feedback inconsistently from school leaders, and the feedback rarely addresses current instructional initiatives.
- **The school leaders will need to establish a process for tracking the academic progress of mid-year transfer students.** School leaders noted that approximately 13 percent of the student population is comprised of students who transferred to the school during the school year. School leaders reported that they meet with students upon their enrollment but do not have a process for monitoring their ongoing performance.

## Learning at the School

- **English language learner (ELL) classes will need to academically challenge students.** The IIT noted that ELL classes lacked instructional rigor as students were consistently assigned worksheets that included recall questions and fill-in-the-blank activities. In 2017-18, only 18 percent of students who took the New York State English As A Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) achieved the highest level.
- **The school should emphasize a writing process for students.** In 85 percent of observed classrooms, the IIT noted that students were engaged in activities that required writing short answers that did not require them to think critically. On the English language arts (ELA) and social studies Regents exams administered in January 2019, only 11 percent of students received a passing score. School leaders stated that the vast majority of students who did not pass, did not attempt or complete their writing prompts, which impacted their success. Teachers reported that the 5:30:10 instructional model that is currently being implemented does not support extended writing activities. School leaders noted that teachers are responsible for analyzing the data in working to improve students' performance on the Regents exams.
- **Teachers should diversify instruction to meet the needs of all students.** In 80 percent of visited classrooms, the IIT observed that teachers used instructional strategies that did not require students to be actively engaged in lessons. Although school leaders identified classroom discussion as an instructional goal, the team saw student discussions in 20 percent of observed classrooms. Students reported that class lessons are not engaging. Although the 5:30:10 instructional model is designed to promote student discussion, school leaders

have not provided a comprehensive PD plan to support teachers' implementation of the model. In addition, school leaders have provided limited feedback specific to the implementation or delivery of the 5:30:10 model.

## Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Parents shared that the school's communication with families is ineffective.** Parents interviewed by the team stated that the school relies on their children to deliver paper documents instead of communicating with them via the mail, email, or phone calls. For example, a flier informing parents of Regents exam preparation activities was distributed to students to give to their parents, but many students did not share the information with their parents. The principal is in the process of implementing a system to use email to communicate with parents.
- **Students stated that the physical environment of the school should be improved.** Students described paint chipping throughout the school as an area that should be addressed. In addition, they stated that most lockers are inoperable and in a state of disrepair.
- **Staff suggested that the school should offer more extracurricular programs to students.** Staff expressed the perspective that programs such as drama, poetry, and dance would enrich the educational experience of students.