Collaborative Leadership & Learning
For Equity & Excellence

Building a Caring Community of Learning - It’s a Team Sport!

INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Wachera Brown, Principal Innovation High School, Jersey City, NJ

Carolyne Quintana, Principal Bronxdale High School, Bronx, NY
ISA PARTNER SCHOOLS

The Institute for Student Achievement (ISA) partners with schools and districts to transform high schools so that students who are traditionally underserved and underperforming graduate prepared for success in college, careers, and life.

“School improvement efforts need to address the system – the culture, structures for collaboration, and the need for shared leadership to deepen instructional strategies … and ensure that all students have what they need to learn and succeed.”
Research-based. Effective. Sustainable.
Jersey City Public Schools

• 6 High Schools (9-12)
• 1 Secondary School (6-12)
• 1 Alternative Program (serving grades 6-12)

We offer comprehensive High Schools as well as district-wide selective programs to suit a range of interests and talents.

High Schools (open enrollment)
• 4- Comprehensive
• 3- Selective admissions process
• 1- Lottery process (Innovation)
Innovation High School

Within these 8 High Schools sits a small STEAM school with the mission to inspire young people to become curious, committed, and independent life-long learners who embrace the skills and values to be innovative problem-solvers, prepared to overcome challenges that confront them and our world.
This is Innovation
A small diverse school of 318 Students
And
Staff
- 30 teachers
- 1 clerk
- 1 Crisis intervention teacher
- 1 guidance counselor
- 3 security officers
- 1 custodian
- 1 Instructional coach
- 1 administrator

Teacher Leaders
- Leadership Team
- Team Leaders
- Department Leaders
- Class advisors
I joined Innovation in April of 2016 as the 3rd principal in two years, but the founding teachers and staff remain constant. There’s been very little attrition.
All too often schools that serve black and brown students are limited in what is available in terms of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics).
Reading: Not much gap narrowing since 1988.

17 Year Olds – NAEP Reading

*Denotes previous assessment format

Math: Not much gap closing since 1990.

17 Year Olds – NAEP Math

Average Scale Score


African American  Latino  White

*Denotes previous assessment format

• The disproportionate difference is something we are passionate about and hold a steadfast belief that all students should have the opportunity to learn despite differences in educational needs and backgrounds.

• Fostering learning environments that accommodate different economical, social, and developmental, and language backgrounds will change this.

• Innovation HS strives to infuse technology in music and art and has changed the deep structure of science offerings through partnerships with Institute for Student Achievement and New Jersey City University. The result is a school redefining what it means to prepare ALL students for the 21st century.
Core Values and Beliefs

● We believe in continuous improvement
● We believe in a college preparatory curriculum
● We believe in distributed counseling
● We believe in continuous professional development
● We believe in extended day
● We believe in parent involvement
● We believe in school organization
The thinking behind the PLC at Innovation is the *heart* and *soul* of distributive leadership.
But as David Fleming wrote:

"Large-scale problems do not require large-scale solutions; they require small-scale solutions within a large-scale framework."

_Lean Logic_, (2016), p. xxi, introduction
We create and explore those small scale solutions in our PLCs, our Collective Teams.

"If small groups are included in the decision-making process, then they should be allowed to make decisions. If an organization sets up teams and then uses them for purely advisory purposes, it loses the true advantage that a team has: namely, collective wisdom."
— James Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds*

"Groups that are too much alike find it harder to keep learning, because each member is bringing less and less new information to the table. Homogeneous groups are great at doing what they do well, but they become progressively less able to investigate alternatives."
— James Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds*

"With most things, the average is mediocrity. With decision making, it's often excellence. You could say it's as if we've been programmed to be collectively smart."
— James Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds*

"You'll sometimes hear from people that they actually do a better job of getting their work done when they have a lot of other obligations— in effect it removes the possibility of procrastination."
— James Surowiecki
Critical Leadership Practices

- Articulate school goals and expected outcomes frequently
- Provide instructional leadership and model expectations
- Ensure protected and focused time for collaborative planning
- Establish a culture that values teacher and student voice
- Create platforms for teacher leadership
- Promote professional accountability
- Create organizational structures and formalized processes that support and maintain focus on success for all students
- Articulate school goals and expected outcomes frequently (Dept and grade-level goals keep learning fresh and militate against the pull to stop learning)
- Provide instructional leadership and model expectations (In schools, leading is looking at multiple things large while overseeing details and providing guidance around the quality of implementation)
- Ensure protected and focused time for collaborative planning (PLCs need expertise (content teams) along with groups that are not too much alike (grade-level teams))
- Establish a culture that values teacher and student voice (Teams can’t be purely advisory; they lose advantage of collective wisdom and student can’t be ignored)
- Create platforms for teacher leadership (People do better with multiple obligations and when they put in leadership positions (those big and small))
- Promote professional accountability (We are programed to be collectively smart, but expectations and deadlines must be in place)

Create organizational structures and formalized processes that support and maintain focus on success for all (small-scale solutions within a large-scale framework)
When leaders empower teachers, better ideas emerge.

“You can seek to control or you can seek to support, but very rarely can you do both”

- Chris Lehmann, Principal of the Science Leadership Academy
Organization Structures

• **Leadership Team**
  - Develop school professional development plan
  - Analyze school data
  - Develop school goals
  - Identify/Address school equity
  - Develop PARCC plan

• **Grade Level (team leader facilitates)**
  - Common goals (data/parental involvement)
  - Kid talk
  - Interdisciplinary planning
  - Naviance
  - Instructional rounds
  - Writing plan

• **Content area (department leader facilitates)**
  - Common goals (data/parental involvement),
  - Unit plans, feedback
  - Develop and analyze common assessments,
  - Discuss student work samples to norm scoring
  - Effective teacher feedback writing samples

• **Grade level class advisers**
  - Culture and climate (events and activities)

*weekly PLC
( 60 min-grade level, 60-min content)
First Steps of Department PLC’s Collaboration

- **Establish Norms**
  7 Norms of Collaboration

- **Assign Roles**
  Accountability for all teachers

- **Weekly Agendas**
  Meetings are meaningful and focused
Structure of Grade Level PLCs

- Meetings are highly structured and organized
- How team creates goals with action plans
  - Aligns to School’s Professional Development Plan (PDP) and PARCC plan
  - Develop 3 goals to focus on throughout school year
- How agendas are determined
  - Bi-weekly meetings with all grade-level team leaders
  - Weekly agendas are shared ahead of time to allow for team collaboration
- Instructional Rounds
  - Peer observations of Look-Fors
- Interdisciplinary instructional planning
- Advisory - tenet of ISA
  - Naviance
Content Area PLCs

● **Establish 3 Goals**
  - Data driven
  - Analyze PARCC data to determine goals
  - Aligned with school wide writing plan

● **Unit Plans/Instructional tasks**
  - Align NJSLS standards for curriculum mapping
  - Provide feedback
  - Provide strategies to support students

● **Develop and analyze common assessments**  [https://vimeo.com/313682846](https://vimeo.com/313682846)
  - Formal and informal assessments
  - Aligned with NJSLS and PARCC
  - Monitor students progress
Math team gives teacher feedback on her feedback to students

Watch Vimeo:  https://vimeo.com/313682846
Leadership Reflection: My Perspective

“Sometimes we neglect to see our purpose for being here---seeing the big picture and the best in the individual—the big picture is what do you want for students, what do you want for the school, what do you want for yourself---It doesn’t become personal. It becomes your WHY. I hope that I have been able to model that—could walk in and not be petty, but how will that help us reach the big picture.”
Be Aware: There are forces that work against Continuous Improvement
Is it working?

• Teachers
  • Several teachers taking on leadership roles in the District
  • Seven teachers enrolled in leadership programs
  • Aspiring to be educational leaders to enact a vision

• Students
  • Pursuing college/career opportunities
  • Growth mindset
  • Restorative justice
  • Self-advocate
Watch Vimeo: https://vimeo.com/313682670
In 2015-16 our PARCC data told a story, a story not unlike the story told in a number of urban schools around the country.

Both the district and state OUTPERFORMED Innovation on the PARCC Literacy and Algebra 1 Exams.
By the end of 2016-17, Innovation staff and students rewrote that story.

Innovation **OUTPERFORMED** all but 3 high schools in Jersey City (3 special requirement Schools), and Innovation **OUTPERFORMED** the district and state on the PARCC Literacy Exam.

Innovation **OUTPERFORMED** the district in Algebra 1.
By the end of 2017-18, Innovation staff and students builds on successes

100% of students achieved graduation requirements for ELA

With the exception of Algebra 1, ALL content areas showed increases when compared to 2016-17 data.
### 2017-18 Graduation Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What percentage of graduating students has been accepted by four-year colleges?</td>
<td>Accepted 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What percentage of graduating students has been accepted by two-year colleges?</td>
<td>Accepted 83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3. What percentage of graduating students has been accepted to other postsecondary institutions? | Applied - 1%  
Accepted - 1% |
| 4. What percentage of graduating students has applied/been accepted by **public** postsecondary institutions? | 93% applied to 4yr schools  
Accepted into 4yr **public** schools 88% |
| 5. What percentage of graduating students has applied/been accepted by **private** postsecondary institutions? | 93% applied to 4yr schools  
Accepted into 4yr **private** schools 69% |
| 6. What percentage of those applying/accepted to postsecondary institutions will receive financial aid? | 75% SHOULD but  
8% have shown documentation = Grants $58,891 & Loans $27,500  
Total FAFSA $86,391/yr |
| 7. What percentage of those applying/accepted will receive scholarships? | 44% have returned award/scholarship offer letters = **$887,914** |
One’s tempted to say, “I have really good teachers.”

One is tempted to say, “I have really good students.”
Creating a culture where everyone takes ownership and contributes
“Innovation has one administrator. I can’t build a school alone. Can’t be everywhere. Can’t see everything. But due to our collaborative efforts, I can know almost everything that I need to know about the school”.
Reflections, *The Wisdom of Crowds*

How might these quotations inform your use of PLCs moving forward?

What are the forces that fight against innovation (*small i*) at your school?

How might this portion of the presentation help you fight against the forces that pull schools toward the status quo?
Knee to Knee Activity

- Find a partner and turn knee to knee. Identify Partner A and Partner B. Introduce yourselves.

- Partner A has 2 minutes to respond to: “What are your values? How do they align to your practices? How do they guide how you approach decision-making? How do they inform your leadership?”

- Partner B will listen silently. Upon completion of the 2 minutes, Partner B will probe about something they heard saying, “Tell me more about …” Partner A will have 1 more minute to respond.

- Thank your partner and switch.
Who Am I?

- Carolyne Quintana: cquintana@bronxdalehs.org   @QBronxdale

- Principal of Bronxdale HS for 7 years, NPS Coaching Fellow through the NYCDOE’s Office of Leadership

- Learning Partners Mentor; Restorative Practices Mentor; Community School

- Edu things that matter to me right now: SoLD; equity and integration (on committees at work and at my son’s school); coaching

- Mom, wife, love cooking and feeding others, love reading and telling stories, love dancing in the living room and being outdoors with the kids!
Bronxdale By The Numbers

- 77% of Bronxdale students are classified as economically disadvantaged.[1]
- The school’s racial make-up is similar to the community’s: 57% Latino, 29% Black, 8% White, 5% Asian, and 1% Native American.[2]
- In 2017-18, Bronxdale served 445 students, 26% of whom qualified for special education services (not including ASD Nest and D75) and 5% of whom were classified as Limited English Proficient.[3]

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Bronxdale By The Numbers

- In 2018, Bronxdale’s 4- and 6-year grad rates (82% and 84%, respectively) surpassed grad rates of comparison schools and borough and City high school averages.

- A higher percentage of the school’s 9th and 10th grade students earned sufficient credits to be on track for graduation than their comparison group and borough and city-wide counterparts.[1]

- The school’s 2016-17 NYC Department of Education (DOE) School Quality Review evaluation rated Bronxdale as “well-developed” in rigorous instruction, teaching and learning effectiveness, teacher collaboration and development, and high expectations for students.[2]

[1] The “comparison group” is comprised of students from other schools across the city who were the most similar to Bronxdale students, based on their incoming standardized test scores, disability status, economic need, and over-age status. The comparison group result is an estimate of how the students at this school would have performed if they had attended other schools throughout the city. See: http://schools.nyc.gov/OA/SchoolReports/2016-17/School_Quality_Snapshot_2017_HS_X508.pdf.
## Indicators of School Progress 2017-18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Bronxdale</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient credits earned in 9th grade to be on track for graduation</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient credits earned in 10th grade to be on track for graduation</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successfully completed approved college or career preparatory courses and exams</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated college ready (meeting CUNY’s standards for avoiding remedial classes)</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated within 4 years</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated within 6 years</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Extreme negative emotions can have a devastating effect on a student’s ability to learn.”

(David Brooks, NYT 1-17-2019)

BHS: A CARING COMMUNITY

WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

- Advisory and Advisory Committee
- Equity and Access Committee
- Student Support Team
- Restorative Responses
- Student groups: PGC, HizStory, HerStory, QSA, Global Kids, and more …
- Inquiry-based teaching and learning; Capstone
SHARED INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

- Shared Leadership isn't just about distributing responsibilities …

- “SIL involves the active collaboration of principals and teachers on curriculum, instruction, and assessment … and shared responsibility for staff development, curricular development, and supervision of instructional tasks.” (Marks and Printy, 2003)

- Stop and Think: What’s the difference implied in those two bullets?
Shared Leadership: How?

- How are teacher leaders selected?
- How is teacher leadership developed?
- How are new committees and leadership opportunities created?
- How do you show you value shared leadership?
- How is the purpose and proposed outcome made explicit?
- How do you maintain adequate oversight without micromanaging?
- How do you know what decisions need to be made by the principal and when shared leadership and decision-making is appropriate?
New Principal Support Coaching

I’ve learned this year:

- “Asking questions, rather than giving advice, facilitates development rather than engendering dependency, and helps your coachee recognize that answers often already lie within them.” (Tatter, 12-2018 gse.harvard.edu “Usable Knowledge”)

- There is a difference between buying in and owning.

- Teachers are smart and they can handle autonomy. Principals may not know how to create the conditions for that.
Table Talk: 2 Rounds

- Choose one of the following three topics to discuss for 6 minutes with 2-3 other people at your table.

- After 6 minutes, thank your partners.

- Then, find 2-3 new people to discuss the second topic of choice for 6 minutes. Thank your partners.

- Finally, share at your whole table, “How do you identify what you need to do (or keep doing) to ensure genuine shared leadership can happen in your school environment? And, what is it that you need to do?”
Table Talks: 2 Rounds

- Topic 1: What structures in your school/district support collaborative forms of instructional leadership? What needs to be in place for that to happen?

- Topic 2: What must leaders know and be able to do in order to engage their school community as true partners in leading instructional improvement? What might teachers need to know and be able to do?

- Topic 3: What actions can district leaders take to encourage more collaborative forms of instructional leadership?
ACTION ITEM: “How do you identify what you need to do (or keep doing) to ensure genuine shared leadership can happen in your school environment? What conditions support or constrain shared instructional leadership?”

“What’s the one shift that you would need to make?”
“If we are truly interested in transforming schools, and meeting the needs of urban youth of color who are the most disenfranchised within them, educators must create safe and trusting environments that are respectful of students’ culture.” (Christopher Emdin)