

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

# Final Report



<b>BEDS Code</b>	320700011473
<b>School Name</b>	Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School
<b>School Address</b>	701 St Ann's Avenue, Bronx, NY 10455
<b>District Name</b>	NYCDOE CSD 7
<b>Principal</b>	Melanie Williams
<b>Dates of Visit</b>	January 15-17, 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.

## 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 28 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited six 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.
- In advance of the visit, 16 staff members (57percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.
- The school serves 317 students in grades nine through twelve.

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

1. Building upon previous professional development (PD), school leaders have effectively communicated to teachers that Danielson 3B student-to-student discussion, is a school-wide priority. Teachers were able to identify this priority as well as explain the expectations that the principal and assistant principals had related to this PD initiative. The program of monitoring for this instructional priority, which includes three observations in the fall and three observations during the spring, is known and accepted by staff. The team found that all targets in this regard have been met so far for the 2018-19 school year. During interviews with teachers, the team learned that the feedback that they receive from non-evaluative classroom observations by the principal and assistant principals is appreciated and considered useful by most teachers. Some teachers, especially newer teachers, noted that the opportunities to participate in peer inter-visitations were effective in supporting their growth.
2. Building upon earlier efforts at collaboration, teachers noted that they have someone in the school to turn to when they have instructional questions. They identified the principal, teacher leaders, and fellow colleagues most often, and they indicated that there are generally collaborative and positive relationships among staff. Some new teachers also noted a mentorship program, which helps them to transition, and said that they appreciated the impact of that program.
3. The principal has continued to prioritize the importance of communication with parents and the development of a welcoming atmosphere during the 2018-19 school year. Parents shared with the IIT that communication from the school is strong and parents feel welcome within the school. They reported that they appreciate the monthly phone calls from teachers, the communication from the parent liaison, and the principal's open-door policy. Parents noted that they feel empowered to address their concerns with school staff and that has contributed to their overall sense of inclusion at the school. Almost all the parents interviewed by the team stated that they utilize Jupiter Grades to keep track of their children's progress, and they credit that to the good culture of communication at the school and the effort made by teachers to keep them updated.

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

### Systems for Improvement

- **The school needs to develop an effective system for measuring the impact of its interventions and credit recovery programs and for targeting the finite resources available on the greatest areas of need.** In discussions with staff members and the principal, and in an analysis of data, the IIT found that many students in grade nine who are most in need of support are not receiving the reading interventions to promote academic success. Parents told the IIT that the school could do more to support struggling students before they fail or fall behind. The IIT learned that the only year-long reading interventions at the school are provided to special education students and are linked to needs identified in their Individualized Education Plan (IEPs). In the future, school leaders should develop a system to conduct an inventory and assessment of current interventions and credit recovery programs to determine to what extent student's credit recovery needs are being met at each strategic checkpoint. They should also consider focusing on providing the strongest possible instruction to students in grades nine and ten to minimize the need for credit recovery and special support.

- **School leaders should develop and communicate clear expectations and guidelines for the deployment of paraprofessionals.** The IIT observed and learned from staff, that paraprofessionals in the school still follow their students’ schedules when their assigned student is absent. They do not have additional or different school- related responsibilities, which could be revised to be broader, especially when the student they are responsible for is absent. In addition, the IIT learned that paraprofessionals would like to have access to lesson plans before the classes, so that they can prepare for how best to serve students and take on a more active role in the class.

## Leadership and Organization at the School

- **School leaders should develop and implement sufficient structures and systems to recognize and celebrate student success and improvement.** The team found that students were concerned that only the high performing students had access to trips or rewards, and that there was little recognition of students who were improving in academics or succeeding in other areas. School leaders could consider implementing initiatives such as a “Student of the Week/Month” or nominations taken from each teacher to create a “10th Grader of the Week” or a shout out board for students who have improved their attendance.
- **School leaders need to provide sufficient support to enable students to take on additional responsibilities as part of their preparation for college.** The IIT learned that although the school is designated as a college preparatory program, students need to be more adequately prepared to self-assess their behavior and academic standing, how they may be struggling, or to identify what resources and supports they need to get back on track. In the future, school leaders should consider identifying a member of the staff to provide group and/ or individual guidance so that students will be better prepared to navigate the complexities of higher education as independent and self-motivated scholars.

## Learning at the School

- **The school should establish effective systems to address the learning needs of all students from grades nine through 12.** Parents and teachers told the IIT that more efforts need to be made to identify and provide assistance to struggling students from the moment students enter the school. Some parents said their children were identified too late, and it made it difficult for them to catch up. Teachers reported that year-long English and reading interventions are currently only provided to special education students.
- **Teachers need to provide students with more opportunities for discussion with peers and to extend their learning.** The IIT observed examples of student-to-student discussions in classrooms, but to varying degrees of success and depth. School leaders should consider strengthening their cycle of monitoring and providing feedback on the effective use of student-to-student discussion through the use of higher-order questions, referencing classroom resources, and encouraging students to develop and share their own mastery of these questions through discussions.
- **School leaders should clarify for teachers their expectations for the implementation of the Danielson 3C “Making Thinking Visible” standard.** Teachers were able to state that Danielson 3C was one of the PD priorities, but they were unclear about how to implement it successfully in their instruction. They informed

the IIT that Danielson 3B had been a priority longer and that they had received more training and support to develop that practice, and that this was now needed for Danielson 3C.

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

- **Students and parents reported that there is currently a limited range of extracurricular activities available at the school and that they would like the school to provide additional opportunities.** They told the IIT that the school should offer more clubs such as debate, chess, and video gaming, and additional athletics. When the IIT discussed this request with teachers, they were informed that some teachers would be interested in setting aside time to develop such programs.
- **Science teachers reported that the school does not have a system or a consistent pool of student volunteers to help them set up their labs.** In discussions with the IIT, the science teachers explored the idea of applying for additional funds to hire students to help set up labs before each science class. Science teachers noted that these positions could provide students with valuable work experience that could be beneficial for their academic and employment endeavors.