

$$\frac{6}{15} = \frac{x}{x+d}$$

$$\frac{6}{15}(x+d) = x$$

$$\frac{6}{15}x + \frac{6}{15}d = x$$

$$\frac{6}{15}d = x - \frac{6}{15}x$$

$$\frac{6}{15}d = \frac{9}{15}x$$

$$\frac{d}{dt}\left(\frac{6}{15}\right) = \frac{dx}{dt}\left(\frac{9}{15}\right)$$

$$\frac{\frac{d}{dt}\left(\frac{6}{15}\right)}{\frac{9}{15}} = \frac{dx}{dt}$$

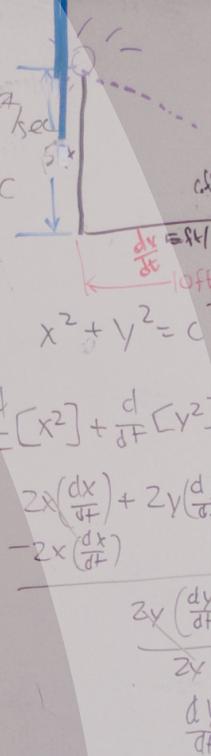
$$\frac{d}{dt}\left(\frac{2}{3}\right) = \frac{dx}{dt}$$

$$(5)\left(\frac{2}{3}\right) = \frac{dx}{dt}$$

$$(b) = \frac{10}{3} \text{ ft/sec} = \frac{dx}{dt}$$

$$5 \text{ ft/sec} + \frac{10}{3} \text{ ft/sec}$$

$$= 8.33 \text{ ft/sec}$$



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GSS Transfer School Model:

Good Shepherd Services has a long history of providing services to young people in New York City that is infused with its approach to a strength-based, youth development philosophy. In essence, GSS's philosophy and practice is to help young people identify and build upon their inherent strengths and abilities while acknowledging their individual circumstances and needs. GSS's first transfer school, South Brooklyn Community High School, opened in September 2002. In the fall of 2006, GSS opened a second transfer school, West Brooklyn Community High School, the first replication of the GSS model. GSS has since worked with other N.Y.C. organizations to further develop the model at four more high schools.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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OVERVIEW

Since it opened in 2006, West Brooklyn Community High School, founded and designed jointly by Good Shepherd Services and the New York City Department of Education, with support from New Visions for Public Schools, has achieved a dramatic level of success in supporting students who had struggled at, or dropped out of, their prior high schools. WBCHS boasts among the highest course-passing rates, state-exam scores, and graduation rates of any school serving this population in New York City. The school implements a partnership model in which the Department of Education provides the academic program and Good Shepherd Services provides comprehensive services and supports to the students through the NYC Department of Education's Learning to Work Initiative. Learning to Work provides funding and support to community-based organizations to partner with transfer schools and provide counseling, internships, and college and career readiness activities. The aim is to develop students' core intellectual and behavioral skills to prepare them not just to graduate from high school—a goal that itself once seemed unattainable for many of these students—but also for the lifelong learning skills that they will need to succeed in postsecondary education and careers and as citizens. This strong academic focus is combined with a deep concern for students' socio-emotional development and backed by a tight-knit, highly empowered staff. The result is a rich, family-like learning community driven by high expectations.

Located at the intersection of the Boro Park and Sunset Park neighborhoods in Brooklyn, WBCHS serves a diverse population of 16- to 21-year-old, over-age, and undercredited students from surrounding neighborhoods. While these transfer students come to the school with widely diverse personal and socio-

emotional backgrounds, they share a history of low academic expectations and repeated educational failures. The result is that students are distrustful of both schools and their own academic abilities.

From the moment WBCHS enrolls a student, it begins work changing both of these attitudes. By building authentic relationships with its students, teachers and counselors open lines of communication for guidance, advice, and criticism. By offering support, patience, and concern, in exchange for a non-negotiable sense of accountability, the school nurtures student growth without coddling. By identifying student strengths and then insisting students rise to high levels, the school provides a pathway for students to reshape their educational self-image.

This work is paying off in student outcomes. WBCHS has earned an "A" on its New York City Progress Report every year to date, reflecting strong graduation, credit-attainment, and Regents passing rates. More recently, the school has been working to build stronger preparation for, and pathways into, postsecondary education and career credentials.

This binder examines the core systems, structures, and practices that underpin West Brooklyn Community High School's success. The practices here have been documented by staff from Eskolta and are based on observations, interviews, and discussions with WBCHS staff over the course of the 2009-10 school year. Eskolta consultants, working with school leadership, observed courses, staff meetings, and the in-situ school culture. They conducted one-on-one or group interviews with most members of the staff and reviewed documents and curricula used by the school for planning and instruction.

Chapter I.

FIVE IDEAS THAT SET THE TONE

The success of West Brooklyn Community High School has as much to do with the power of good ideas as with the power of good practice. While WBCHS is a school of action, that action would lack focus, consistency, and, ultimately, impact on students were it not shaped by a series of key ideas. This chapter highlights five key ideas that set the tone for everything the school does and offers examples of important situations to put them into practice. These ideas were culled from observations and conversations with school staff over the course of the 2009-10 school year.

The ideas discussed are the importance of:

1. building relationships while also
2. committing to student learning;
3. discovering and demanding strength in students while also

4. taking small steps to improve; and
5. thinking critically through it all.

THE FIVE KEY IDEAS

1. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

At any school, teachers and counselors must be able to connect with students if those students are to be and feel engaged. At a school serving students who enter feeling disconnected and disengaged, this personal connection is even more important. WBCHS's community partner Good Shepherd Services has made this idea a priority in its work with students. From minute one, building relationships throughout the school community is key.

THE CORE VALUES OF GOOD SHEPHERD SERVICES IN THE KEY IDEAS OF WBCHS

Good Shepherd Services identified five core values at the heart of its model for transfer schools: Building Healthy Relationships; Active and Rigorous Learning Environment; High Expectations; Building Community; and Student Voice and Responsibility. It should come as no surprise that almost all of the five key ideas discussed here, which emerged after reflecting on common themes in West Brooklyn Community High School's success, fit seamlessly into the GSS core values.

Three WBCHS principles—Build Relationships, Commit to Learning, and Discover and Demand Strength—are extensions of GSS's first three core values and undergird the school's development. Think Critically reflects the way in which WBCHS has combined the core values of Student Voice and Responsibility with emerging elements of an Active and Rigorous Learning Environment to emphasize specific approaches to responsible thinking and learning.

Take Small Steps is the only principle that expands noticeably beyond the GSS values. It reflects an insight of leadership and staff at the school into how to build the community, relationships, and environment necessary for student success.

During intake, a school leader contacts each student personally. Relationship building begins long before a student actually sets foot in the school. The WBCHS director makes a point of contacting every prospective student personally to set up an interview. Later, the director greets every prospective student as she arrives at the school for an interview.

The personal involvement of a senior staff member impresses upon students that WBCHS is different. It is a school where everyone will treat them with respect and take them seriously. By beginning with this personalized approach, the school sets a tone that informs everything that follows.

For more information, see Chapter IV—Intake: Introducing Students to a New School Culture.

A counselor highlights active listening when meeting a new student. Many of the students arriving at a transfer school are accustomed to meeting with a guidance counselor only when they are in trouble, such as failing to complete a necessary requirement. This does not help build relationships. At WBCHS, the first meeting is one in which the counselor asks open-ended questions and listens to the student's stories and background.

The school views open and nonjudgmental listening as a way of building a relationship with the student, not as condoning specific behavior. Later, if behavior might need to be addressed or changed, the student will be more open to and accepting of the intervention.

For more information, see Chapter VII—Counseling Interventions: Reconnecting Students to Their Education.

The school hires teachers who can be engaging in front of a group. While lectures and presentations are hardly the standard form of instruction at WBCHS, the ability to give an engaging presentation is a key attribute of a WBCHS teacher. To excite and engage students, teachers must be enthusiastic and clear when dramatizing key points in the classroom. This helps rebuild the relationship with school and learning that most students have lost.

For more information, see Chapter II—Hiring Decisions: Getting the Right People.

In one-on-one time with students, staff members empathize even when they disagree. Whether it

is a counselor meeting with a student or a teacher conferencing with a student, adults must be able to listen intently and show that they care and that they empathize with a student. The best counselors can get “inside a student’s head,” understanding how and why a student thinks a certain way, even if that way of thinking is unhealthy. WBCHS teachers can empathize with students’ struggles in the classroom and lead them in honest discussions, even if this involves criticism. Both counselors and teachers seek to understand their students’ problems and what is behind those problems as a necessary step toward reaching solutions.

2. COMMIT TO LEARNING

If the work of building relationships is the foundation of WBCHS’s success, then the house built on that foundation is the school’s commitment to learning. The top priority is always for students to be in class and learning, a point vocalized most prominently by the director of the counseling staff. Despite a myriad of distractions and competing needs, teachers and counselors at WBCHS make this commitment to learning and place it above all else.

WBCHS makes the rigor of the school program explicit during intake. For a large part of the intake interview with each student and his family, school leaders emphasize and reemphasize that WBCHS is an academically rigorous school. Because it places all emphasis on learning in the classroom, the school offers minimal extracurricular activities that might distract from learning. This message sets the tone for the commitment to learning that students have struggled with in the past.

For more information, see Chapter IV—Intake: Introducing Students to a New School Culture.

New staff cannot view themselves as the students’ saviors. When WBCHS hires counselors or teachers, it ensures that they understand and value their role in engaging formerly disengaged students. Rather than focusing on “saving” these students, teachers and counselors respect the school’s commitment to helping students learn to solve their own problems.

In hiring teachers, WBCHS leaders look for individuals who understand that the first priority of teachers at the school is to help students learn, and that they do so by designing lessons that reengage them. In hiring

counselors, the first priority is to help students learn by helping them address obstacles to learning. The school does not hire interviewees who focus too much on building relationships at the expense of learning.

For more information, see Chapter II—Hiring Decisions: Getting the Right People.

When a student is pulled out of class, counselors work to get her or him right back in class. Perhaps one of the greatest weaknesses of a model with deep counseling support is the possibility that the support becomes a new crutch. Students who once lost time due to relationships with friends and from other distractions outside of school might dodge their responsibilities with a counselor inside the building.

WBCHS students bring with them many stories of past and current struggles. To build a healthy relationship, counselors need to listen to and hear these stories. However, they also need to listen to a story once, then push the student forward. Rather than solely building relationships by understanding student problems, WBCHS counselors emphasize solutions that get their students back to class. Accordingly, effective counseling conversations are brief (10 to 15 minutes) and end with the student back in class, refocused.

For more information, see Chapter VII—Counseling Interventions: Reconnecting Students to Their Education.

When the school cannot address students' non-academic needs, counselors help with referrals. A 10- to 15-minute meeting is not long enough to provide the support that some students need for deep socio-emotional problems. Rather than take time away from the learning to try to solve these problems during the school day, counselors refer students to social services and help them arrange meetings that will not interfere with learning.

For more information, see Chapter IX—Family Engagement: Triangulating for Support.

Meetings between school leaders and staff emphasize adult learning. In the same way that they expect staff to put student learning above all else, the principal and director make staff learning their own top priority. In both one-on-one supervision and full staff meetings, leaders help each staff member identify one or two specific goals and give regular feedback on

those goals. This contributes to a school-wide tone that is about learning and improvement.

For more information, see Chapter III—Instructional Staff Development: Guided Discovery.

3. DISCOVER AND DEMAND STRENGTH

WBCHS takes a “strengths based” approach to student learning. This idea—vocalized by both counseling and instructional staff—has two parallel, but at times competing, meanings. On the one hand, it means seeking out strengths in students who have often been branded as failures and helping them to see and use these skills. On the other hand, it means expecting students to have the strength to meet the high expectations they had failed to meet in the past. These two sides of the strengths-based approach—discovering and demanding strengths—can be seen in a variety of ways.

DISCOVERING STRENGTH

Just as WBCHS staff seeks to discover strength in students, the school's leaders seek to discover strength in their staff. From top to bottom, the school models a strengths-based approach.

Electives and on-site internships play to student strengths. Part of the counselor's job is to find the strengths in each student. Counselors seek to draw out students' talents and encourage them to pursue what they are good at. They do this by acknowledging those strengths and providing the students with opportunities to explore them. These talents are then turned into elective credits in classes that are designed to leverage student strengths. For instance, classes to express learning through art leverage the fact that many students are skilled artists even if they are poor writers. At other times, this focus is turned into an on-site internship that engages the student, such as an internship on African drumming or Latin dance.

For more information, see Chapter X—Internships: Challenging and Motivating Through Opportunity.

School leaders model the strengths-based approach by regularly asking for staff input. One key aspect of a strengths-based approach is the expectation that people around you have useful knowledge. Leaders model this expectation by asking staff members for their input on new policies or strategies the school

will use. They do this regularly as part of carefully structured meetings. Similarly, every professional development session includes a written evaluation, giving staff the chance to offer feedback on the experience.

For more information, see Chapter III—Instructional Staff Development: Guided Discovery.

Leaders highlight staff strengths in one-on-one supervision. Just as leaders emphasize their commitment to adult learning by setting goals with staff, they do this in a strengths-based way by regularly suggesting that staff members pair with colleagues to learn from one another.

For more information, see Chapter III—Instructional Staff Development: Guided Discovery.

Course evaluations seek out student voice. Just as leaders seek staff input, the school seeks student input. At the end of each trimester, the school administers and analyzes anonymous surveys of students about their courses.

For more information, see Chapter XI—Data: Using Numbers to Focus on People.

DEMANDING STRENGTH

WBCHS staff members not only recognize and draw out students' strengths, but they also hold students to high expectations that they can and do meet.

The school expects a student who breaks a rule to be mature in his or her response. A strengths-based approach to enforcing rules means that students are neither treated like children, coddled or lectured when they break a rule, nor like inmates, demeaned and punished. Instead, they are treated like intelligent adults. When an infraction occurs, it is met with a clear explanation of why the rule has been put in place and the friendly insistence that it be followed.

The school makes sure that explanations are not of the "because it's the rule" variety, but rather intelligent explanations that highlight the way the rule either protects their safety or enables learning. For example, if a student is wearing a hat—something that violates the Department of Education's rules—a staff member tells her or him not just that this violates the district's rules but that the rule is in place because students have been known to hide razors or knives in hats. A student

who does not respond when asked is asked again—and then asked to meet with a counselor. The message is clear: there is room for intelligent explanation but not for negotiation.

For more information, see Chapter VII—Counseling Interventions: Reconnecting Students to Their Education.

In the classroom, teachers question more and lecture less. Demanding strength means demanding that students think for themselves. This can be difficult for students who have rarely been asked to do this before. Teachers at WBCHS carefully and regularly incorporate questioning into every class, finding ways to push students to think about not only what and how something works but why it works that way.

For more information, see Chapter III—Instructional Staff Development: Guided Discovery.

In one-on-one supervision, leaders make sure that the staff does not coddle students. When dealing with students who have struggled in the past, counselors and teacher can be tempted to respond by trying to make things easier for them. Support is vital, but when it lowers standards, leaders step in during one-on-one supervision.

Some red flags of this behavior in counselors are:

- > The counselor tries to protect the student by not sharing information with colleagues.
- > The counselor hesitates to call a parent because of fear of what will occur.
- > The counselor suggests bending a rule.

For teachers, the most common red flag is the statement that "These students cannot handle more difficult work" or a teaching practice that reflects that belief. In either case, the leader uses time in one-on-one supervision to go back to the school's commitment to learning, asking the counselor or teacher whether her approach is going to help the students learn the skills they need to succeed in life after high school. This reminder—that although support is key, too much support erodes student strengths—is an important part of one-on-one supervision.

For more information, see Chapter VII—Counseling Interventions: Reconnecting Students to Their Education.

In meeting with a student, the counselor pushes him or her to arrive at solutions. Just as teachers do more questioning than lecturing in class, counselors do more listening than talking in a counseling session. Instead of saying the student has broken a rule, the counselor might ask for an explanation of why the broken rule is in place. Counselors engage students by asking them to think for themselves. They set standards just beyond students' current reach to help push them ahead.

For more information, see Chapter VII—Counseling Interventions: Reconnecting Students to Their Education.

4. TAKE SMALL STEPS

The demand that each student meet high expectations would be disappointing if they had to be met immediately. Students enter WBCHS with existing struggles and skill deficits, and many lack a basic understanding of the habits of a good learner. Taking small steps and expecting gradual, incremental change is critical for success at WBCHS.

Teachers make small adjustments regularly. Part of what happens through one-on-one supervision, feedback on lesson plans, and department meetings is that teachers review their expectations for students and make small changes. Often, this will be less about adjusting for the whole class, and more about identifying those few students who are resistant or struggling and finding new ways to engage and challenge them. This is as much a process of small steps for the teachers (getting help from supervisors to answer the questions, “What can my students achieve?” and “How can I help them to achieve more?”) as it is for the students (getting help and encouragement from teachers to find their strengths and push past resistance to believing they can do better).

For more information, see Chapter VI—Grades and Assessment: Pushing Expectations Through Backward Design.

Counselors focus on manageable solutions. Every two weeks counselors meet one-on-one with students to review their grades. For every student, but particularly those who are failing two or three classes, counselors set goals for improvement, working closely with each student to identify and define these goals. Students who are failing four or more classes meet directly with the director.

Regardless of how far behind a student is, there are never more than two goals. Furthermore, these goals are intentionally made manageable. For example, the goal for a student who has missed five days of school in the past two weeks might be to miss at most three days in the next two weeks, rather than perfect attendance. The student who is failing three classes might set a goal to start passing the one that seems most in reach.

For more information, see Chapter VII—Counseling Interventions: Reconnecting Students to Their Education.

There is a sequence of biweekly thresholds for repeated poor behavior. One of the times a transfer school is most put to the test is when a student breaks a rule or engages in behavior that gets in the way of other students' learning. This is particularly important for students in the midst of a serious life change: Their behavior is often reminiscent of patterns they exhibited at their old schools when failing. At many transfer schools, the expectation is that this will not be tolerated and the student's counselor or another adult support person must help them realize this. On the flip side, at other transfer schools, the expectation is that students need to be cut a little slack, with an understanding that they are learning to behave appropriately in school and need a caring adult to help them get there.

WBCHS rejects both approaches. Rather, the idea of “small steps” dictates the response: The behavior will be tolerated a little the first time, less the next time, and so on. This practice takes the form of a clear and consistent series of consequences for misbehavior. A set of small steps enables the school to calibrate its response without giving the sense that it treats students arbitrarily.

First, the student meets with her counselor and sets a manageable but meaningful goal for improvement. A student who repeats the behavior or does not meet the goal in the next two weeks may have one more meeting with the counselor (if this is the first time the student has gone through this process). Otherwise, the offender begins moving up the ladder. The next repeat brings a three-way meeting involving the staff member who the student acted out against. The next brings the student's parent or guardian into school for a meeting or a home visit if the parent or guardian

is unresponsive. Finally, a student who continues to exhibit the same poor behavior meets with the director.

For more information, see Chapter VII—Counseling Interventions: Reconnecting Students to Their Education.

Leaders focus on a few goals for each staff member.

Just as WBCHS expects counselors and teachers to discern small steps for their students to improve, school leaders identify just a few focused goals to work on with the staff members they supervise. Paradoxically, this focus on a few small goals helps the school to accomplish a lot each year—much more than it could if it were asking every staff member to do everything at once. Staff members talk about how the guidance and support they get helps them improve and reflect on their own practice every year.

For more information, see Chapter III—Instructional Staff Development: Guided Discovery.

5. THINK CRITICALLY

WBCHS continually asks staff to think critically and express thoughts clearly and honestly. Similarly, it expects students to think critically about themselves and their path. The value placed on critical thinking and deep personal reflection is present throughout the other ideas but bears repeating to the extent it has been championed by the principal and other instructional leaders.

In class, teachers ask students to analyze issues, not just learn content. At a school where every student starts behind and needs to pass statewide tests filled with content they have yet to learn, it would seem that a focus on drilling in that content would be paramount. It is not. WBCHS staff attributes the success of the students on statewide exams largely to the school's intense focus on pushing students to think critically about their learning.

The school rejects the idea that its students have not succeeded in the past because they have not been drilled with content—many of them have. Rather, it assumes no one ever asked the students to truly engage with that content. By asking students to question and analyze their learning, and explicitly teaching students the skills to do so, teachers help them to engage and become successful lifelong learners/earners.

For more information, see Chapter VI—Grades and Assessment: Pushing Expectations Through Backward Design.

In one-on-one supervision, leaders expect staff to disagree—but they also admit when ego is at play.

The commitment of teachers and counselors to student learning must be so deeply rooted that they are willing to say unpopular things, potentially hurting other people's feelings as long as they do so with respect for the genuine purpose of helping students learn. This begins and is modeled in one-on-one supervision.

School leaders emphasize two things that they view as strengths from their staff: One is the willingness and ability to disagree. They view a disagreement as an opportunity to delve into an issue and discuss it. Second is the willingness and ability to identify and address when a personal relationship or an unwillingness to change one's opinion has gotten in the way. For instance, a teacher who is told to assign more rigorous assignments to students may insist that they are gradually getting there and need more time. This disagreement can serve as a starting point of discussion between supervisor and teacher about what can and should be expected of student growth. However, it may become clear that the teacher fears he cannot get the students to learn these assignments. The supervisor then encourages the teacher to admit this, recognize it as something to work on, and set a goal to improve how he teaches the content.

For more information, see Chapter III—Instructional Staff Development: Guided Discovery.

WBCHS expects staff to critique colleagues, but privately. Just as the school expects staff members to think deeply about their own practice and set ego aside when they do that, it also expects them to think deeply about how they are part of a team and how well that team is furthering student learning. Inevitably, in one-on-one supervision school leaders hear staff members criticizing one another. Rather than take the response on themselves, leaders encourage staff to think about what is at issue and how it affects student learning, and then bring it up in private with their colleagues themselves.

For more information, see Chapter III—Instructional Staff Development: Guided Discovery.

Chapter II.

HIRING DECISIONS: GETTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

As a transfer school serving students who need a great deal of support, West Brooklyn Community High School invests significant time in securing teachers and counselors who work well with its population. And as in all good schools, counselors and teachers must be able to:

- > Reflect deeply about their practice;
- > Commit to helping students learn;
- > Maintain high standards; and
- > Communicate well.

The school's first step in recruiting is to reach out through a variety of avenues familiar to innovative public schools. It turns not only to district career fairs but also to progressive teacher education schools and to websites like Idealist.org.

After identifying potential applicants, WBCHS uses an extensive process to determine if a potential hire is a good fit. In the case of both teacher hires and counselor hires, the school simulates the real work of the position, using sample scenarios to determine if applicants meet the above standards.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS WHEN HIRING

FOUR ACTIVITIES THAT HELP WBCHS DETERMINE IF A TEACHER IS A GOOD FIT

Candidates teach a short sample lesson. School leaders carefully observe how a candidate interacts with students during a 12-minute sample lesson. Although this is too short a time for a complete lesson, it is long enough to give a sense of the candidate's style and approach. Is the candidate mindful of his students and what they are doing or not doing throughout the lesson? How does the candidate convey information? Is she articulate and confident? Does he engage the students? Does he push the students to think more deeply? Can she simultaneously lead a class discussion or lesson and control students so that the lesson is productive and focused? The principal looks for candidates who can not only lead interesting, hands-on activities but who are also energetic and flexible, with the personality to connect with all students. (See *Appendix 2.1* for the prompt given to potential hires for the sample lesson and *Appendix 2.2* for the rubric used to assess the lesson.)

Candidates teach a short sample lesson.

PORTION OF INTERVIEW PROCESS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	... BUT DON'T BE FOOLED BY
<p>Teach a 12-minute sample lesson</p> <p>This is too little time to teach a real lesson but long enough to do a small task of substance.</p>	<p>The Ability to Engage</p> <p>Students who have been disengaged by their prior schools need teachers who engage them. Teachers must demonstrate energy and the ability to connect with all students in a classroom. The lack of this skill is reason alone to reject a candidate. High-quality candidates often produce examples of differentiation for multiple learning styles, scaffolding for struggling learners, and extension projects for highly motivated students.</p>	<p>A Cool Activity</p> <p>One way to engage an audience is with an interesting, hands-on activity, but this can be deceptive. A teacher needs the personality and flexibility to engage in any situation, not just with a predesigned activity. More important, activities must be more than engaging; they should push deeper thinking. A frequent reason WBCHS rejects candidates is the failure to connect an engaging activity to either the skills or content being taught. Another common reason is failure to call on higher-order critical thinking.</p>

Candidates observe and provide feedback on other candidates' sample lessons. Invited in groups of five, candidates observe one another's lessons. During a group feedback sessions on these lessons, which is facilitated by the principal, school leaders look for

candidates who can give colleagues both positive feedback and constructive criticism. *(See Appendix 2.3 for the observational protocol used to evaluate peer lessons.)*

Candidates observe and provide feedback on other candidates' sample lessons.

PORTION OF INTERVIEW PROCESS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	... BUT DON'T BE FOOLED BY
<p>Observe and Give Feedback on Other Candidates' Sample Lessons</p> <p>Candidates come in groups of five and observe one another's lessons.</p>	<p>Ability to Be Positive</p> <p>This is critical in a school serving students who had been branded failures. And teachers need to see the potential not only in their students but in their colleagues as well.</p>	<p>Unwillingness to Disagree</p> <p>Seeing the positive is one thing; glossing over the negative is another. Candidates should be able to disagree and offer critiques as well.</p>

Candidates meet one on one with the principal. Here is an opportunity for the principal to offer direct insight into the position and to raise questions that may be too direct for group settings. In particular, one-on-one meetings provide an opportunity for school leaders to firmly convey West Brooklyn's expectations to potential hires, emphasizing that small transfer schools with high-need students rely heavily on intense levels of staff collaboration among both teachers and counselors. The principal makes clear

the frequency of meetings and seeks to determine the candidate's willingness to participate actively. The principal also looks for enthusiasm about collaboration, while also seeking to hire individuals who can balance collaboration with the ability to work independently and stand on their own two feet, drawing from others but not depending on them. *(See Appendix 2.4 for the questions used during the one-on-one interview with the principal.)*

Candidates meet one on one with the principal.

PORTION OF INTERVIEW PROCESS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	... BUT DON'T BE FOOLED BY
<p>Meet one on one with the principal</p> <p>The interview is a place for the principal to raise questions that are too direct to raise in a group.</p>	<p>Interest in Collaboration</p> <p>A small school serving students with high needs relies on intense levels of staff collaboration—not only among teachers but also between teachers and counselors. Staff must be willing to participate in frequent meetings.</p>	<p>Lack of Independence</p> <p>Too much interest in collaboration may be a bad sign. Staff members need to stand on their own two feet, drawing but not depending on others.</p>

Candidates observe a classroom and debrief with the principal. The candidates observe a WBCHS teacher in the classroom and debrief with the principal on what they have observed. This gives the principal further insight into each candidate's understanding of and beliefs about instruction. This process is continued, post-observation, asking candidates to comment on a

series of scenarios that detail common academic and behavioral problems found in the school. (See *Appendix 2.5 for the types of scenarios WBCHS uses to gauge a candidate's instructional beliefs and Appendix 2.6 for the rubric used to evaluate the candidate after the one-on-one interview.*)

Candidates observe a classroom and debrief with the principal.

PORTION OF INTERVIEW PROCESS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	... BUT DON'T BE FOOLED BY
<p>Observe a classroom and debrief</p> <p>The candidate observes a classroom with the principal. The debrief provides a window into the applicant's understanding of and beliefs about instruction.</p>	<p>Commitment to Community Norms and Expectations</p> <p>Many candidates are unfamiliar with transfer schools until they arrive at WBCHS. They should be ready to commit to classroom routines the school developed to address behavior challenges.</p>	<p>Commitment Without Understanding</p> <p>A candidate may express a willingness to opt into a community without fully understanding its expectations. Through questioning, WBCHS leaders seek to ensure applicants understand the school's routines and policies and the reasons behind them.</p>

To clarify expectations and give context to the classrooms and situations they have just discussed, candidates receive Principles of Learning at WBCHS. Based on this overview of the school's philosophy, the

school can ask candidates directly if they are aligned with the school's mission and would choose to be a part of the school's community. (See *Appendix 2.7 for The Principles of Learning at WBCHS.*)

THREE ACTIVITIES THAT HELP WBCHS DETERMINE IF A COUNSELOR IS A GOOD FIT

School leaders review resumés with an eye toward experience with diverse adolescents. When school leaders review a candidate’s resumé, they pay particular attention to an applicant’s background and

experience. In the high-pressure world of accelerated schools, there is not enough time for extensive on-the-job training. Leaders look for counselors who have worked with adolescents of various races and ethnicities reflective of the population WBCHS serves. They also try to ensure that the candidate has both group and one-on-one experience with students.

School leaders review resumés with an eye toward experience with diverse adolescents.

PORTION OF INTERVIEW PROCESS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	... BUT DON'T BE FOOLED BY
Resumé The applicant’s background and experience can reveal special characteristics or work history that WBCHS seeks.	Experience with Racially Diverse Adolescents In the high-pressure world of accelerated schools, there isn’t enough time for lots of on-the-job training. Counselors should come with experience working with adolescents of various races and ethnicities reflective of the population WBCHS serves.	Only Group Experience At least some elements of a candidate’s prior experience should be in a one-on-one setting, not only in groups.

The principal conducts a one-on-one interview and looks for flexibility and self-assurance. Given the difficulty of observing a counselor working one on one with a student, counselor candidates participate in a one-on-one interview that is more extensive than that for teachers. Good candidates will be open-minded and envision themselves as part of a team where they will

learn from others and make valuable contributions. A good candidate demonstrates flexibility but not so much that he cannot enforce rules. Counselors need to be able to fill in for coworkers and work well with them. *(See Appendix 2.8 for examples of counselor interview questions.)*

The principal conducts a one-on-one interview and looks for flexibility and self-assurance.

PORTION OF INTERVIEW PROCESS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	... BUT DON'T BE FOOLED BY
Interview Because it is difficult to observe counseling in action, WBCHS’s hiring process for counselors centers on one-on-one interviews with the principal.	Flexibility Good candidates are open-minded and can see themselves as part of a team where they will learn from others and contribute in different ways.	Softy Good candidates are not so flexible that they are bad at enforcing rules. Counselors need to show empathy while remaining firm on nonnegotiable expectations.

The principal provides for comment a scenario that requires both empathy and boundaries. Giving potential counselors a real-life scenario to engage with provides an opportunity for them to showcase an ability to empathize while also setting boundaries. In reviewing the applicant’s comments about sample scenarios, school leaders look for several key capacities: the ability to listen well to students and understand their perspectives without imposing their own; the

ability to constructively engage students in problem solving, so that responsibility for action rests on the student’s shoulders, with the counselor’s assistance; and the ability to determine quickly when a student who has been pulled out of class can return to it or, alternatively, needs more intensive help. (See *Appendix 2.9 for samples of scenario used during the interview process.*)

The principal provides for comment a scenario that requires both empathy and boundaries.

PORTION OF INTERVIEW PROCESS	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	... BUT DON'T BE FOOLED BY
<p>Scenario</p> <p>The principal asks the candidate to comment on a scenario of a student with myriad problems facing a crisis.</p>	<p>Empathy</p> <p>Counselors need to empathize with students who have faced myriad problems in their lives, their homes, and their schools, exhibiting an ability to listen and “get inside the head” of the student, understanding experiences from the student’s perspective without imposing their own.</p>	<p>Therapy</p> <p>Counselors are not social workers and should not think they are. Candidates who want to “save” students will be disappointed. The first priority of WBCHS counselors is to help students solve problems and, if possible, return to classrooms where they can learn. Counselors refer students who need therapy elsewhere.</p>

KEY QUALITIES IN INSTRUCTIONAL AND COUNSELING STAFF

Ability to reflect deeply. WBCHS leaders feel strongly that the key indicator of whether someone will honestly reflect and improve is not only their willingness to admit a mistake but also their positional take on an

issue. Truly reflective staff members can separate their personal stake in an issue from the issue itself. WBCHS teachers and counselors need to be open to rethinking their own assumptions and abilities again and again. Most of all, they need to be able to admit when they have resisted acknowledging a mistake, then engage in a process of thinking about how to lessen that resistance in the future.

WBCHS’s Rubric for Assessing the Ability to Reflect Deeply

INSUFFICIENT	SUFFICIENT	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
Bristles at potential criticism or gives feedback in an overly personalized manner	Willing to take and give criticism respectfully	Willing to take and give criticism respectfully Willing to admit openly to having stuck to a positional issue and to move beyond it	Willing to take and give criticism respectfully Willing to admit openly to having stuck to a positional issue and to move beyond it Willing to discuss how to avoid having positional issues get in the way in the future

Committed to student learning above all else. Using scenarios and case studies, WBCHS leaders assess the ability of potential hires to place a higher priority on student learning than on politeness. The school pushes its staff beyond “the culture of nice.” They need a deep commitment to student learning, so deep that they are willing to say unpopular things, hold their colleagues accountable, and potentially hurt others’ feelings, as

long as it is done with respect for the genuine purpose of helping students learn. For teaching staff, this may mean speaking up in staff meetings. For counseling staff, it goes further, always placing top priority on getting students back into the classroom where they can learn, not keeping them in a counseling session that takes time away from learning.

WBCHS’s Rubric for Assessing Commitment to Student Learning

INSUFFICIENT	SUFFICIENT	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
Views the first priority as maintaining order Sees student learning as subordinate to their own comfort	Views the first priority as having students in class engaged in learning Takes students out of class only when it will help them get back into class and learning	Views the first priority as having students in class engaged in learning Takes students out of class only when it will help them get back into class and learning Speaks up when something stands in the way of student learning	Views the first priority as having students in class engaged in learning Takes students out of class only when it will help them get back into class and learning Speaks up when something stands in the way of student learning Respectfully critiques, in private, a colleague who does something that is not helping student learning

High expectations—in theory and action. The strengths-based approach, which is at the heart of the WBCHS model, means more than recognizing and drawing out students’ strengths. For teachers and counselors, it also means having high expectations that students will rise to. For many teachers and counselors, this equates to asking difficult “why” questions and,

in classes, assigning projects that push students to do independent research, writing, and analysis. All of this is important, yet it is not enough. Teachers and counselors who take the strengths-based approach further thoughtfully set and adjust standards that students may resist, but they push past that resistance because of a belief that their students can do more.

WBCHS’s Rubric for Assessing High Expectations in Theory and Action

INSUFFICIENT	SUFFICIENT	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
Unable or unwilling to enforce rules consistently and clearly	Enforces rules consistently and clearly based on a belief that students must be held to the same, consistent standards until they meet them	Enforces rules consistently and clearly based on a belief that students must be held to the same, consistent standards until they meet them Asks students to think for themselves rather than lectures them	Enforces rules consistently and clearly based on a belief that students must be held to the same, consistent standards until they meet them Asks students to think for themselves rather than lectures them Sets standards just beyond a student’s current reach, with the idea of pushing her to meet them

Excellent communication skills. Much of the work of both teaching and counseling is about communication. With students who have been disengaged from school, teachers and counselors need to be able

to communicate with these students in a way that recognizes some of their skepticism toward learning without succumbing to it.

WBCHS's Rubric for Assessing Communication Skills

INSUFFICIENT	SUFFICIENT	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
Difficulty expressing opinions and beliefs in a coherent, compelling, and respectful manner	Willing and able to respectfully and compellingly state what they believe	Willing and able to respectfully and compellingly state what they believe Can connect with students, imagining what they are thinking and using this to help them	Willing and able to respectfully and compellingly state what they believe Can connect with students, imagining what they are thinking and using this to help them Can dramatize points in order to drive them home in a classroom, advisory, or a student assembly

APPENDIX 2.1

SAMPLE DOCUMENT: PROMPT FOR THE 12-MINUTE EXAMPLE LESSON

INTERVIEW: LESSON PLAN WITH 12-MINUTE EXAMPLE LESSON

REQUEST: As part of your interview at WBCHS, we ask that every candidate provide a lesson plan covering a relevant, interesting topic within your content area. *All candidates should be prepared to teach a 12-minute “mini-lesson” from this lesson plan in front of a full class of WBCHS students.*

The 12-minute example mini-lesson is an important part of the WBCHS hiring process. In addition to examining how candidates interact with our student population and carry themselves before a live audience of students, we will examine how the mini-lesson fits into the overall structure of the lesson plan and what choices were made when choosing and presenting the material.

APPENDIX 2.2

SAMPLE DOCUMENT:

RUBRIC USED TO ASSESS THE 12-MINUTE EXAMPLE LESSON



WEST BROOKLYN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

1053 41st Street
 Brooklyn, NY 11219
 TEL 718.686.1444 FAX 718.686.1189



Liliana Polo
 Principal

Karen McGovern
 Program Director

Candidate: _____ Subject Area: _____ Date: ____/____/____

		5	4	3	2	1
INTERVIEW AND LESSON PLAN	Focus on student strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gives specific examples > Desire to improve > Evidence of student voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Shows an understanding of student strengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Limited understanding > Demonstrates some awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Little awareness > Learning is the responsibility of the student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Indicates lack of respect for students and learning
	Reflective practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gives specific examples > Data drives instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Expresses interest in PD, seeks to improve craft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Expresses some interest in PD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Alludes to being reflective but isn't clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Places most of the blame on the student
	Understanding of our school population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Extensive experience with transfer students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Experience working with high school students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Limited exp working with youth in a school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Some experience with middle school/elem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > No experience
SCENARIOS	Focus on student strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gives specific examples > Desire to improve > Evidence of student voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Shows an understanding of student strengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Limited understanding > Demonstrates some awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Little awareness > Learning is the responsibility of the student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Indicates lack of respect for students and learning
	Reflective practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gives specific examples > Data drives instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Interested in PD, seeks to improve craft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Expresses some interest in PD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Alludes to being reflective but isn't clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Places most of the blame on the student
	Understanding of our school population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Extensive experience with transfer students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Experience working with high school students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Limited exp. working with youth in a school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Some experience with middle school/elem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > No experience

		5	4	3	2	1
WRITING SAMPLE	Focus on student strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gives specific examples > Desire to improve > Evidence of student voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Shows an understanding of student strengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Limited understanding > Demonstrates some awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Little awareness > Learning is the responsibility of the student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Indicates lack of respect for students and learning
	Reflective practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gives specific examples > Data drives instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Expresses interest in PD, seeks to improve craft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Expresses some interest in PD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Alludes to being reflective, but isn't clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Places most of the blame on the student
	Understanding of our school population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Extensive experience with transfer students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Experience working with high school students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Limited exp. working with youth in a school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Some experience with middle school/elem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > No experience

Total score: _____

APPENDIX 2.3 OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL USED TO EVALUATE PEER-LESSONS DURING INTERVIEW

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION AND DEBRIEFING PROTOCOL

OBSERVED TEACHER NAME:	OBSERVER NAME:	CLASS:	PERIOD:	DATE:	PRESENT:	LATE:	ABSENT:
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AIM/OBJECTIVE:					
WORKSHOP MODEL			WHAT IS THE TEACHER DOING?	WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS DOING?	QUESTIONS/ SUGGESTIONS
DO NOW	START:	END:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Did the teacher tap into students' prior knowledge and/or experience and connect new information to that? <input type="checkbox"/> Was there a clear structure/ routine that students were accustomed to?					
MINI- LESSON	START:	END:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Did the teacher prepare students for unfamiliar vocabulary words? <input type="checkbox"/> Did the teacher model what students were expected to do during the work period? <input type="checkbox"/> Were specific learning strategies modeled for students to practice on their own?					

WORKSHOP MODEL			WHAT IS THE TEACHER DOING?	WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS DOING?	QUESTIONS/ SUGGESTIONS
WORK PERIOD	START:	END:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are students engaged in practicing the strategies/ skills they just learned? <input type="checkbox"/> Is this activity facilitating student understanding of the content? <input type="checkbox"/> Are students interacting with one another? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the teacher checking in with students and walking around the room monitoring student work?					
CLOSING	START:	END:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Did the teacher provide enough time at the end to assess student learning? <input type="checkbox"/> At the end of this lesson, does the teacher know whether or not students reached the goals/objectives? What's the evidence? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the students able to explain their thinking (metacognition) both verbally and in writing?					

Date of Post-Observation: ____/____/____

<input type="checkbox"/> Observed teacher reflects on lesson (How do I think this lesson went?)	<input type="checkbox"/> What specific positive feedback did I receive? (What were the best parts of this lesson?)
<input type="checkbox"/> What specific suggestions did I receive about this lesson?	<input type="checkbox"/> From the feedback I got through this observation, what I will focus on right now is . . .

Notes:

APPENDIX 2.4

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS USED DURING ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW FOR HIRING A TEACHER



Liliana Polo
Principal

WEST BROOKLYN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

1053 41st Street
Brooklyn, NY 11219
TEL 718.686.1444 FAX 718.686.1189



Karen McGovern
Program Director

1. Our students vary greatly in skill and motivation. A class can have 20 students with reading levels ranging from the 6th grade to the 12th grade. How would you ensure that all students are supported appropriately? Please be specific in your response.
2. Using a variety of assessment strategies is an important skill for teachers. Select a unit of study (within your content area) that you have recently taught. What assessment strategies did you use? Why did you select those strategies?
3. What is the relationship between instruction and classroom management?
(Candidate should describe strengths and challenges; specific examples preferred)
4. We believe teacher leadership is essential in moving the school's vision forward. This can take on various forms: peer observations, engaging in professional development both inside and outside the school, supporting peers, learning to use data effectively, developing mentoring relationships with students, etc. All of these roles involve working collaboratively with others. What have been your experiences in collaborating with others? Please outline strengths and challenges.
5. Lesson Plan

APPENDIX 2.5

SCENARIOS USED DURING ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW FOR HIRING A TEACHER



Liliana Polo
Principal

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Karen McGovern
Program Director

SCENARIOS

1. During your lesson you notice a student texting with a cell phone, under the desk. None of the other students notice, but you do. This student has a history of verbal outbursts; you worry that a direct confrontation will lead to a public power struggle. What are your next steps?
2. As your students file into your classroom, you notice a female student with an overly revealing top. She is one of your highest-achieving students and has a good attendance record. What are your next steps?
3. During your fourth-period class, you observe two students engage in a long and suspicious handshake. You are not sure but suspect that drugs were exchanged. You have suspected one of the students of being high in your class in the past. What are your next steps?
4. You are reviewing for the next day's exam. You are getting frustrated with a trio of students who are actively engaged in a conversation about last night's basketball game. You have told the three students to stop talking twice, but with little results. You specifically remind one of the students to complete the class work, which causes the student to reply, "Others are talking, why are you picking on me? That's why this class sucks." The student then gets up and walks out of your class. What are your next steps?
5. As you walk toward the staff lounge to get lunch before your next class, you see a fellow teacher talking on the phone in the hallway. The school prohibits cell phone use in the building. The period is about to be dismissed, inundating the hallway with students. What are your next steps?
6. You are reviewing your grades to make sure everything is in order before submitting them. You notice that all but one student failed the latest formal assessment; however, the majority of the students have high classwork grades. What are your next steps?
7. You have organized your class into small groups for an activity. Each group has a significant amount of work to get done in the time allotted; therefore it's imperative that the groups work quickly and effectively. Each group is working well, except for one. In that group, the students are at different levels and find it difficult to work together. They are starting to get visibly frustrated and have stopped working together. What your next steps?

APPENDIX 2.6

SAMPLE DOCUMENT:

RUBRIC USED TO ASSESS THE 12-MINUTE EXAMPLE LESSON



WEST BROOKLYN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

1053 41st Street
 Brooklyn, NY 11219
 TEL 718.686.1444 FAX 718.686.1189



Liliana Polo
 Principal

Karen McGovern
 Program Director

Candidate: _____ Subject Area: _____ Date: ____/____/____

TOTAL SCORE: _____

	5	4	3	2	1
Focus on student strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Applicant's response focuses on a desire to improve student achievement. > Classroom management strategies are student based and there is a sense of student voice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Applicant shows an understanding of student strengths and a desire to improve on strengths-based teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Limited understanding of student strengths. > Answers indicate some awareness of working from students' strengths, but it is not expressed explicitly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Little awareness of student strengths > Answers appear to indicate that student learning is solely the responsibility of the student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Answers indicate a lack of respect for students or student learning.
Reflective practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Recognizes need to continuously improve; learn > Desire and experience in collaborating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Response gives specific instances in which the teacher reflected on practice or on specific actions or outcomes. > Uses data in assessment or as driving instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Responses indicate the applicant continually seeks to improve on his/her teaching. > Expresses strong interest in professional development opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Responses indicate the applicant seeks to improve on his/her teaching. > Expresses some interest in professional development opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Shows some insight as to reflective practice > Answers allude to being reflective but are not very clear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Places most of the blame on the students or shows very little interest in looking at own decisions as affecting student learning.

	5	4	3	2	1
Understanding of our school population	> Has extensive experience working with transfer students or over-age and undercredited students.	> Has experience working with high school-aged students.	> Has limited experience working with adolescents in a school setting.	> Has limited experience working with adolescents in a non-school setting or has some experience working with middle/elementary school-aged students.	> Has no experience working with students.

INTERVIEWER: _____

APPENDIX 2.7

PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING AT WBCHS

PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

ORGANIZING FOR EFFORT

An effort-based school replaces the assumption that aptitude determines what and how much students learn with the assumption that sustained and directed effort can yield high achievement for all students. Everything is organized to evoke and support this effort, to send the message that effort is expected and that tough problems yield to sustained work. High minimum standards are set and assessments are geared to the standards. All students are taught a rigorous curriculum, matched to the standards, along with as much time and expert instruction as they need to meet or exceed expectations.

CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

If we expect all students to achieve at high levels, then we need to define explicitly what we expect students to learn. These expectations need to be communicated clearly in ways that get them “into the heads” of school professionals, parents, the community and, above all, students themselves. Descriptive criteria and models of work that meets standards should be publicly displayed, and students should refer to these displays to help them analyze and discuss their work. With visible accomplishment targets to aim toward at each stage of learning, students can participate in evaluating their own work and setting goals for their own effort.

FAIR AND CREDIBLE EVALUATIONS

If we expect students to put forth sustained effort over time, we need to use assessments that students find fair; and that parents, community, and employers find credible. Fair evaluations are ones that students can prepare for; therefore, tests, exams, and classroom assessments—as well as the curriculum—must be aligned to the standards. Fair assessment also means grading against absolute standards rather than on a curve, so students can clearly see the results of their learning efforts. Assessments that meet these criteria provide parents, colleges, and employers with credible evaluations of what individual students know and can do.

RECOGNITION OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

If we expect students to put forth and sustain high levels of effort, we need to motivate them by regularly recognizing their accomplishments. Clear recognition of authentic accomplishment is a hallmark of an effort-based school. This recognition can take the form of celebrations of work that meets standards or intermediate progress benchmarks en route to the standards. Progress points should be articulated so that, regardless of entering performance level, every student can meet real accomplishment criteria often enough to be recognized frequently. Recognition of accomplishment can be tied to opportunity to participate in events that matter to students and their families. Student accomplishment is also recognized when student performance on standards-based assessments is related to opportunities at work and in higher education.

ACADEMIC RIGOR IN A THINKING CURRICULUM

Thinking and problem solving will be the “new basics” of the 21st century. But the common idea that we can teach thinking without a solid foundation of knowledge must be abandoned. So must the idea that we can teach knowledge without engaging students in thinking. Knowledge and thinking are intimately joined. This implies a curriculum organized around major concepts that students are expected to know deeply. Teaching must engage students in active reasoning about these concepts. In every subject, at every grade level, instruction and learning must include commitment to a knowledge core, high thinking demand, and active use of knowledge.

ACCOUNTABLE TALK

Talking with others about ideas and work is fundamental to learning. But not all talk sustains learning. For classroom talk to promote learning it must be accountable—to the learning community, to accurate and appropriate knowledge, and to rigorous thinking. Accountable talk seriously responds to and further develops what others in the group have said. It puts forth and demands knowledge that is accurate and relevant to the issue under discussion. Accountable talk uses evidence appropriate to the discipline (e.g., proofs in mathematics, data from investigations in science, textual details in literature, documentary sources in history) and follows established norms of good reasoning. Teachers should intentionally create the norms and skills of accountable talk in their classrooms.

SOCIALIZING INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence is much more than an innate ability to think quickly and stockpile bits of knowledge. Intelligence is a set of problem-solving and reasoning capabilities, along with the habits of mind that lead one to use those capabilities regularly. Intelligence is equally a set of beliefs about one's right and obligation to understand and make sense of the world and one's capacity to figure things out over time. Intelligent habits of mind are learned through the daily expectations placed on the learner. By calling on students to use the skills of intelligent thinking—and by holding them responsible for doing so—educators can “teach” intelligence. This is what teachers normally do with students they expect much from; it should be standard practice with all students.

SELF-MANAGEMENT OF LEARNING

If students are going to be responsible for the quality of their thinking and learning, they need to develop—and regularly use—an array of self-monitoring and self-management strategies. These metacognitive skills include noticing when one doesn't understand something and taking steps to remedy the situation, as well as formulating questions and inquiries that let one explore deep levels of meaning. Students also manage their own learning by evaluating the feedback they get from others; bringing their background knowledge to bear on new learning; anticipating learning difficulties and apportioning their time accordingly; and judging their progress toward a learning goal. These are strategies that good learners use spontaneously and all students can learn through appropriate instruction and socialization. Learning environments should be designed to model and encourage the regular use of self-management strategies.

LEARNING AS APPRENTICESHIP

For many centuries, most people learned by working alongside an expert who modeled skilled practice and guided novices as they created authentic products or performances for interested and critical audiences. This kind of apprenticeship enabled learners to acquire complex interdisciplinary knowledge, practical abilities, and appropriate forms of social behavior. Much of the power of apprenticeship learning can be brought into schooling by organizing learning environments so that complex thinking is modeled and analyzed, and by providing mentoring and coaching as students undertake extended projects and develop presentations of finished work, both in and beyond the classroom.

APPENDIX 2.8

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS USED WHEN HIRING COUNSELORS



Liliana Polo
Principal

WEST BROOKLYN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

1053 41st Street
Brooklyn, NY 11219
TEL 718.686.1444 FAX 718.686.1189



Karen McGovern
Program Director

- 1.** Our students vary greatly in skill, motivation, and discipline. Your counseling group could have 20 students with reading levels ranging from the sixth grade to the twelfth grade and an even wider range of maturity levels. Some may be living in the shelter system, some may be working 30 hours a week to support a child, some may be extremely talented but hold deep anger issues. How would you ensure that all students are supported appropriately? Please be specific in your response.
- 2.** Enforcing norms is an important part of a counselor's job. Do any of the school's norms make you uncomfortable? Are there any you might hesitate to enforce? If so, which and why?
- 3.** What is the relationship between being supportive and allowing students to experience challenges? (Candidate should describe strengths and challenges; specific examples preferred)
- 4.** We believe counselors' life experience is essential to building a relationship with their students. What in your work or life experience prepares you to build strong, supportive relationships with our students? How would you leverage these experiences to both draw students into the school community and challenge them to move forward?

APPENDIX 2.9

SCENARIOS USED WHEN HIRING COUNSELORS

THREE SCENARIOS: CASE STUDIES ON COUNSELING FOR POTENTIAL HIRES

The following three scenarios represent common situations faced by counseling staff at WBCHS. Read the scenario and imagine how you would react to the situation.

- 1. Rambling Discussion.** During your weekly Community Leaders meeting, you are leading a discussion on the college application process, which includes a brief mention of the importance of taking a college tour. During the discussion however, your students become very curious about campus life, and you soon find yourself leading a quickly moving discussion about what it's like to live on a college campus, largely centered around parties, dating, and cooking your own meals. You are reluctant to move deeply into the discussion and still have important information to go over regarding SAT registration. How do you manage the group?
- 2. Balancing Time.** Each benchmark you need to meet with all the students in your group is to check in and go over their progress reports. There are only three days until the new benchmark and you still have eight students in your group to meet with, several of whom have been difficult to track down. You do have one student who has been very easy to track down: Renaldo. He is going through an extremely difficult situation at home and is dying to talk with you constantly. You spoke most of yesterday about his issues and came to a small resolution. However, just as you are about to go look for some of the other students you need to meet with, you find him at your office looking very troubled. How do you manage the situation to make sure you meet with all you students and give Renaldo the attention he is due?
- 3. Needy Teacher.** Your students are the least of your problems this week. David's fifth period health class, on the other hand, is giving you a major headache. First, David asked for your assistance mediating a late-assignment dispute between him and a student. Then, during class, he called you to remove Henry, a difficult student of yours, from his room. Now he is at your office, asking for help mediating with a student who is failing. How do you respond to this colleague who is repeatedly demanding your time?

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

In listening to candidates respond to the scenarios, WBCHS is looking for counselors who first are willing to wear many different hats and look comfortable being firm when donning all of them. Particular importance is placed on how they react to being asked to enforce norms regarding respect, electronics, etc., and balance that role of enforcer with being supportive. A giant red flag is someone who seems uncomfortable or expresses reservations about the workload.

Chapter III.

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT: GUIDED DISCOVERY

Ongoing professional development is critical to the success of West Brooklyn Community High School. To accelerate the academic progress of students who come to WBCHS having dropped out of school, instructional staff need to be highly skilled in engaging students in material in a way that causes them to care about it, think about it, and learn about it.

It is hardly a coincidence that the principal maintains a powerful belief in the intellectual capacity of her teaching staff. She expects teachers to plan their work carefully so that it constructively engages students and treats education not as lectures on abstract information—a format that alienates and bores students—but rather as a guided discovery of the meaning behind and purpose of what we learn. Similarly, she plans staff development carefully so that it constructively engages teachers. Staff development

at WBCHS is designed to avoid lectures on abstract ideas that bore and alienate adults as much as they would bore and alienate students. Rather, it is guided discovery for teachers as professionals to engage in, question, and put their own imprint on the school's approach and instructional principles. Most recently, WBCHS has been engaged in supporting teachers to implement the strategies in the Danielson framework.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRINCIPLES AT THE HEART OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Just as five key ideas set the tone for West Brooklyn Community High School, seven instructional principles lie at the heart of its vision and form the core of

IDEAS EXPLORED IN THIS CHAPTER

Non-negotiable core instructional principles: An overview of the instructional principles used at WBCHS and many GSS Transfer Schools

A framework for introducing and discussing the principles as the school develops year to year: How school leaders set a primary area of focus each year and focus staff meetings, common planning time, and staff retreats on a set of questions tied to each of the instructional principles

Infrastructure for involving staff in those discussions and connecting teachers to their own teaching and learning: The structures for staff to engage in that set of questions

A three- to four-month trajectory for how those infrastructures connect and build upon one another: The organization of full faculty meetings, department meetings, peer-to-peer meetings, and other structures for staff engagement and learning

A leadership team that helps make it happen: The development and expansion of the leadership team over WBCHS's first three years

staff development. The first three of these refer to key instructional systems and structures designed to reengage students in high school and provide them with consistency in their school environment. The next four delve into the content and skills that students learn in their classes, intended to create a culture of high expectations for students to become lifelong learners.

All of these principles leverage the school's expectation that its staff members will be lifelong learners. The challenging work of helping students get back on track requires the concerted effort of the entire staff. Teachers succeed together, forming professional learning communities so that they collaboratively grapple with difficult issues and figure out how to address them. Teachers simultaneously improve their collective practice by focusing on their own learning and growth.

This lifelong learner expectation for staff helps push students to pass state exams despite any belief among them that they cannot. Teachers must not only believe in their students' capacity to do so but also design and teach course sequences to deliver the skills and content necessary for students to pass that critical milestone and earn credits for graduation. According to the principal, the Danielson framework supports this approach to professional development. Danielson indicates that to be highly effective, a teacher must be constantly learning, adding new strategies based on assessments of students.

1. THE CURRICULUM IS ALIGNED TO STANDARDS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

The curriculum, developed and used by the teachers, is aligned to the New York State curriculum and standards for high school graduation. The work now is further aligning the curriculum to the Common Core State Standards. This sets the expectation throughout the academic structure that students will move through a sequence that culminates with a high school diploma.

2. TEACHERS USE RUBRICS AND ASSESSMENTS TO DESIGN LESSONS

To make learning meaningful, as well as to make progress reports a realistic reflection of student

growth, teachers design units with their assessments in mind. They use consistent rubrics to score assessments of students' progress in learning content, applying their skills to make meaning of texts, and thinking critically.

3. EVERY CLASS USES THE WORKSHOP MODEL

Students who have been lost in other high schools benefit from a consistent, clear structure in WBCHS classes. Every class uses the same format, one designed to engage students and balance the delivery of new information with the opportunity to apply skills:

- > **Objective:** Every lesson begins with objectives clearly visible to students.
- > **Do Now:** Students complete a brief opening assignment that connects their background knowledge to the day's lesson.
- > **Mini-lesson:** The teacher introduces new material or skills, connecting those to student background knowledge.
- > **Work Period:** Students engage in individual, small group, and/or whole-group work in which they apply skills to content, with the support of and structure from the teacher.
- > **Closing:** The teacher closes the lesson, possibly with an "Exit Ticket" question that guides students to reflect on their learning.

For more information on the workshop model used at WBCHS and other New York City transfer schools, see *A Professional Learning Path to Rigorous and Relevant Instruction: Key Lessons from the Transfer School Institute*, published by the New York City Department of Education Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation available at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/AlternativesHS/Resources/default.htm>.

4. STUDENTS RECEIVE CONSISTENT BIWEEKLY FEEDBACK ON GRADES

Every two weeks, students receive progress reports appraising their work in each of their classes. Teachers are responsible for updating gradebooks at least biweekly. To make this transparent and consistent for students, every class uses the same grading policy:

- > 10 percent of the grade is for students' work on Do Now assignments.

- > 20 percent is for student **engagement** in lessons.
- > 25 percent is for the quality of **classwork**.
- > 15 percent is for **homework**.
- > 30 percent is for students' results on an in-class **project or test** given every two weeks.

5. EVERY CLASSROOM EMBODIES YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

While the central work of youth development is generally undertaken by advocate counselors (and academic development by teachers), a strengths-based approach is critical inside the classroom as well. Every teacher must be committed to working from student strengths.

6. STUDENTS ARE LEARNING TO MAKE MEANING FROM TEXTS

Many over-age, undercredited students struggle in high school because they have never learned to make meaning from a text. In every class, teachers explicitly teach students how to use some of the six key strategies that good readers use to make meaning of the things they read:

- > Connecting ideas
- > Determining importance
- > Questioning
- > Visualizing
- > Making inferences
- > Synthesizing

This emphasis on key strategies has prepared the school to make the transition to the Common Core with its emphasis on critical skills in addition to content. *(For more information, see Appendix 3.1: Overview of the Six Learning Strategies.)*

7. STUDENTS ARE LEARNING TO THINK CRITICALLY

Many over-age, undercredited students struggle in high school because no one has ever helped them connect to the deeper meaning of learning. Instead of engaging in material, they either disappear in the back of the room or try to keep up with a barrage of content they do not care about. At WBCHS, students learn to address material not only through lower-order thinking (being able to remember and explain content and apply skills) but also at a higher order (being able to analyze content using evidence, evaluate arguments, and synthesize ideas).

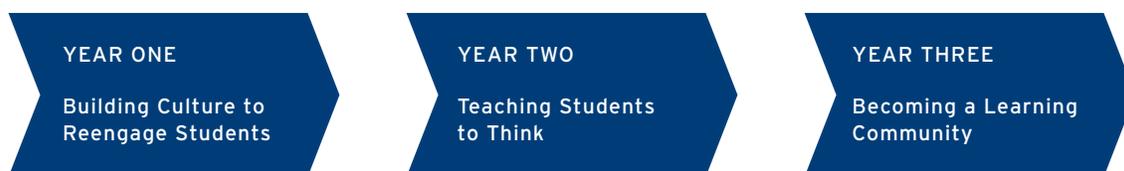
To do this, lessons and instruction need to scaffold information following Bloom's Taxonomy: from remembering and understanding both content and the skills they use, to applying skills to content, to analyzing and evaluating other's use of content and skills, to using skills to synthesize and create new content.

Alongside this work with higher-order thinking, teachers explicitly model and demonstrate metacognition. This means explaining their own thinking and how they arrive at their understanding, and asking students to do the same. *(For more information, see Appendix 3.2: Bloom's Taxonomy of Higher-order Thinking.)*

STAFF DEVELOPMENT: ONE YEAR, ONE FOCUS

Although all seven instructional principles were introduced and discussed from the moment the school was founded, each required separate time and focus to delve into meaningfully. The principal emphasizes the importance of concentrating on one goal a year to maintain focus and direction. Each year, the areas of focus have reflected the development of the school and

STAFF DEVELOPMENT



determined which instructional principles were primary topics for staff development. As a result, there was a progression, with certain areas taking greater priority in certain years.

As an area became the focus, the school's leaders introduced its key elements as non-negotiable. However, this was balanced with room for teachers to engage in, think about, and put their own personal imprint on the topic. This took the form of a variety of questions, with negotiation around answers not only allowed but encouraged.

YEAR ONE: BUILDING A CULTURE TO REENGAGE STUDENTS

In the school's opening year, leadership felt it was critical that the most visible structures and systems be consistent across classrooms. A consistent design would minimize both student confusion and the chance students would feel as if different classes treated them differently. If all classrooms did not use the same grading policy, progress report schedule, and lesson design from the beginning, it would be much more difficult to change these later. In addition, if teachers did not commit to integrating youth development practices into their classrooms from the beginning, students who had been alienated from school in the past would easily be turned off.

Using faculty meetings, department meetings, and other structures, school leaders engaged faculty in the questions that were open for negotiation. In the first year, because of the need for consistency and transparency, the school devoted most of its faculty and department meetings to questions related to three non-negotiables: Every Class Uses the Workshop Model; Students Receive Consistent Biweekly Feedback on Grades; and Youth Development Principles Are Embodied in Every Classroom.

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Every Class Uses the Workshop Model.

Year 1 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: What should we ask for in Do Now assignments? How can we use visuals in the classroom to reinforce the structure? How do you transition from Mini-lesson to Work Period? What should we ask for in Exit Tickets?

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Student Receive Consistent Biweekly Feedback on Grades.

Year 1 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: What does engagement look like, and how should we grade it? How often should we give homework? How should we score Do Now and Classwork assignments?

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Youth Development Principles Are Embodied in Every Classroom.

Year 1 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: How do you make your classroom strengths based? How do you engage students in group work?

Other concepts would take longer for staff to explore and comprehend. Nonetheless, it was important to begin developing a common language. Thus, leadership introduced these concepts in the first year, with the understanding there would be time for fuller exploration in the future. This way, staff would not feel blindsided when asked to step deeper into things like critical thinking, reading strategies, and metacognition—areas that received less attention in first-year staff meetings.

NON-NEGOTIABLE: The Curriculum Is Aligned to Standards.

Year 1 Questions Open for Negotiation: What do the state exams look like? How will you incorporate state exam questions into your class?

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Students Are Learning to Think Critically.

Year 1 Questions Open for Negotiation: How would you categorize questions you ask in class along Bloom's Taxonomy? When do you ask higher-order questions in your class?

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Students Are Learning to Make Meaning from Text.

Year 1 Questions Open for Negotiation: What are the reading strategies? How can you try incorporating a specific reading strategy into a lesson?

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Teachers Use Rubrics and Assessments to Design Lessons.

Year 1 Questions Open for Negotiation: What do you think of sample rubrics from other schools?

YEAR TWO: TEACHING STUDENTS TO BE LIFELONG LEARNERS

While WBCHS introduced the language of Bloom's Taxonomy, literacy strategies, and metacognition from Year One, initially there were too many other things to focus on to give these the attention they deserved. By Year Two, many important structures were well in place. Staff took for granted that the school had a common grading policy, that every classroom was using something very close to the Workshop Model for lesson design, and that instruction was strengths based. Of course, there was still progress to be made in all these areas, but that took place on an individual basis after Year One. The school-wide spotlight moved to several areas of deeper instruction and critical thinking: Students Are Earning a High School Diploma; Students Are Learning to Think Critically; Students Are Learning to Make Meaning from Text.

NON-NEGOTIABLE: The Curriculum Is Aligned to Standards.

Year 2 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: How will you sequence courses in your department? How do these prepare students for state exams? How do they align to state standards?

NON-NEGOTIABLE:: Students Are Learning to Think Critically.

Year 2 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: What does it mean to scaffold higher-order thinking in our lessons? How does a higher-level response differ from a lower-level one?

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Students Are Learning to Make Meaning from Text.

Year 2 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: How do you incorporate literacy strategies into both reading and writing in your subject area? How do you explicitly teach students specific literacy strategies in lessons? What literacy strategies will you emphasize in your class?

In the meantime, the other non-negotiables remained on the radar, just with less emphasis in staff meetings. This included the non-negotiables around structure and culture that had been highlighted in Year One:

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Every Class Uses the Workshop Model.

Year 2 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: How are we building higher-order thinking into our Do Now's and Exit

Tickets? What level of thinking is appropriate to ask for in each of these? How do we model literacy strategies in the Mini-lesson in order for students to practice them in the Work Period?

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Student Receive Consistent Biweekly Feedback on Grades.

Year 2 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: How are you using your benchmark assessment results to gauge higher-order thinking? What does a good response on a benchmark assessment look like, in light of considering students' critical thinking skills?

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Youth Development Principles Are Embodied in Every Classroom.

Year 2 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: How do we continue to take a strengths-based approach with students who are struggling after a year?

Finally, other areas yet to be explored in depth remained part of the common language to which the staff was becoming accustomed. Some teachers moved ahead in these areas, while others did not.

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Teachers Use Rubrics and Assessments to Design Lessons.

Year 2 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: How are you grading your benchmark assessments? How do you gauge what is and is not deeper thinking in an assessment?

YEAR THREE: BUILDING A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

With growth in the staff and some teacher turnover, some teachers were still getting accustomed to the lesson design and grading policy, while others felt comfortable with higher-order thinking and pushing to redesign their lessons in new ways. In Year Three, this called for increasing differentiation of professional development. Moreover, the school expanded from six teachers in its first year to sixteen; growth led into the question of how the school could be a strong professional learning community.

Of course, the notion of the school as a learning community had been present from the beginning. The principal always paid attention to staff development at the full-group, small-group, and individual levels. But making this focus explicit in Year Three enabled staff to more constructively reflect on it, comment on how it had been done in the past, and make it even stronger.

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Teachers Are Lifelong Learners.

Year 3 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: What are your goals individually? What are your professional needs as a teacher, and how can you collaborate with others to improve your teaching? What are the goals for your department? How can we improve our systems for mentoring and peer observation?

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Teachers Use Rubrics and Assessments to Design Lessons.

Year 3 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: What is the core higher-order thinking skill you are developing in your department? What are the categories in the rubric your department is using to gauge this? How do you design lessons to scaffold the learning necessary for students to move up this rubric?

In other areas that had been the focus of Year Two, teachers progressed at different speeds, depending on their own experience and their comfort with the topics. New questions were raised for these teachers to continue deepening their practice.

NON-NEGOTIABLE: The Curriculum Is Aligned to Standards.

Year 3 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: What issues are faced by students who are consistently not succeeding and therefore not graduating?

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Students Are Learning to Think Critically.

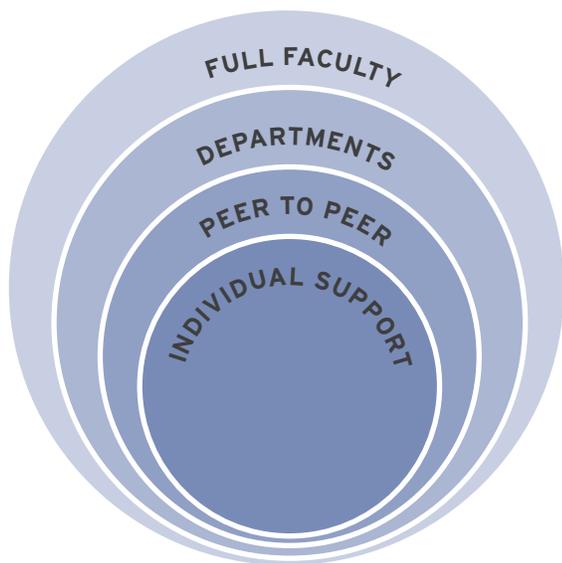
Year 3 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: How do you move a student from low-level thinking to higher-level thinking?

Overview of Sample Questions

EXPECTATION	SAMPLE QUESTIONS, YEAR 1	SAMPLE QUESTIONS, YEAR 2	SAMPLE QUESTIONS, YEAR 3
Every Class Uses the Workshop Model .	<p>What should we ask for in Do Now assignments?</p> <p>How can we use visuals in the classroom to reinforce the structure?</p> <p>How do you transition from Mini-lesson to Work Period?</p> <p>What should we ask for in Exit Tickets?</p>	<p>How are we building higher-order thinking into our Do Now's and Exit Tickets?</p> <p>What level of thinking is appropriate to ask for in each of these?</p> <p>How do we model literacy strategies in the Mini-lesson in order for students to practice them in the Work Period?</p>	
Student Receive Consistent Biweekly Feedback on Grades.	<p>What does engagement look like, and how should we grade it?</p> <p>How often should we give homework?</p> <p>How should we score Do Now and Classwork assignments?</p>	<p>How are you using your benchmark assessment results to gauge higher-order thinking?</p> <p>What does a good response on a benchmark assessment look like, in light of considering students' critical thinking skills?</p>	
Youth Development Principles Are Embodied in Every Classroom.	<p>How do you make your classroom strengths based?</p> <p>How do you engage students in group work?</p>	<p>How do we continue to take a strengths-based approach with students who are struggling after a year?</p>	

EXPECTATION	SAMPLE QUESTIONS, YEAR 1	SAMPLE QUESTIONS, YEAR 2	SAMPLE QUESTIONS, YEAR 3
The Curriculum Is Aligned to Standards.	<p>What do the state exams look like?</p> <p>How will you incorporate state exam questions into your class?</p>	<p>How will you sequence courses in your department?</p> <p>How do these prepare students for state exams?</p> <p>How do they align to state standards?</p>	<p>What issues are facing students who are consistently not succeeding and therefore not graduating?</p>
Students Are Learning to Think Critically	<p>How would you categorize questions you ask in class along Bloom's Taxonomy?</p> <p>When do you ask higher-order questions in your class?</p>	<p>What does it mean to scaffold higher-order thinking in our lessons?</p> <p>What is the difference between questions that ask for application, analysis, or evaluation?</p>	<p>How do you move a student from low-level thinking to higher-level thinking?</p>
Students Are Learning to Make Meaning from Text.	<p>What are the reading strategies? How can you try incorporating a specific reading strategy into a lesson?</p>	<p>How do you incorporate literacy strategies into both reading and writing in your subject area?</p> <p>How do you explicitly teach students specific literacy strategies in lessons?</p> <p>What literacy strategies will you emphasize in your class?</p>	<p>What is the appropriate sequence of literacy strategies from one year to the next?</p> <p>How do our curriculum maps reflect developing use of literacy strategies?</p>
Teachers Use Rubrics and Assessments to Design Lessons.	<p>What do you think of sample rubrics from other schools?</p>	<p>How are you grading your benchmark assessments?</p> <p>How do you gauge what is and is not deeper thinking in an assessment?</p>	<p>What is the core higher-order thinking skill you are developing in your department?</p> <p>What are the categories in the rubric your department is using to gauge this?</p> <p>How do you design lessons to scaffold the learning necessary for students to move up this rubric?</p>
Teachers Are Lifelong Learners.	<p>What time should staff meetings be?</p> <p>What are your goals for this year?</p>	<p>Who will you observe and give feedback to?</p> <p>What is the best way to structure peer feedback?</p>	<p>What are your goals individually?</p> <p>What are your needs as a teacher and how can you collaborate with others to improve your teaching?</p> <p>What are the goals for your department?</p> <p>How can we improve our systems for mentoring and peer observation?</p>

NON-NEGOTIABLE: Students Are Learning to Make Meaning from Text.



Year 3 Questions Open for Staff Engagement: What is the appropriate sequence of literacy strategies from one year to the next? How do our curriculum maps reflect developing use of literacy strategies?

STAFF DEVELOPMENT: INFRASTRUCTURE

The structures to support staff development grew with the school. In its founding year, with a small staff and a culture being created with each new interaction, there were in essence only two structures: individual support and full faculty. As the school grew, intermediate levels became necessary for two reasons. First, they helped to maintain consistency in the culture of the school: The more interactions teachers had with one another, the more opportunities arose to reinforce the school's core principles. Second, they allowed for more differentiated support: While some needs were common to all teachers, others, needed by specific individuals, were better met at the small-group level.

FULL-FACULTY MEETINGS

In Year One, full-faculty meetings took place each week and were the core of staff development. In Year Three,

meetings took place monthly, with other structures filling the space in between.

Faculty meetings reflect a few elements that are present in all WBCHS professional development activities and critical for their success:

Agenda sent around beforehand. Leaders prepare all agendas for faculty meetings and send them around at least one day beforehand. These typically list the objective and activities (while a facilitator's agenda is more detailed). By planning and sharing beforehand, leadership not only helps faculty know what to expect but also models the level of preparation they expect from faculty.

Workshop Model modeled. Every faculty meeting is structured using the Workshop Model. Since teachers do this with students, it seems logical that leadership does it with teachers. Just as in the classroom, the same basic structures—Do Now, Mini-Lesson, Work Period, and Exit Ticket—are used to balance building background information, introduce new information, and engage participants in thoughtful discovery.

Clear objectives connect to single overarching focus for the year. Each year has an overarching focus that grounds discussion. Leadership makes sure this goal is explicitly restated with each faculty meeting and tied into a single objective (rather than trying to address several objectives, which would could make staff feel scattered, overwhelmed, or anxious). In essence, the faculty meeting is a monthly way to maintain focus in the face of issues that arise throughout the school year. It brings staff back to the core school-wide goals.

Opening led by a faculty member. Most faculty meetings begin with a simple opening led by a teacher. This serves as an opportunity for the individual teacher to build leadership skills and for the staff to continue building comfort with one another. In the sample faculty meeting agenda in Appendix 3.3, Natalia led a "Colombian hypnosis" icebreaker and debrief—clearly any number of activities is possible.

A few pieces of data or a brief text are used to introduce new information. Faculty meetings push teachers' thinking and understanding. While the principal can push individual teachers during one-on-one meetings tailored to their individual needs, it is impossible to be so individualized in a full-staff meeting. Instead, leadership uses either a text or a

few pieces of data to push discussion. For instance, a reading on professional learning communities served as a way for staff to discuss how WBCHS could be a professional learning community, while data on student results on benchmark assessments opened discussion of how teachers were interpreting higher-order thinking in their assessments.

Team-building activities and small-group discussion engage faculty. Just as WBCHS encourages teachers to have time for student interaction in every lesson, leadership incorporates time for teacher interaction into every faculty meeting. Kinesthetic activities that get teachers up and moving quickly get teachers more comfortable with one another and more willing to speak their minds. In the example below, teachers get up and walk to different stations where they place and read notes. Group activities such as these engage teachers in two ways. First, movement engages them physically. Second, questions that ask for real, meaningful thought from teachers engage them intellectually.

Exit Tickets serve as evaluations. The end of every full-faculty meeting offers an opportunity for honest feedback from teachers, with written reflections they hand in to the principal. This helps set a tone that the

school encourages reflection and that leadership values feedback. In the faculty meeting example above, the Exit Ticket raises the following questions:

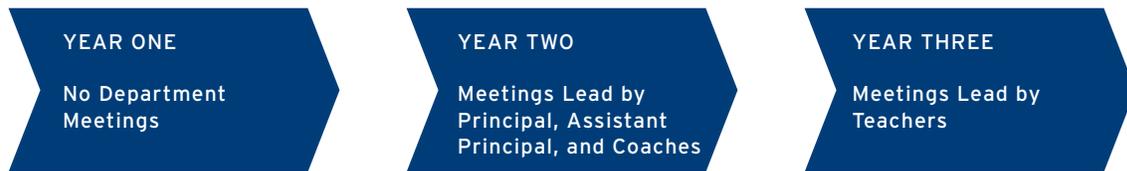
- > What am I leaving with today that will help me address my Bloom's-related dilemma?
- > This professional development worked for me because _____.
- > This professional development would have been more beneficial if _____.

DEPARTMENT MEETINGS

Department meetings began in Year Two. They offered a more intimate setting that became critical as the school grew and the intense camaraderie of Year One wore off. But this more intimate setting also brought its share of challenges: More small groups created the need for more leaders capable of facilitating discussion.

To accomplish this in Year Two, the principal, the assistant principal, or a hired coach led all department meetings. These more experienced educators set in motion the structures that would be expected from departments for the future.

DEPARTMENT MEETINGS



TYPICAL DEPARTMENT MEETING AGENDA

2:15 Check In

2:20 Follow Up from Last Time

- > Heather presents: How did students do on the last benchmark assessment?
- > What were responses on the higher-level questions you added?
- > How helpful was the rubric for scoring?

2:35 Delving Deeper

- > Compare a Level 2, 3, and 4 student response. What are the key differences? (3 minutes)
- > Discuss key differences. (7 minutes)
- > Relate key differences to specific words in the rubric. (5 minutes)
- > What language was most helpful in the rubric? What language could we have used more? (5 minutes)

2:55 Next Steps

- > One strategy you will try in your classroom
- > Christina is scheduled to bring benchmark assessment results next week.

In Year Three, after leadership had modeled what department meetings should look like, departments became responsible for their own facilitation. WBCHS chose not to designate any specific leader of each department, but rather to have the departments work as a group, with each member taking on varying roles.

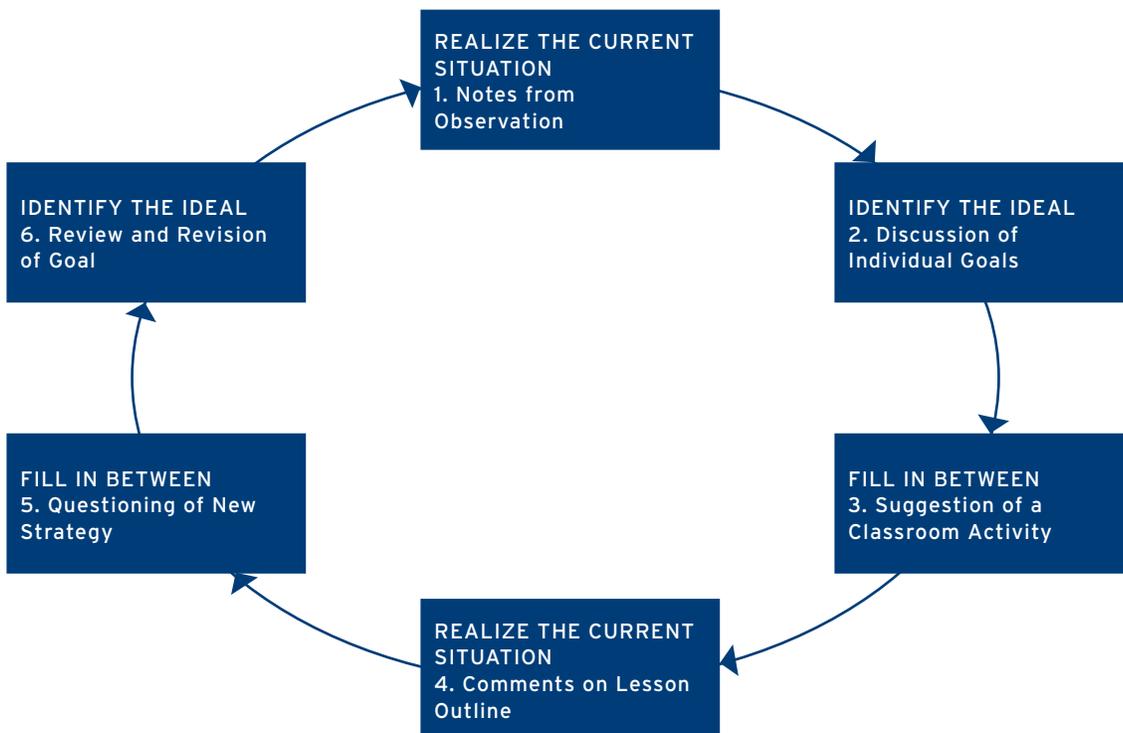
Several key steps help ensure that meetings are well organized:

- > **Send a reminder midweek.** One member of the department is responsible for sending a reminder midweek. Cc'ing the principal keeps her aware of when and how often departments are meeting.
- > **Begin with a check in.** Every department meeting, just like every full-faculty meeting, begins with a check in. This gives teachers the chance to get anxieties off their chest and feel comfortable with their colleagues.
- > **Use student work to focus the meeting.** The substance of most department meetings comes from one of two things: student work brought in by one or more teachers, or data across the entire department (e.g., average grades, test scores).
- > **Complete a specific task or reading.** This is followed by a specific, prearranged task or reading

with associated tangible work. In the example offered in the box on page 38, the group is revising the rubric they use for scoring higher-order thinking questions. At another meeting, they might read a brief article on assessing reasoning skills and discuss what it suggests for their own work. In either case, if the group does not come up with a protocol on its own, the principal provides that. Typically, it is a set of simple steps or guiding questions for the group to investigate a reading or engage in. Without it, conversation easily digresses or stalls.

- > **End with next steps that tie to the classroom.** As with full-faculty meetings, department meetings end with individual teachers jotting down plans for something they will do or try on their own. This keeps the work grounded in real classroom practice.
- > **Plan for next time.** To keep the cycle moving forward, each department meeting ends with a reminder of who will bring student work the next time. At times throughout the school year, a teacher will tell the principal that she is frustrated by a lack of planning in her department. This becomes an opportunity to turn such frustration into leadership,

FIGURE 3.1
INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT TO TEACHERS



working with the teacher to help the department be more organized.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

The bulk of staff development occurs through individual support to teachers. Three ideas sum up this support, which is led by the principal and other instructional leaders: Identify the Ideal; Realize the Current Situation; and Fill in Between. Of course, the progression of these three is hardly so simple. In practice, it more likely follows the pattern in Figure 3.1: The principal helps the teacher realize what is going on, identifies goals with him, then returns to these data and goals as they try to fill in the in between.

1. Notes from observation. The principal and members of the leadership team get into classrooms for observations early and often. Typically, by November, every teacher has been observed at least three times. Since the first one or two observations are necessary simply to get a flavor of the teacher's work and expectations, it is only after the third that there is enough information to draw conclusions. Nonetheless, from the very first observation, the debrief is critical and provides a clear next step for discussion.

The observation protocol (see *Appendix 3.4: Classroom Observation and Debriefing Protocol*) has four critical features:

- » **Alignment to Core Instructional Principles.** The protocol is organized around specific questions designed to highlight the Workshop Model, the teaching of critical thinking, and the teaching of literacy strategies—each an element of the school's core instructional principles.
- » **Not asking too much.** The protocol has four sections, each of which has three questions and a box to be filled in completely, partially, or not at all. Other versions used in the past, with many more questions, required too much writing and so were rarely completed.
- » **Three columns of basic observations.** These form the bulk of the protocol: what the teacher is doing; what the students are doing; and the observer's questions/suggestions. This structure has the advantage of clearly delineating observational data (in the first and second

columns) from observer's inferences (in the third column) and makes it easier to refer to reality when debriefing.

- » **Space to indicate numbers present and absent.** A small space is available for noting how many students were present and absent, an important statistic in any school but particularly in a transfer school where sporadic attendance is often a reality that teachers must learn to work with.

- 2. Discussion of individual goals.** Working from initial observations, the school's instructional framework, and past experience, the principal or another instructional leader works with the teacher to set one or two goals for her own teaching. For instance, the teacher might identify the goal of asking more higher-order thinking questions in class. This goal then focuses future conversations between the teacher and instructional leader. It is the responsibility of the leader to return to these goals regularly over three to four months. In future observations, the teacher's goals serve as a lens through which to see the lesson; once the teacher is observed accomplishing the goals two or three times, it is time to move onto other goals. (See *Appendix 3.5 for a Goals Discussion Template.*)
- 3. Suggestion of a classroom activity.** Perhaps the greatest responsibility of the instructional leader is to help the teacher think of a way to reach goals. One way of doing this is by suggesting specific classroom activities or materials, such as graphic organizers. The debrief of an observation may include time for the leader to offer up an activity, followed by the teacher and leader thinking through together to adapt this to the classroom. It is key that the leader does not dominate this discussion. Starting with two or three ideas and picking one to think through together is much better than spending the debrief lecturing the teacher on three different possible activities.
- 4. Comments on lesson outline.** Every week, teachers submit the coming week's lesson outline to the principal. Teachers initially resisted this requirement. It was critical that they get meaningful and helpful feedback every week to justify the request. After about six months, this became a

part of the regular expectations at the school and one that teachers and leadership find extremely valuable. Lesson outlines (see *Appendix 3.6: Lesson Outline Template*) include these features:

- » **One week, one page.** The outlines are brief. Typically, one week takes one page divided into five columns for each day of class.
- » **Alignment to lesson design.** As with the observation protocol, the lesson outlines are carefully aligned to the school's expectations that

every teacher divide class time into Objective, Do Now, Mini-lesson, Work Period, and Exit Ticket. Each column has space to fill in a sentence describing the plan for each of these elements.

- » **Feedback in the form of questions.** Every week on every lesson outline, the principal and assistant principal provide written comments to the teachers (just as a good teacher would do with his students). These comments are in the form of questions for deeper face-to-face

Sample Feedback Questions on a Lesson Outline

OCT. 20-23	MONDAY
Topic	Shaping the surface of the Earth
Objective	How do rivers shape the land by erosion? FEEDBACK: Is the answer "by erosion"? What about: What is the relationship between rivers (or water) and land?
Do Now	Look at images of 2 rivers (1 fast, 1 slow). Which would cause the land to erode the fastest? Image of a canyon. How do you think the canyon formed?
Min-Lesson	Vocabulary: Braided stream; Meandering stream; Discharge; Gradient. FEEDBACK: Do you have visuals for this?
Work Period	Reading with questions. Cause/Effect map. Cause → Braided Stream. FEEDBACK: Will they be making inferences with the causes and determining effects? Or inferences from visuals?
Exit Ticket	Revisit Do Now. Which river has a higher gradient? FEEDBACK: Could you ask: How does a river's gradient affect erosion?

discussions. When possible, the questions tie back to the teacher's goals. The box below is an example from one day of an Earth Science class for a teacher whose goal was to ask more higher-order thinking questions in class.

5. Questioning of new strategy. In the follow up both to lesson outlines and observation debriefs, leaders focus on the specific new strategies a teacher had identified during the goal setting process. As a rule of thumb, they expect to see the strategy in use effectively three times before moving on. Usually this entails several observations and discussions, covering two to four months.
6. Review and revision of goal. Occasionally, as the teacher and leader review observations and lesson outlines, they return to the initial goal and modify it. It may be that realizations have led to slight changes in their understanding of the goal. Or the

teacher may have realized the goal by putting new teaching strategies into place.

PEER-TO-PEER GROUPS

Part of the strength of staff development at WBCHS arises from the many interconnecting webs that lead to the repetition and support of an idea through a variety of avenues. For example, an idea introduced in a full-staff meeting is reinforced in weekly department meetings and one-on-one observations and debriefs. A further structure for reinforcing these ideas is the use of peer-to-peer groups. Two or three teachers connect with one another around a specific strategy or challenge.

Three simple ideas govern these groups:

Allow ad hoc groups to form. Leadership allows—indeed, actively encourages—the formation of these peer-to-peer groups. Rather than trying to create a

committee for every new idea, this provides a space for differentiating for teachers' needs. Thus, a few teachers may choose to study a particularly challenging idea, even if their colleagues are not ready for that particular task.

For example, at a time when most WBCHS teachers were focusing on how to assess higher-order thinking skills, three teachers, all of whom were already doing this well, formed a group to study how to help students move from one level to the next in higher-order thinking skills. That challenge had resulted naturally from their work on assessing those skills.

Suggest peer observations. When a teacher is trying a new strategy, there are limits to how much observations and feedback with a coach or instructional leader can help. Modeling is always valuable. This may be done by the coach or instructional leader modeling in the teacher's classroom. However, it is often more effective for the teacher to observe a colleague. Leaders will often suggest doing this, after checking first with the peer to be observed.

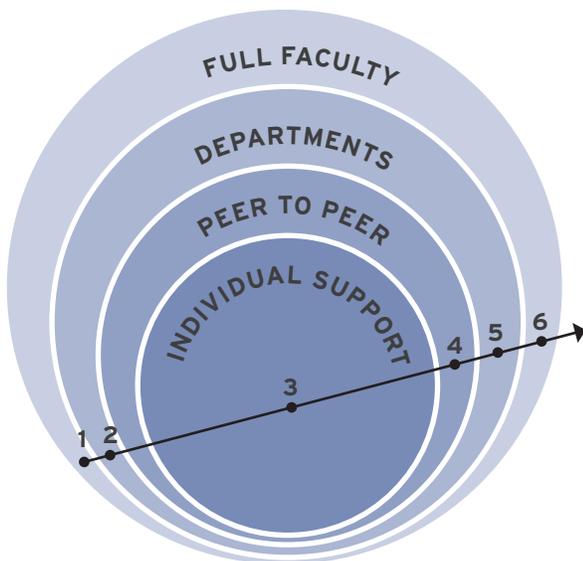
These peer observations offer a bonus: They help build a sense of cohesion and leadership on staff, giving an opportunity for colleagues to build consistency in their

comfort as a professional learning community. This also makes peer observation a positive experience, designed to highlight the positive in the school.

Leverage potential leaders. At times, one-on-one meetings with teachers are an opportunity for a teacher to vent frustration about colleagues. Leaders help teachers arrive at a constructive way to deal with that frustration. Sometimes, this may mean intervening to help colleagues talk constructively with one another. At other times, such frustration arises from frustrated leadership potential. To build leadership on staff while keeping departmental work moving forward, WBCHS may ask teachers to take the lead in moving colleagues—for instance, by writing agendas for meetings that have not been progressing or by providing readings for meetings that have been unfocused.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT: PATH OF DEVELOPMENT

The different structures of staff development—full-faculty workshops, department meetings, individual support, and peer-to-peer groups—are not distinct elements. In practice, WBCHS weaves all of these together over a three- to four-month period, to address a particular topic, generally following a six-step path:



- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Introduce Topic | 4. Share Practices |
| 2. Clarify Meaning | 5. Develop Plan |
| 3. Set Goals and Support Practice | 6. Share Plans |

1. Introduce the Topic. This first step takes place in a full-faculty meeting. The principal and instructional coaches take responsibility for such a meeting and engage faculty in thinking through the issue together. For instance, a full-faculty meeting may ask teachers to think about, "What is higher-order thinking? What kinds of questions elicit different levels of thinking from students?" This ties the coming work to a specific focus for the school and gives an initial level of consistency in baseline understanding.

2. Clarify the Meaning. In the week or two following the staff meeting, leaders visit each department meeting and answer questions to clarify the topic. Their role is to field questions and take advantage of the small venue of the department to help individual teachers think through what this will mean for their classrooms. This is also a time when leaders can help departments decide how they will shape their initial meetings in relation to the

understanding of school expectations and building

focus topic. For instance, if the school is focusing on questions to elicit higher-order thinking from students, they may elicit discussion by bringing in sample class assignments, assessments, or observations of questions asked in class.

- 3. Practice New Strategies.** Within the first few weeks of school, leaders get into every classroom at least once, if not twice, to observe teachers and give them feedback. They also work with each teacher to set one or two individual goals. These goals should help match the teacher's individual interests with the school-wide focus. For instance, if the school is focusing on higher-order thinking, one teacher may specifically want to focus on using student grouping to push higher-order thinking, while another may want to focus on modeling higher-order questions in a Mini-lesson. Through individual observations and debriefs, as well as written feedback on lesson outlines, leaders help teachers maintain their focus on a few key goals and help them to see progress they are making. (See Appendix 3.5 for a Goals Discussion Template.)
- 4. Share Practices.** Through individual support, leaders often encourage teachers to connect with their peers, either to share practices or to get advice. By keeping this connected to each teacher's goals and the school-wide focus, this builds consistency in understanding across the school.
- 5. Develop a Plan.** As departments continue their work, what generally begins with looking at student work (see step 2, *Clarify the Meaning*) moves into making a plan. This may happen with the assistance of a full-faculty workshop in the second or third month of the process. What is key is that departments first collect, review, and reflect on actual student results and connect these to their own teaching. After a point, that begins to grow repetitive. Departments then translate patterns into specific goals or plans.

- 6. Share Plans.** After three or four months, at a full-faculty meeting, some or all of the departments share the plans they have developed. This helps departments learn from one another and give one another feedback. It also helps the full school see the progress made since the topic was introduced. It also makes it easier for teachers across departments to find opportunities to partner with one another around similar goals or challenges.

LEADERSHIP: DEVELOPING A LEADERSHIP TEAM TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

How WBCHS's instructional leadership team developed is one more central aspect of the success of the staff development program. In brief, the school began with a centralized leadership model that was gradually expanded and decentralized over the first three years. It first established a new culture and language consistently and coherently, and then a strong team at the helm broadened and supported them.

It is important to note that the development of the instructional leadership team was in part possible because the school devoted resources to increasing the salary of instructional leaders and hiring outside coaches. A comparison with other transfer schools suggests that most often this dedication of resources at WBCHS comes at the expense of field trips or other extracurricular events for students that appear to consume more funding at other schools. This is in line with the emphasis on academic preparation as the top priority at West Brooklyn Community High School.

YEAR 1 = 1 LEADER + 1 OUTSIDE COACH

In Year One, the only leadership position was that of the principal, along with an outside instructional coach

DEPARTMENT MEETINGS



who offered a wealth of experience. The principal shaped the language and thinking on her own in the first year, setting a tone for the future. At the same time, she drew upon the outside coach to provide support inside and outside the classroom, without yet establishing a clear hierarchy at the school. This also gave her the time to assess the strengths of her founding staff and move on from there. Most instructional staff meetings brought together the full instructional staff, so that the founding year served as a time to build shared language, expectations, and culture across the school.

YEAR 2 = 2-PERSON TEAM (PRINCIPAL + ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL) + 1 OUTSIDE COACH + 4 DEPARTMENTS

In Year Two, one teacher became assistant principal, expanding the instructional leadership team. While the pair continued to draw on the instructional coach, the school reduced this reliance so that the skills the staff was learning were increasingly internalized within the school. At the same time as expanding to a two-person instructional leadership team, the school began consolidating teachers by departments. Because the school has no grade levels, it would have been difficult to meet by student level. And because an overall school culture had been set in the first year, full staff meetings could become less frequent.

YEAR 3 = 3-PERSON LEADERSHIP TEAM (PRINCIPAL + ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL + INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT SPECIALIST) + 4 DEPARTMENT HEADS + MULTIPLE COACHES

In Year Three, the school added a third person to the instructional leadership team. A teacher who had been at the school since its inception became the instructional support specialist. The three-person team divides up the school's small staff so that every teacher gets regular feedback from one of them.

In this year, the school also placed more emphasis on the role of department heads, with one teacher from each of the core subject areas taking responsibility for helping his department to set goals and to align their work with the school's overall goals. The role of

department head was solidified this late in the process so that the principal and assistant principal had time not only to establish expectations firmly but also to model and develop the skills needed for department heads to act as facilitators and supports to their colleagues.

Finally, the school phased out the role of the single instructional coach who had provided support in defining the school's model. Starting in Year Three, the instructional leadership team began working with staff to identify individual coaches to match the needs of individual departments or teachers. This more decentralized approach was possible because the school had defined its culture, and the involvement of the instructional leadership team ensured that coaching stayed in line with the school's vision. Teachers could not simply identify coaches on their own but rather brought their needs and interest to their supervisors.

APPENDIX 3.1

OVERVIEW OF THE SIX LEARNING STRATEGIES

THE WBCHS LEARNING STRATEGIES

1. Connecting ideas

Remembers something familiar and uses this prior knowledge to explain something encountered in the text, problem, phenomenon, presentation, or performance. Connects text to life, text, society, and the world.

2. Determining importance

Identifies actions, information, conflicts, ideas, or details that arouse interest or emotion, seem to be important, and are worth thinking more about.

3. Questioning

Identifies questions she wonders about while reading, viewing, or listening; attempts to answer the questions on her own or with others. Asks who, what, where, when, and why questions, as well as higher-order wondering questions.

4. Visualizing

Creates an image in his mind based on what he's read, observed, or heard. Combines the image and prior experiences to build understanding and generate personal responses.

5. Making inferences

Creates hypotheses about what the author means even though it is not explicitly stated.

> Synthesizing

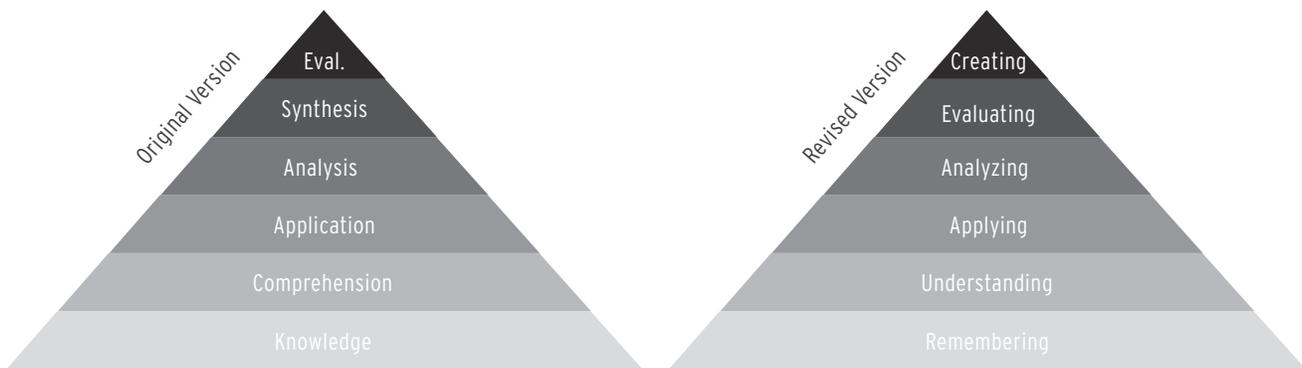
Connects something in the text, problem, phenomenon, presentation, or performance with something she already knows. Considers how "something remembered" and "something encountered" are similar or different.

* Adapted from Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis. 2000. *Strategies that Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding*, Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers; and Ellin Oliver Keene and Susan Zimmermann. 1997. *Mosaic of Thought*, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

APPENDIX 3.2

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY OF HIGHER-ORDER THINKING

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom led a group of psychologists in developing a classification of levels of intellectual behavior important to learning. He proposed that learning fits into one of three psychological domains: the cognitive, affective, or psychomotor domain. "Bloom's Taxonomy" specifically refers to his examination of the cognitive domain. This multi-tiered model follows the thinking process, moving from lower-order to higher-order skills. During the 1990s, a new group of cognitive psychologists, led by Lorin Anderson (a former student of Bloom), updated the taxonomy to reflect its relevance to modern-day work. Note the change from nouns to verbs associated with each level. The two graphics show the revised and original taxonomy.¹



- > **Remembering:** Retrieving and recalling relevant knowledge from long-term memory
Key Words: defines, describes, identifies, knows, labels, lists, matches, names, outlines, recalls, recognizes, reproduces, selects, states
- > **Understanding:** Constructing meaning from oral, written, and graphic messages
Key Words: comprehends, converts, defends, distinguishes, estimates, explains, extends, generalizes, infers, interprets, paraphrases, predicts, rewrites, summarizes, translates
- > **Applying:** Carrying out or using a procedure through executing or implementing
Key Words: applies, changes, computes, constructs, demonstrates, discovers, manipulates, modifies, operates, predicts, prepares, produces, relates, shows, solves, uses
- > **Analyzing:** Breaking material into constituent parts and determining how the parts relate to one another
Key Words: analyzes, breaks down, compares, contrasts, diagrams, deconstructs, differentiates, discriminates, distinguishes, identifies, illustrates, infers, outlines, relates, selects, separates
- > **Evaluating:** Making judgments based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing
Key Words: categorizes, combines, compiles, composes, creates, devises, designs, explains, organizes, plans, rearranges, reconstructs, relates, reorganizes, revises, summarizes, tells, writes.²
- > **Creating:** Reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure through generating or producing
Key Words: appraises, compares, concludes, contrasts, criticizes, critiques, defends, describes, discriminates, evaluates, explains, interprets, justifies, relates, summarizes, supports

¹ Richard C. Overbaugh and Lynn Shultz (Old Dominion University). "Bloom's Taxonomy." Accessed 11/15/2011. http://www.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm

² Mary Forehand (The University of Georgia). "Bloom's Taxonomy." Created 04/19/2010. Accessed 11/15/2011. http://projects.coe.uga.edu/epltt/index.php?title=Bloom%27s_Taxonomy

APPENDIX 3.3

SAMPLE DOCUMENT: TEMPLATE FOR FULL FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

{WORKSHOP TITLE}

{Date}

{Time}

OBJECTIVE(S):

1. {First Objective, Tied to One School-wide Goal}
2. {Second Objective, Tied to One School-wide Goal}

Opening Activity [10 minutes]

Led by: {Teacher Name}

{Description of Activity}

Do Now [10-15 minutes]

{Do Now activity should ask teachers to look at data or a brief reading related to the objective and answer one simple question about it.}

Mini-lesson ~or~ Share Out [10-30 minutes]

Led by: {Principal, Coach, Instructional Leader if Mini-lesson, or Departments if Share Out}

{Mini-lesson should provide a deeper look at the data or reading in relation to the workshop objectives and raise higher-order thinking questions for participants to engage in during Work Period, or provide an opportunity for departments to present work they have been doing.}

Work Period [10-30 minutes]

Groups: {Fill in predefined groups or a way that groups will be formed}

Instructions: {Provide instructions for a structured activity that includes movement and gives a clear way for teachers to provide insights to their colleagues using the thinking from the Mini-lesson or Share Out.}

Next Steps [10-20 minutes]

Led by: {Principal or Instructional Leader}

{One to two guiding questions for the full group should help them make the explicit connection from the Work Period to their practice in the classroom, and support they would need to make this real.}

Exit Ticket [5 minutes]

What worked for me in this PD:

This PD would have been beneficial if:

Lingering questions or ideas:

APPENDIX 3.3

SAMPLE: FULL FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

FACULTY MEETING AGENDA FROM NOVEMBER OF YEAR TWO

OBJECTIVE(S):

Understand the relationship between the questions we ask and promoting higher-level thinking in our classrooms.

Opening Activity [10:00]

Led by: Natalia

Colombian Hypnosis and Debrief—An interactive icebreaker to get blood moving after a day of teaching and focus on easy versus difficult tasks.

Check In [10:07]

Led by: Elizabeth

Select a piece of furniture that represents your mood. Write one sentence that explains why. Share out.

Hello Bloom's [10:15]

Led by: Lili

Framing today's work and connections with past professional development. Lili explains the purpose of today's questioning activity and links it into the school's focus on critical thinking.

Do Now Activity [10:25]

Put these 3 questions in order from easiest to most difficult (2 minutes):

- > List the 5 causes of the Civil War.
- > Explain how oxygen flows through the body.
- > Analyze why Obama's policies are considered "liberal" while McCain's policies are considered "conservative."

Share Out (5 minutes): Selective Share Out and reasons why.

Charting: What makes a question easy or difficult? How are the types of questioning strategies and the form of questions related to the critical thinking in the response.

Mini-lesson [10:35]

Talking points:

- > Make connection to last professional development: "giving information" vs. creating opportunity for students to "discover and apply" information, which allows for students to deepen learning
- > Today, looking at questions and together figuring out whether they fit in spectrum of Bloom's Taxonomy
- > You will go to stations around the room. Each station has one Bloom's level with its definition and language that goes with that level
- > Last year, we explored this language and worked out some of it
- > At the end of this term, we will ask everyone to submit a level for each student based on assessments and classwork

Modeling: Facilitator will take 3 questions from Do Now and place them where appropriate. (“This is easy because the words are very clear, right? Now let’s look at one that’s not so clear.” Show the impact of environmental factors on the way in which the presidential campaigns have been operated for this election.)

Work Period–Part 1 [10:45]

Pair Activity: In pairs, participants receive 6 questions. Each pair has 10 minutes to place questions at the appropriate station along with a note as to why question is there.

Gallery Walk: Participants walk around to each station and put Post-it notes next to questions they feel have been placed incorrectly.

Consensus Building: Full group reviews the questions with Post-it notes. The group that placed the questions explains their reasoning. Discussion follows in which group tries to reach consensus on proper placement. If a consensus can’t be reached, leave it as something to revisit.

Temperature Check: How do you feel about Bloom’s Taxonomy right now?

Work Period–Part 2 [11:15]

Individual Reflection: Individually look at the content you are teaching for next week. Come up with 5-7 questions you will ask on your next assessment that range from Level 1 to 5 in the Bloom’s categories we just worked with.

Pair Review: In pairs, share out the questions you’ve just developed. With your partner, check: Is it clear what is being asked and what level it is at?

Group Share Out: What does it mean if I have a lot of lower-level questions on my assessment? What does it mean for my lessons if I ask higher-order questions in my assessment?

Whole Group Closing Activity [11:45]

On a Post-it, write: What do you understand about Bloom’s Taxonomy now that perhaps you didn’t understand before? What concerns still exist for you about Bloom’s Taxonomy in your classroom?

Selective Share Out

Hand in Closing Post-it

APPENDIX 3.4 CLASSROOM OBSERVATION AND DEBRIEFING PROTOCOL

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION AND DEBRIEFING PROTOCOL

OBSERVED TEACHER NAME:	OBSERVER NAME:	CLASS:	PERIOD:	DATE:	PRESENT:	LATE:	ABSENT:
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AIM/OBJECTIVE:					
WORKSHOP MODEL			WHAT IS THE TEACHER DOING?	WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS DOING?	QUESTIONS/ SUGGESTIONS
DO NOW	START:	END:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Did the teacher tap into students' prior knowledge and/or experience and connect new information to that? <input type="checkbox"/> Was there a clear structure/ routine that students were accustomed to?					
MINI- LESSON	START:	END:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Did the teacher prepare students for unfamiliar vocabulary words? <input type="checkbox"/> Did the teacher model what students were expected to do during Work Period? <input type="checkbox"/> Were there specific learning strategies modeled for students to practice on their own?					

WORKSHOP MODEL			WHAT IS THE TEACHER DOING?	WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS DOING?	QUESTIONS/ SUGGESTIONS
WORK PERIOD	START:	END:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are students engaged in practicing the strategies/ skills they just learned? <input type="checkbox"/> Is this activity facilitating student understanding of the content? <input type="checkbox"/> Are students interacting with one another? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the teacher checking in with students and walking around the room monitoring student work?					
CLOSING	START:	END:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Did the teacher provide enough time at the end to assess student learning? <input type="checkbox"/> At the end of this lesson, does the teacher know whether or not students reached the goals/objectives? What's the evidence? <input type="checkbox"/> Are students able to explain their thinking (metacognition) both verbally and in writing?					

Date of Post-Observation: ____/____/____

<input type="checkbox"/> Observed teacher reflects on lesson (How do I think this lesson went?)	<input type="checkbox"/> What specific positive feedback did I receive? (What were the best parts of this lesson?)
<input type="checkbox"/> What specific suggestions did I receive about this lesson?	<input type="checkbox"/> From the feedback I got through this observation, what I will focus on right now is . . .

Notes:

APPENDIX 3.5 LEADERSHIP TEAM GOAL DISCUSSION TEMPLATE

I AM ...	I AM ON TRACK TOWARD ACHIEVING MY GOAL. MY EVIDENCE IS ... (List at least 3 pieces of evidence.)	I AM NOT ON TRACK, BUT CAN GET ON TRACK IF ... (be specific about what you need) - OR - IF AM NOT ON TRACK AND I NEED HELP IN ORDER TO ... (be specific about who you need help from and for what) - OR - I AM TOTALLY LOST AND I DON'T THINK I CAN RECUPERATE TO MEET THIS GOAL. MY EVIDENCE IS ...	I'D LIKE FEEDBACK ON ...	FEEDBACK
Principal				
Assistant Principal				
Instructional Leaders				
Data Specialists				
Student Activities				
Special Education				

APPENDIX 3.6 LESSON OUTLINE TEMPLATE

DATE: ____/____/____	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Topic					
Aim/ Objective					
Do Now					
Mini-lesson					
Work Period					
Closing					

Chapter IV.

INTAKE: INTRODUCING STUDENTS TO A NEW SCHOOL CULTURE

The student intake process is an opportunity to achieve four important goals: establishing the school culture among students and parents and reinforcing it among staff members; building a better understanding of the school in the surrounding community; beginning to develop relationships that are central to student success; and establishing both graduation and postsecondary success as a single goal.

KEY STEPS

The process of intake begins six weeks before the end of each trimester. It is led by the director, for whom this is a key responsibility. Advocate counselors, funding through Learning to Work, also play a major role in interviewing incoming students.

STEP 1. SET AN INTAKE TARGET

Unlike a traditional high school, where the graduating class consists of a set number of students who are replaced by an incoming freshman class of roughly the same size, the WBCHS graduating class varies trimester

GOALS OF THE INTAKE PROCESS

Establish and reinforce school culture. Much of the intake process consists of stating and reiterating the school's basic expectations to prospective students and their parents. This is both an important introduction for incoming students and a reminder for the staff members who are talking to them. In a culture where transparency is a watchword, the intake process must represent what the school is and offer an opportunity for students who are unprepared for that culture to opt out.

Build an understanding of the school in the community. Transfer schools often sit in a difficult spot: They are founded to help students who other schools cannot, yet it would be unrealistic to expect them to help every student. WBCHS places a high priority on educating counselors at other schools so they understand that the school is neither a dumping ground nor a panacea but rather an alternative option for students who have some basic skills and are prepared to reengage if they get a second chance.

Begin developing relationships. The intake process is typically a student's first interaction with WBCHS. As with every conversation between adults and students at the school, this is part of developing meaningful, supportive relationships.

Establish graduation and postsecondary success as a goal. The intake process is the first time that WBCHS staff conveys to students that the school is committed to helping them not only graduate but also transition to postsecondary education and preparation for earning career credentials.

to trimester, and that class is replaced by a new one just days after the close of each trimester.

The process to decide exactly who will graduate begins about eight weeks before the end of the term. The director checks with the advocate counselors. Based on credits, tests, and how students are doing in the current trimester, each AC estimates how many students will graduate at the end of the term.

At the same time, the director asks about students who have been chronically absent for months or repeatedly failing multiple classes for multiple terms. While these students are clearly the subject of various other conversations throughout the term, at this point the director asks whether ACs feel it is time to discharge these students—either counseling them into a GED or other alternative program or discussing other options with the student and family members.

These two numbers—students expected to graduate and students to be discharged—added together give an exact goal for the number of students to bring in. The director checks on these numbers at each biweekly benchmark meeting for the remainder of the term, but generally any adjustments are small.

STEP 2. REACH OUT TO REFERRAL SOURCES

About 75 percent of the students who come to WBCHS are referred to it by their school's guidance counselor. The others find out about the school through peers or parents and contact the school directly. As such, it is important to reach out to guidance counselors early and often.

About five weeks before the end of the term, the director actively reaches out with a phone call or email to five or six guidance counselors, reminding them that WBCHS is engaging in another cycle of intake. These counselors have two characteristics. First, they work at schools that have sent a number of students to WBCHS in the past. Second, they know the school and have a strong understanding of its approach and philosophy. Their referrals are a dependable place from which to start identifying new WBCHS students.

After that, the director engages in broader but less personal email outreach to all guidance counselors in the area. The email serves two purposes. First, it reminds counselors that WBCHS is engaging in a

cycle of intake and lays out deadlines for the process. Second, it reminds counselors of the school's mission, philosophy, and approach: rigorous academics; a family-like environment; and one-on-one counseling for students who have a history of truancy but are ready to reengage in high school if they get the chance. The email also refers to the school's target population

STEP 3. GET RELEVANT RECORDS

A significant portion of the intake process is paperwork, often made more difficult by the fact that students who have meandered through the system are typically missing various records. When WBCHS receives a referral, the director asks the student or his guidance counselor to bring in, mail, or fax two key documents: the student's transcript, which helps determine what his credit needs are; and a report on the student's attendance to date, which helps identify a history of truancy.

WBCHS and other transfer schools also use intake as an opportunity to request various legally required documents, such as immunization records, Individual Education Plans (IEP)s, waivers for videotaping, releases to track college-going data, Title I eligibility forms, and military recruiting opt-out forms. (*For more information, see Appendix 4.1: Initial Referral Checklist.*)

STEP 4. SCHEDULE INTERVIEWS

About three weeks before the end of the term, the director designates a series of interview days, with a maximum of seven slots each day for overlapping 2.5-hour interviews. Exactly as many slots are scheduled as are needed, based on the intake goal.

As soon as the director has the information necessary to deem a student a good referral—information on truancy history, the transcript, and an understanding from the person making the referral that the student will benefit from the WBCHS environment—the student is placed on a list to be scheduled for an interview.

The director then begins going down the list of referrals, calling guidance counselors and students. When leaving a message, she makes it clear that they have one day to respond. If they do not respond within one day (or do not show up for the interview), the candidate's name goes to the bottom of the list, and a new interview slot opens up. This ensures that the process moves forward as quickly as possible.

STEP 5. HOLD FIRST INTERVIEWS

WBCHS advocate counselors conduct the first interview. These consist of four portions. First, the student's reading level is assessed using the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills. Because WBCHS does not offer services appropriate for teenagers with a reading level below the sixth grade, a staff member immediately takes students who do not meet or approach that standard aside and explains the situation to them. Students who are near a sixth-grade level according to this assessment continue through the process to determine if they appear to have the literacy skills necessary for the school.

Second, the student's math ability is assessed with a simple math assessment, designed by WBCHS to reflect state standards. (This assessment is later used for course programming.)

Third, the student's writing and level of reflection are assessed by writing an essay about why she wants to go to WBCHS. (The student's essay is later shared with her advocate counselor and introductory English teacher.)

Fourth, the student participates in an interview. This is largely a time to describe the thinking and philosophy of the school to the student, as well as to collect a brief academic history. (*For more information, see Appendix 4.2: Parent-Student Commitment Letter and Appendix 4.3: Intake Interview Form.*)

The interview emphasizes five points:

- > **Rigor.** WBCHS is a rigorous academic environment that expects engagement, writing, and thinking from students.
- > **Acceleration.** The school is an accelerated environment. Students are taking 18-week courses condensed into 12 weeks in order to help them graduate from high school more quickly. Along with this, they will be getting feedback every two weeks.
- > **Counseling.** The school is a supportive environment. Every student has a counselor who works with him much more than in his old school.
- > **Safety.** The school does not tolerate fights or any violent behavior.
- > **College and Post-high School Planning.** Every student applies to college as part of the post-graduate plan.

STEP 6. CONSIDER RED FLAGS

The intake interview is not a screening in the sense it would be at a selective school. However, on occasion, one of three types of "red flag" presents itself in an interview:

- > **Disinterest.** The student does not seem genuinely interested in attending school.
- > **Violence.** The student shows evidence of violent behavior that will not change upon enrolling.
- > **Mental Health.** The student shows evidence of mental health issues that require more expertise to treat than the school can provide.

A counselor who notices any of these in the first interview makes a note for the director. Whatever the reason for the red flag, the credo of transparency is central to how to proceed.

Depending on the issue and the recommendation of the counselor, the director raises the issue either as part of the follow-up interview with the parent or by scheduling a separate one-on-one meeting with the student. In doing so, the director restates the school's expectations around engagement, attendance, and nonviolent solutions to problems, and counsels the student and family about other services or assistance that are available.

STEP 7. HOLD FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS

After the first interview, the school asks students to come back with a parent or guardian for the final interview. In rare instances identified as red flags, the director may ask the student to come alone for a second interview. Otherwise, when possible, the director assigns the follow-up interview to the advocate counselor who is likely to have the student on his caseload. This facilitates the development of a relationship among the counselor, student, and parent.

The follow-up interview generally reiterates the first interview. It serves as a further opportunity for school staff to emphasize the WBCHS culture and expectations, this time in front of both the student and a parent or guardian. This reiteration helps to build the relationship between the family and the school. It also helps reduce future "he said she said" debates when the school and family differ in their understanding of the school's culture.

APPENDIX 4.1 INITIAL REFERRAL CHECKLIST

WEST BROOKLYN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL CHECKLIST OF MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR INITIAL INTERVIEW

August 8, 2011

SAMPLE DOCUMENT

Student Name: _____ Date of Referral: ____/____/____

RECEIVED?	DOCUMENT	DATE RECEIVED
	Transcript	
	Attendance Report	
	Immunization Records	
	Title/Eligibility	
	Military Recruitment Opt-out Form	
	Waivers for Videotaping	
	Release for College-tracking Data	
	Individual Education Plan (IEP)	

Referred By: _____

Comments:

APPENDIX 4.2 PARENT-STUDENT COMMITMENT LETTER



Liliana Polo
Principal

WEST BROOKLYN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

1053 41st Street
Brooklyn, NY 11219
TEL 718.686.1444 FAX 718.686.1189



Stephen Marcus
Director

STUDENT AND PARENT COMMITMENT LETTER

____/____/____ (date)

Dear _____,

This is your official Student and Parent Commitment Letter. By signing this letter, you and your parent(s) are agreeing to follow the Expectations and Norms of West Brooklyn Community High School. We expect you to keep this commitment while you are a student here. In addition to highlighting basic rules and expectations, this letter explains our commitment to you!

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU!

West Brooklyn is a community created and maintained by staff, students, and families. We are committed to doing everything we can to help you reach your goals. Our goal is to support you in earning credits and passing all of your required exams, and to prepare you for postsecondary opportunities.

RULES ARE FOLLOWED. SAFETY IS A PRIORITY.

Students and staff work to make sure that our school is a safe and respectful learning environment. Behaviors that put safety at risk will not be tolerated. Fighting and Possession of Drugs are non-negotiables in our community. All school rules, including our Electronics and Hat policies, should be followed at all times.

ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMICS

Attendance is a priority! School is from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Being on time, and staying here until dismissal is part of our expectation. If you are absent or leave early, then expect a call home. When you are doing well, then expect a call home.

You will receive benchmark report cards with grades approximately every two weeks.

COLLEGE & POST-HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING

You will apply to college as part of your post-graduate plan. Even if you are not sure what you want to do, we want to make sure you have every option available to you once you graduate. We also strongly encourage students to work in one of our paid job internships after school.

MEETINGS, MEETINGS, AND MORE MEETINGS!

- > Every two weeks you will meet with your advocate counselor to discuss your benchmark, your attendance, your goals, and to support you in your efforts.
- > Also, you and your teachers can request a STAC meeting where the **s**tudent, **t**eacher, and **a**dvocate **c**ounselor meet to make sure to resolve any situations that may come up.
- > You, or you and your parent will meet with your advocate counselor, and/or a school administrator to address any behavior or performance issues.
- > You will participate in a Student Mediation meeting whenever a student or staff member feels that a meeting is necessary.
- > Parents and students attend our Open School sessions to talk with the teachers about their classes.

student signature

parent signature

advocate counselor signature

- As a student, I agree to follow the Expectations and Norms of West Brooklyn Community High School. (*You will find a complete overview of our Expectations and Norms in the Student Handbook.*)

The parent and advocate counselor agree to support you as you work toward your high school diploma and plan for college and/or other post-high school work.

WELCOME TO WEST BROOKLYN!

APPENDIX 4.3 INTAKE INTERVIEW FORM

Interviewed by: _____ Date: ____/____/____

WBCHS INTAKE INTERVIEW

Begin by explaining the process (reading test, interview, and parent interview). Explain the importance of a good fit for both the student and the school. If this is not the best program for the student, we will find one that better serves her academic needs. Tell the student that the information he shares with you during this interview is not confidential and may be shared with parents during the interview.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

(First clarify anything you don't understand from the application form.)

Name: _____ Age: _____

Number of credits: _____ Special education: Yes / No

Self-contained class: _____ Resource Room: _____

Outstanding court cases: Yes / No *(if yes, please explain)*

Suspension from school: Yes / No *(if yes, please explain)*

How did you find out about WBCHS?

Have you ever had a counselor before? Yes / No *(if yes, tell me how that experience was for you)*

SCHOOL HISTORY

(Did you have a positive experience, how were your grades, relationships with teachers and peers, how was your attendance?)

Middle School:

High School—First year:

High School—Second year:

High School—Third year:

High School—Fourth year:

Tell me about your high school experience. (Explore reasons for truancy, e.g., large school, feeling unsafe, falling behind in class. Let their story unfold, listen to it, and look for opportunities to ask questions relevant to their truancy and/or dropping out.)

FAMILY

Mother's Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____, _____, _____

Telephone Number: _____ - _____ - _____

If employed:

Workplace and telephone number: _____

Father's Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____, _____, _____

Telephone Number: _____ - _____ - _____

If employed:

Workplace and telephone number: _____

Do you have any brothers and sisters? What are their names and ages? Do they live with you?

Tell me about how your parent/guardian reacted to your attendance issues.

Tell me about now and why you feel differently about committing to school and getting your high school diploma.

Why do you think things will be different for you here?

How do you see yourself working within the structure of the program (e.g., working with an advocate counselor; no beepers, cellphones, hats, etc.)?

What are your favorite subjects, least favorite?

Names of additional household members:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Who do you talk with when you have personal problems?

How do you handle conflict with family/adults/peers? How do you handle anger?

Give an example of something that might make you angry?

HEALTH ISSUES

- Do you have asthma? *(If yes, do you use an inhaler? How often?)*
- Do you have any allergies?
- Do you take any prescription medications?
- Do you have any health conditions we should be made aware of? (e.g., heart condition, breathing problems, diabetes, high blood pressure)

COLLEGE AND POST-HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS—COUNSELORS, PLEASE READ TO APPLICANT

Here at West Brooklyn, we expect and help all students to apply for college and/or other types of post-high school programs. In order to best assist you with this process, including questions about financial aid, please answer these questions:

- 1.** Are you a U.S. citizen? Yes / No
If no, then:
- 2.** Are you a permanent resident? (i.e., do you have a green card?) Yes / No
If no, then:
- 3.** Do you have a VISA? Yes / No

Chapter V.

PROGRAMMING AND SCHEDULING: COURSE SELECTION AND STUDENT SCHEDULES

Over-age and undercredited students need to progress to graduation and college readiness as quickly and efficiently as possible. WBCHS accomplishes this through individualized course scheduling, as well as through the school calendar and its teaching strategies.

Many students arriving at WBCHS have repeated some courses and skipped others, making for an academic experience that is riddled with holes. Most likely, no single person at their previous school knew exactly what those holes were: not the student's teachers, not her counselor, not even the student herself. Adding to the difficulty, once a student is off the "normal" path of ninth-, then tenth-, then eleventh-grade courses, they often follow a progression that has no clear logic at all. WBCHS's process of selecting courses for students addresses these challenges in several ways. This chapter examines the steps in that process through the lens of the different people and groups involved.

STEP 1. CREATE CURRICULUM MAPS AND INTRODUCTORY COURSES

Responsibility: Academic Departments

Each academic department creates maps for curricula that align to state standards, prepare students for state exams, and build critical thinking skills. Designed and maintained by individual teachers in their respective content areas, the maps are regularly examined and discussed by the department as a whole. As such, they offer the school an opportunity to sequence courses within departments, ensuring an even progression of content and skills while reducing redundancy in supporting electives. To ensure the maps stay fresh and relevant, the school revisits the entire process each

summer. In summer 2013, teachers had the opportunity to meet individually with the principal on aligning their curriculum to the Common Core.

An introductory course accompanies every sequence in math, English language arts, and social studies. This course follows the school's core instructional principles and helps introduce students to basic critical thinking skills embedded in both literacy and math. These skills are at the heart of the school's educational philosophy. *(For more information, see Chapter I—Five Ideas that Set the Tone.)*

As in a traditional high school, core subject areas at WBCHS have introductions and sequences that are designed around and beyond state exams. However, unlike traditional high schools, WBCHS does not label these sequences with specific grade levels. Instead, it considers where each student falls in a sequence individually, student-by-student, sequence-by-sequence.

STEP 2. CREATE A WORK PLAN FOR SCHEDULING

Responsibility: Office Manager

To consider each student individually requires a process that begins long before the start of each term. In a traditional high school, most major programming decisions can be made in the quiet of summer and play out from there; at WBCHS these are made throughout the year. In fact, the process of scheduling for the first day of each 12-week trimester usually begins about six weeks into the previous one.

A critical staff member at WBCHS is the office manager, selected in part because of her ability to keep projects organized and on task. The office manager outlines a

calendar of tasks for programming each trimester and ensures that everyone adheres to this schedule.

STEP 3. USE DATA TO ESTABLISH SCHEDULING PRIORITIES AND DECIDE ON SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Responsibility: Principal, with Director

Before the staff can program students into classes, the school's leaders make several core decisions on priority and class offerings. Each term, they review performance and assessment data to determine which students should get a higher priority during the programming process and what new classes the school should create to best serve student needs. Typically, the leaders make these determinations well in advance of each term, during the preprogramming planning period.

Given the constraints inherent in both class size and course availability at a small school, the school's leaders rank students according to the urgency with which their program must be filled. This is particularly important at a transfer school where students enter at many different stages in their progress toward graduation. Accordingly, the leaders examine student-specific data and develop a ranking protocol to determine which students would benefit the most from getting a high priority. At WBCHS, the ranking factors include: credits needed to graduate; age; remaining New York State Regents tests; special needs (e.g., students with Individualized Education Programs and English language learners); students who have been flagged as struggling; and time spent in the building. For instance, the following groups have been used in the past:

Priority 1: Course offerings required for students with IEPs

Priority 2: Course offerings required by regulation for English language learners

Priority 3: Course offerings needed for students who have 28+ credits toward graduating (potential graduates)

Priority 4: Course offerings needed for students who are in their third year or more at the school

Priority 5: New course offerings needed for students who have repeatedly failed classes needed to graduate

When considering priorities, school leaders often also focus on filling a particular class. For instance, in the case of an ecology class designed to support the Living Environment Regents exam, they would pay special attention to those students most in need of the science support, based on course grades and previous Regents scores. In such cases, leadership consults with both teachers and counselors to determine whom to place in a particular course. This is particularly important for new course offerings or introductory classes in a course sequence.

Similarly, the leaders use data to determine which courses the school will offer in a given term, the size of these courses, and their frequency in the schedule. In a typical case, the leaders noticed that a small number of students were repeatedly failing the Math Regents exam. After discussing this with teachers in the math department, they decided to create a more intensive preparatory class to serve those students. The course, co-taught by a math and special education teacher, is capped at eight students per term. In a similar situation, after examining results on the Global History and Geography Regents Exam, the school decided to drastically reduce class size in the preparatory courses, given the test's intense literacy focus. In this more student-centered environment, teachers and students can focus on writing skills more intensely, which has produced corresponding gains on the test. In both cases, leadership made decisions after reflecting on data and consulting with other knowledgeable staff.

STEP 4. TALLY STUDENT COURSE NEEDS IN SEQUENCED AREAS

Responsibility: Counselors

Every counselor is responsible for determining what course each student needs in each sequence. To do this, counselors first need to understand transcripts from the dozens of schools that arriving students have attended. After decoding these transcripts, they then spend several weeks reviewing how the students are progressing before deciding what courses they need for next trimester. This process, similar to the ranking process, focuses on all the students within a

counselor’s caseload rather than only those in need of a high level of priority. As in other high schools, this is done differently for different groups of students, but the groups of students at transfer schools are not quite the same as in other high schools.

Ignore Old Transcripts. Students who are new to WBCHS come with a history of high school coursework. While counselors must be able to read and analyze transcripts from old high schools, they follow a simple rule of thumb about what to do with those transcripts: Do not trust them. As tempting as it is to make decisions based on the courses a student has passed previously, it is too hard to know what mix of standards and expectations other high schools had for passing or failing courses. WBCHS has found that the best route is essentially to ignore those transcripts—or at least at first.

Enroll Students in Introductory Courses. No matter how many courses students have passed before arriving at WBCHS, they still need to learn more; the introductory courses are designed to do this. New students take the introductory courses in math, English language arts, and social studies—subject areas in which virtually every arriving student needs at least one course. For some students this is a review, for others it is eye opening. Either way, it serves two critical purposes: First, it gives students a common language around the literacy and numeric skills they need in order to succeed. Second, it gives teachers and counselors an opportunity to see students’ actual skill levels so that they know how to move them through the rest of the course sequence.

Assess the Students and Begin the Sequence. As students enter their second term, having taken the introductory course, teachers and counselors now know them better and can better assess their skill levels and ability. Based on this assessment, the school places students within the sequence into the course that best fits their needs. For instance, in English language arts, after ELA3, the introductory course, the school officially offers ELA 4 through ELA 8. Most students simply continue to ELA 4 and proceed from there, but a more advanced student who only needs 2 ELA courses to graduate might jump directly to ELA 7.

Ask Before Going out of Sequence. After a student’s second term at WBCHS, the assumption is that she will

move, step by step, through each sequence. However, a student who is struggling in a class or failing for any variety of reasons cannot always proceed apace. When counselors are reviewing student grades and deciding on their courses for the next term, they may find they will be asking a student to repeat a class or for some other reason requesting a course out of sequence (typically when the counselor has observed or heard that they are regularly struggling with it). The counselor then consults the teacher of the class to be repeated. This is not a long, formal conversation. Rather, it centers on one easy question: “I’m thinking of placing this student into this course. What do you think?”

These conversations are critical on a number of levels: First, they yield better decisions. Second, they create a routine check-and-balance for any non-routine decisions about student courses. Finally, they serve as an easy way to have regular communication between teachers and counselors, making it more comfortable for them to talk at other times as well.

STEP 5. TALLY STUDENT COURSE NEEDS IN AREAS OUT OF SEQUENCE

Responsibility: Counselors

The process of determining the number of students needing courses in sequenced areas tends to start with introductory courses and move forward through the sequence. Tallies for student needs in non-sequenced areas go the other way: The process starts with students closest to graduation. Based on the principal’s rankings described in Step 3, counselors follow two steps:

Find Critical Courses. Students who are potentially within one or two terms of graduating (those who might be called “seniors” in a graded school) need to be able to take the courses that fill gaps in their transcripts. WBCHS does not offer all non-sequenced courses every term, so it makes sure to offer those that are needed by seniors.

Assign Students to Critical Courses. After selecting critical non-sequenced courses, WBCHS tallies other students who have spaces in their schedules and need the courses. This gives an idea of potential enrollment.

STEP 6. DESIGN MASTER SCHEDULE

Responsibility: Director, in Collaboration with Principal and with Input from Counselors' Data

Once students have been prioritized and assessed and course offerings have been selected, a master schedule must be built. At WBCHS, designing this schedule is a collaborative effort led by the director in direct consultation with the advocate counselors. While many of the principles involved in this process remain the same term after term, data are examined and the process is repeated in a unique fashion during the preprogramming period in the months prior to each term.

When designing the schedule, the director and advocate counselors balance several considerations. Foremost, they examine school-wide student needs. The counseling staff assesses the school's course needs by looking at the number of June graduates and students who need to take Regents exams in June. If a large number of June graduates require the Math Regents and an art credit, those courses will be among the first to be placed in the new schedule. When placing these high-priority courses within the master-scheduling grid, the counseling staff considers both the time of day and other competing sections that might be in a similar time slot. For instance, to avoid problems with student attendance, WBCHS almost never schedules Regents classes in the morning. Similarly, it rarely offers two high-level courses during the same period because it is likely that the same high-level students will need to take both. In a similar fashion, the director examines teaching capacity, consulting with the principal for advice when making these decisions.

Finally, the director must consider the physical space of the building, maximizing its use. For instance, to free up classroom space, every gym class has at least 35 students and every gym section occurs in the central periods of the schedule. By aligning these gym sections with the higher-priority courses offered during those periods, the school leverages its space. This creates opportunities for smaller, more intensive classes that would otherwise seem impossible to offer for the small number of students the school services.

It is important to emphasize that the entire schedule design process is intensely collaborative. Only by consulting with a wide range of staff, from administrators to counselors, can the director assess

the nuances in student needs and teaching capacity to ensure a balanced schedule. *(For an example of a student schedule, see Appendix 5.1. For courses sequences, descriptions, and scheduling guidelines, see Appendix 5.2.)*

STEP 7. FIX PROBLEMS IN STUDENT PROGRAMS IN THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASS

Responsibility: Counselors, with Teachers' Advice

It is inevitable that once a schedule has been designed and students placed within it, someone will notice errors. Advocate counselors in consultation with the director identify and address these errors. This tinkering typically takes place on a case-by-case basis, after most of the schedule has been loaded. Often there are minor adjustments during the first two weeks.

Perhaps the most common type of error occurs when a student cannot follow his classes in a chronological order. In the complex process of determining a unique program for every student, it is inevitable that some students will be enrolled in classes they are not prepared for—either by accident or, more often, because there was no place in the student's schedule to take a course at the right spot in the sequence. Typically, the teacher involved will notice this error first and reach out to the counseling staff. Together, the teacher and counselor determine better options.

Occasionally, students will get schedules with gaps or holes in them. In these instances, the counselor attempts to reconfigure the schedules to ensure that no one is repeating a class she has already taken. Instead, the counselor identifies classes that support the student's needs during that term, and might reach out to individual teachers for a quick, informal conversation to determine if this makes sense. For instance, a student who needs the literacy-intensive Global History and Geography Regents might be programmed into an available ELA elective. Similarly, a student with a large number of difficult high-level courses who needs several elective credits might also be placed in a lighter course, such as art or gym, to balance that challenge.

APPENDIX 5.1 SAMPLE STUDENT SCHEDULES

WEST BROOKLYN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL SAMPLE STUDENT SCHEDULE

MONDAY FEB 14, 2011	TUESDAY FEB 15, 2011	WEDNESDAY FEB 16, 2011	THURSDAY FEB 17, 2011	FRIDAY FEB 18, 2011
Homeroom Turner, Onaje 8:45 AM - 8:59 AM	Homeroom Turner, Onaje 8:45 AM - 8:59 AM	Homeroom Turner, Onaje 8:45 AM - 8:59 AM	Homeroom Turner, Onaje 8:45 AM - 8:59 AM	Homeroom Turner, Onaje 8:45 AM - 8:59 AM
English 6 Defino, Nicole 201 9:00 AM - 9:55 AM	English 6 Defino, Nicole 201 9:00 AM - 9:55 AM	English 6 Defino, Nicole 201 9:00 AM - 9:55 AM	English 6 Defino, Nicole 201 9:00 AM - 9:55 AM	English 6 Defino, Nicole 201 9:00 AM - 9:55 AM
Health Loh, Jeff 217 9:58 AM - 10:53 AM	Health Loh, Jeff 217 9:58 AM - 10:53 AM	Health Loh, Jeff 217 9:58 AM - 10:53 AM	Health Loh, Jeff 217 9:58 AM - 10:53 AM	Health Loh, Jeff 217 9:58 AM - 10:53 AM
Forensics 1 Fort, Lisa 217 10:56 AM - 11:51 AM	Forensics 1 Fort, Lisa 217 10:56 AM - 11:51 AM	Forensics 1 Fort, Lisa 217 10:56 AM - 11:51 AM	Forensics 1 Fort, Lisa 217 10:56 AM - 11:51 AM	Forensics 1 Fort, Lisa 217 10:56 AM - 11:51 AM
Lunch Polo, Liliana Cafeteria 11:51 AM - 12:21 PM	Lunch Polo, Liliana Cafeteria 11:51 AM - 12:21 PM	Lunch Polo, Liliana Cafeteria 11:51 AM - 12:21 PM	Lunch Polo, Liliana Cafeteria 11:51 AM - 12:21 PM	Lunch Polo, Liliana Cafeteria 11:51 AM - 12:21 PM
Physical Education Loh, Jeff Gym 12:23 PM - 1:18 PM	Physical Education Loh, Jeff Gym 12:23 PM - 1:18 PM	Physical Education Loh, Jeff Gym 12:23 PM - 1:18 PM	Physical Education Loh, Jeff Gym 12:23 PM - 1:18 PM	Physical Education Loh, Jeff Gym 12:23 PM - 1:18 PM
Government Ortiz, Natalia B015 1:21 PM - 2:16 PM	Government Ortiz, Natalia B015 1:21 PM - 2:16 PM	Government Ortiz, Natalia B015 1:21 PM - 2:16 PM	Government Ortiz, Natalia B015 1:21 PM - 2:16 PM	Government Ortiz, Natalia B015 1:21 PM - 2:16 PM
College and Careers (MWF) Martinez, Dania 113 2:19 PM - 3:00 PM	Community Leaders (T,Th) Turner, Onaje 207 2:19 PM - 3:00 PM	College and Careers (MWF) Martinez, Dania 113 2:19 PM - 3:00 PM	Community Leaders (T,Th) Turner, Onaje 207 2:19 PM - 3:00 PM	College and Careers (MWF) Martinez, Dania 113 2:19 PM - 3:00 PM

APPENDIX 5.2

COURSES SEQUENCES, DESCRIPTIONS, & SCHEDULING GUIDELINES

ENGLISH COURSE SEQUENCE & DESCRIPTIONS

SUBJECT	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	ENGLISH
OFFICIAL COURSE	ELA 3	ELA 4	ELA 5	ELA 6
COURSE NAME	ELA 3 Intro to Reading Strategies	ELA 4 Reading & Writing: Author Studies	ELA 5 Critical Reading of Nonfiction	ELA 6: Historical Nonfiction
PREREQUISITES	NONE	ELA3	ELA 3 OR 4	ELA 5
WHAT'S TAUGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Learning strategies/ seven habits of proficient readers > Literary elements and techniques > Classroom conversation > Writing process: three stages > Writing strategies > Main idea and detail > Intro to metacognition > Interviewing a text > Sensory details > Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Deepening learning strategies with fiction > More challenging fiction text(s) and poetry > How to read poetry > Introduction to Shakespeare > Writing persuasive essays > Writing analytical essays > Analysis of a novel > Character analysis > Text selection and completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Features of nonfiction text > Structures of nonfiction text > Intro to nonfiction texts > Intro to developing thesis statements > Use of visuals > Compare and contrast > Cause and effect > Problem solution > Sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > nonfiction > Analysis and evaluation of historical nonfiction > Analysis and evaluation of speeches > Creating and supporting claims using multiple nonfiction texts
WHO TEACHES IT?				
SPECIAL NOTES	First Course for all New Students			Not offered Cycle 1
SUBJECT	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	ENGLISH
OFFICIAL COURSE	ELA 7	ELA 7A	ELA 8	
COURSE NAME	ELA 7 Response to Literature	ELA 7a: Transitional College English	ELA 8 College Research	
PREREQUISITES	ELA 3, 4, 5, 6 (Cycles 1 & 3: Students taking ELA Regents only; Cycle 2: Non- Regents Students only)	ELA REGENTS SCORE OF 65-74	ELA 3-7	
WHAT'S TAUGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Apply the Reading Strategies when reading more sophisticated texts > Write a minimum of 3 essays, using arguments to support claims and valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence > Use the Writing Process > Cite strong textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text > Formal, academic discussions > Short response papers (250-500 words) > ELA Regents Prep (Cycles 1 & 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Course developed by the At Home in College program. > Students are prepared for the CUNY entrance exam <p>*Details pending collaborative work of Gloria, CUNY rep., & Kevin*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Self-select learning strategies > Forming research questions > Thesis writing > MLA quoting > Pro/Con > Use of different sources > Writing a research paper 	
WHO TEACHES IT?				
SPECIAL NOTES	Not offered Cycle 1	Official Pre-Regents Class		Only with 65+ on ELA Regents

MATH COURSE SEQUENCE & DESCRIPTIONS

SUBJECT	MATH	MATH	MATH	MATH
OFFICIAL COURSE	MATH 1	MATH 2	MATH 3	MATH 4
COURSE NAME	Integrated Algebra 1	Integrated Algebra 2	Integrated Algebra 3	Probability and Statistics
PREREQUISITES	NONE	INTEGRATED ALGEBRA 1	INTEGRATED ALGEBRA 1 & 2	INTEGRATED ALGEBRA 1 (may be taken concurrently with Algebra 2 or 3)
WHAT'S TAUGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Signed numbers/order of operations > Writing and simplifying expressions > Area, perimeter, surface area, and volume > Solving equations > Ratios and proportions > Solving inequalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Functions & relations > Graphing linear equations > Quadratic functions > Exponential functions > Graphing systems of equations & inequalities > Factoring & solving quadratic equations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Rational expressions > Probability > Statistics > Geometry > Simplifying radicals > Pythagorean theorem > Trigonometry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Univariate and bivariate data > Measures of central tendency > Box-and-whiskers plots > Frequency and cumulative frequency histograms > Probability
WHO TEACHES IT?				
SPECIAL NOTES	*Diagnostic used to determine 1 or 2	Low skills suggestion: place in a smaller class	Official Pre-Regents Class	HIGH-LEVEL COURSE Formerly "Statistics" Recommended for students taking Integrated Algebra Regents exam

SUBJECT	MATH	MATH	MATH
OFFICIAL COURSE	MATH 5	MATH 6A	MATH 6B
COURSE NAME	ELA 6b: Literature Circles	ELA 7 Response to Literature	ELA 8 College Research
PREREQUISITES	NONE	ALGEBRA 3 OR 65+ ON INTEGRATED ALGEBRA REGENTS	PROBABILITY AND STATISTICS or PRE-CALCULUS (preferred) AND 65+ ON INTEGRATED ALGEBRA REGENTS
WHAT'S TAUGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Recognizing patterns > Guess, check, and improve > Linear growth patterns > Quadratic growth patterns > Systematic lists > Mathematical writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Analysis of quadratics (quadratic formula, complex numbers) > Polynomial functions with degree greater than two > Trigonometric functions > Trigonometric identities and equations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Limits > Derivatives > Integration
WHO TEACHES IT?			
SPECIAL NOTES	Focus is developing skills through solving word problems	HIGH-LEVEL COURSE Formerly "Trigonometry" *Cycle TBD	HIGH-LEVEL COURSE *Cycle TBD

SCIENCE COURSE SEQUENCE & DESCRIPTIONS

SUBJECT	SCIENCE	SCIENCE	SCIENCE	SCIENCE
OFFICIAL COURSE	LIVING ENVIRONMENT 1	LIVING ENVIRONMENT 2	LIVING ENVIRONMENT 3	ACTIVE PHYSICS 1
COURSE NAME	same	same	same	same
PREREQUISITES	NONE	LIVING ENVIRONMENT 1	LIVING ENVIRONMENT 1 & 2	NONE-
WHAT'S TAUGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Body systems > Cells > Biochemistry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Reproduction > Evolution > Genetics > Biotechnology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ecology > Human Impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Hair > Fibers > Pollen > Paint > Fingerprints > Shoe/Tire prints
WHO TEACHES IT?				
SPECIAL NOTES	Cycle 1 & 2	Cycle 2 & 3	Cycle 1 & 3 *Pre-Regents Class	Cycle 1, 2, & 3; Can be used as Preparation for Science RCT; Physical Science Elective

SUBJECT	SCIENCE	SCIENCE	SCIENCE (1/2 CREDIT)
OFFICIAL COURSE	ACTIVE PHYSICS 2	FORENSICS	LIVING ENVIRONMENT LAB & PRACTICUM
COURSE NAME	same	Forensics	Same
PREREQUISITES	ACTIVE PHYSICS 1	NONE-PAIR W/LIFE SCIENCE	CURRENTLY PREPARING FOR LE REGENTS, LIVING ENVIRONMENT 2
WHAT'S TAUGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Kinematics > Forces > Newton's Laws > Energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Pathology > Entomology > Anthropology > Serology > Toxicology > Psychology 	STUDENTS MUST COMPLETE 1200 MINUTES OF LAB BEFORE SITTING FOR THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT REGENT. STUDENTS WHO PASS THE COURSE WILL RECEIVE AN ADDITIONAL 1/2 CREDIT IN LIFE SCIENCE.
WHO TEACHES IT?			
SPECIAL NOTES	Cycle 1, 2, & 3 (as needed)	Cycle 1, 2, & 3 (as needed)	Cycle 1 & 2 & 3 (as needed)

SOCIAL STUDIES COURSE SEQUENCE & DESCRIPTIONS

SUBJECT	SOCIAL STUDIES	SOCIAL STUDIES	SOCIAL STUDIES	SOCIAL STUDIES
OFFICIAL COURSE	GLOBAL 1	Global 2	GLOBAL 3	GLOBAL 4
COURSE NAME	same	same	Same	same
PREREQUISITES	NONE	GLOBAL 1	GLOBAL 1 & 2	GLOBAL 1, 2, & 3
WHAT'S TAUGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Geography > Prehistory and Neolithic Revolution > Early River Valley > Classical civilizations > World religions > Byzantine/Early Russia/Golden Age of Islam > Early invaders > Feudalism in Japan and Europe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Feudalism in Japan and Europe > Medieval Europe and Crusades > The Plague and Black Death > Mesoamerica and Age of Exploration > Renaissance > Protestant Reformation and Counter Reformation > Absolutism > Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment > Age of Revolutions > Industrial Revolution > Imperialism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > MAIN > Colonialism > Nationalism > World War I > Europe after Treaty of Versailles > Rise of Fascism > Rise of Revolution (Russian & Chinese) > World War II and Aftermath > The Cold War 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Human rights & origins > Genocide > Apartheid & racial discrimination > Human trafficking > Water crisis/famine > Humanitarian intervention
WHO TEACHES IT?				
SPECIAL NOTES	Cycle 1 & 2	Cycle 1, 2, and 3	Cycle 2 & 3 Official Pre-Regents Class	Cycle 1 & 3

SUBJECT	SOCIAL STUDIES	SOCIAL STUDIES	SOCIAL STUDIES	SOCIAL STUDIES
OFFICIAL COURSE	U.S. HISTORY 1	U.S. HISTORY 2	GOVERNMENT	ECONOMICS
COURSE NAME	same	same	Same	same
PREREQUISITES	NONE	U.S. HISTORY 1	U.S. HISTORY 1 & 2	GOVERNMENT & GH 3
WHAT'S TAUGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Geography and early American-Indian societies > Early colonization of the U.S. > Slavery > American Revolution > Formation of the Constitution > Early Colonial government & society > Civil War 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Civil War review > Reconstruction > Westward growth > Industrial period > Progressive Era > Imperialism > World War I & II > Cold War > Civil Rights Movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Basic Principles of Government > Federalism > Federal govt vs. state > Legalization of marijuana > Banning assault weapons > Women's rights & abortion > Research topics: death penalty, gay marriage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Economic theories > Role of govt in economy > Economic functions > Analysis of NYC neighborhood > Poverty, developing & developed Nations > Globalization & sustainability > Conscious consumption
WHO TEACHES IT?				
SPECIAL NOTES	Cycle 1 & 2	Cycle 2 & 3 Official Pre-Regents Class	Cycle 1 & 3	Cycle 1, 2, & 3

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS COURSES & DESCRIPTIONS

SUBJECT	ART	ART	ART	VISUAL ART
OFFICIAL COURSE	VISUAL ARTS 1-CYCLE 1	VISUAL ARTS 2-CYCLE 2 (Spanish Culture)	VISUAL ARTS 3-CYCLE 3 (Spanish Culture)	VISUAL ART ELECTIVE
COURSE NAME	same	same	same	same
PREREQUISITES	NONE	NONE; VISUAL ARTS 1	NONE; VISUAL ARTS 2	NONE
WHAT'S TAUGHT	A survey of the materials and techniques of modern art + art history, focusing on application of the elements of art and principles of design to express themes of social justice	A survey of the materials and techniques of modern art + art history, focusing on application of the elements of art and principles of design to express themes of imagination and the abstract	A survey of the materials and techniques of modern art + art history, focusing on application of the elements of art and principles of design to express themes of identity and culture	1/2 credit elective course. Explores art through independent expressions. A student-guided studio class develops a series of projects based on a chosen theme or technique
WHO TEACHES IT?				
SPECIAL NOTES	Can be combined with all Arts	Can be combined with all Arts	Can be combined with all Arts	Can be combined Arts-Cycle 1-3 (6th period Elective)

SPANISH COURSE SEQUENCE & DESCRIPTIONS

SUBJECT	SPANISH (also VISUAL ARTS)
OFFICIAL COURSE	CULTURES OF THE AMERICAS (VISUAL ARTS)
COURSE NAME	same
PREREQUISITES	NONE (FOR VA REQS. SEE ABOVE)
WHAT'S TAUGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Latin American history > European colonization > European Cultural Renaissance & its impact on the Americas
WHO TEACHES IT?	
SPECIAL NOTES	Cycle 1, 2, 3

IEP COURSE SEQUENCES & DESCRIPTIONS

SUBJECT	IEP SERVICES	IEP SERVICES
OFFICIAL COURSE	RESOURCE ROOM	RESOURCE ROOM
COURSE NAME	Literacy Intensive 1	Literacy Intensive 2
WHO GOES IN HERE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Students with IEP's > Class will be between 8-10 > students > Designed for students taking ELA 3 (new students) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Students with IEP's > Class will be between 8-10 students > Class designed for students who have passed ELA 3 and Literacy Intensive 1. Also useful for students preparing to take Regents (on a case by case basis)
WHO TEACHES IT?		
SPECIAL NOTES	Cycle 1, 2, & 3	Cycle 1, 2, & 3

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) COURSE SEQUENCE & DESCRIPTIONS

SUBJECT	ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE	ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE	ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
OFFICIAL COURSE	ESL 1	ESL 2	ESL 3
COURSE NAME	Language Intensive I	Language Intensive II	Language Intensive III
PREREQUISITES	NONE	ESL 1	ESL 1 & 2
WHO GOES IN HERE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Students listed as ESL > Class size is 8-10 students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Students listed as ESL > Class size is 8-10 students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Students listed as ESL > Class size is 8-10 students
WHO TEACHES IT?			
SPECIAL NOTES	Cycle 1 Can be recoded as ELA 1 or 2	Cycle 2 Can be recoded as ELA 1 or 2	Cycle 3 Can be recoded as ELA 4

PHYSICAL EDUCATION & FITNESS COURSES & DESCRIPTIONS

SUBJECT	PHYSICAL EDUCATION	PHYSICAL EDUCATION	HEALTH & FITNESS
OFFICIAL COURSE	PHYSICAL EDUCATION (1/2 CREDIT COURSE)	PHYSICAL EDUCATION (1/2 CREDIT COURSE)	HEALTH
COURSE NAME	Team Sports OR Lifelong Fitness	Weight Training	Health
PREREQUISITES	NONE	NONE	NONE
WHAT'S TAUGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Fitness tests > Team building activities > Skills: basketball, soccer, handball > Badminton, etc. > Cardio activities > Weight training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Weightlifting basics > Individualized planning for weight training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Nutrition > Drugs & alcohol > Mental & emotional health > Healthy relationships > Individual health assessments > Sexual health
WHO TEACHES IT?			
SPECIAL NOTES	Cycle 1, 2, and 3	Cycle 1, 2, and 3 (6th period Elective)	Cycle 1, 2, & 3

YEAR-LONG 6TH PD. ELECTIVES (*excluding Weight Training & Visual Art- see Subject Areas above)

SUBJECT	ARTS	ARTS	ARTS	GENERAL ELECTIVE
OFFICIAL COURSE	THEATER (1/2 CREDIT)	PHOTOGRAPHY (1/2 CREDIT)	SPOKEN WORD (1/2 CREDIT)	COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS (1/2 CREDIT)
COURSE NAME	same	same	same	College & Careers
PREREQUISITES	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE
WHAT'S TAUGHT	> Intro to Theater	> Basic Photography Skills	> TBD	> College Application Process > Financial Aid Process > Career Exploration
WHO TEACHES IT?				
SPECIAL NOTES	Can be combined with all Arts Can be combined w/music	Recommended size: 18 Can be combined w/music	Can be combined w/music	

SUBJECT	MUSIC	MUSIC/DANCE/PHYS. EDUC.	GENERAL ELECTIVE
OFFICIAL COURSE	DRUMMING (1/2 CREDIT)	MARTIAL ARTS (1/2 CREDIT)	CAREER READINESS (1/2 CREDIT)
COURSE NAME	same	same	Paperchasers
PREREQUISITES	NONE	NONE	NONE
WHAT'S TAUGHT	> History and application of drumming: West Africa, Cuba, and Brazil	*Curriculum specifics will be determined by teacher	> Resume building > Interview skills > Career self-assessments, etc.
WHO TEACHES IT?			
SPECIAL NOTES	*MAXIMUM of 30 STUDENTS Can be combined with Arts		

AFTERSCHOOL COURSES (*confirmed for 2012-13 school year)

Online Learning Course Cycles 1, 2, & 3	Used for Seniors in their final cycle can earn 1.0 credit in certain subject areas
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SUMMER SCHOOL COURSES (*subject to change depending on budget & teacher availability)

MATH (RECOVERY)	ENGLISH (RECOVERY)	SCIENCE (RECOVERY)	ART (NEW FULL CREDIT)	PHYSICAL EDUCATION
Int. Algebra 2	ELA 7	LE 3	Visual Art Class	Gym (recover full OR 1/2 new)
Int. Algebra 3	*Ind. Study Class	*Ind. Study Class		Gym (recover full OR 1/2 new)

Chapter VI.

GRADES AND ASSESSMENT: PUSHING EXPECTATIONS THROUGH BACKWARD DESIGN

How students are assessed helps define their experience of learning. True at any school, this proposition is particularly important at transfer schools, where students' academic history often has been one of alienation and disengagement. They may have perceived grades as personal attacks and isolated judgments rather than guidance toward graduation and academic success.

The leaders of WBCHS were committed from the beginning to changing how grading and assessment define the educational experience for students. Before

the school opened, they committed to two goals in particular:

- > Following the Good Shepherd model, the grading policy would provide students with frequent feedback on academic progress. Assessments would serve as benchmarks along a path instead of the marker at the end of the path.
- > Grading and assessment would push the kind of critical thinking skills that students need in order to attain a high school diploma and succeed in college, the workplace, and life outside of school.

GOALS OF GRADES AND ASSESSMENTS

Focus instruction on critical thinking. Schools often assume that the best approach to meeting state standards with students who are behind in their learning is to drill content. WBCHS makes a very different assumption: To succeed and excel, its students need more help in skill development than in content. Classroom instruction moves students beyond content memorization into the core thinking skills required of lifelong learners. But before teachers can push critical thinking skills into every classroom, they themselves must understand and commit to those skills. By asking teachers to create content-specific rubrics that emphasize critical thinking, and then supporting their implementation at regular staff meetings, WBCHS creates common expectations around instruction and a common language for teachers. Following this approach, teachers have recently made Common Core expectations for writing and critical thinking the norm by adopting a Common Core-aligned writing rubric, created by a cross-content teacher committee, for use across the school.

Reinforce a small number of clear academic expectations. By providing students with a clear, standardized model for grading and assessments, WBCHS transmits academic expectations to students in a consistent manner. This coherent environment ensures that students understand the quality of thought that every teacher asks of them in every class. Coherence, which reduces confusion for students, helps them focus on a small, consistent, and clear set of academic expectations.

Strengthen relationships through regular feedback. Many students arrive at a transfer school feeling that grading and assessment at their former schools were cryptic and arbitrary. WBCHS's standardized rubrics, benchmarks, and assessments create the opposite environment: a school where coherent, rational, regular feedback connects students with the academic journey, serves as an authentic platform for building meaningful relationships, and enables staff to give guidance and address academic problems.

Given these commitments, assessment and grading have helped WBCHS achieve three important goals: focus instruction on critical thinking; reinforce academic expectations; and provide regular feedback to students on their academic progress.

While the elements of WBCHS's system of grading and assessment are important, the order in which the school implemented them has proven even more critical. Start with too many steps that teachers may perceive as unnecessary, and you risk burning them out and drawing resistance. Start with too few, and you may never get where you need to. The process outlined in this chapter spanned roughly two years.

YEAR ONE: THE FIRST TWO MONTHS OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

START WITH CONSISTENT, FREQUENT FEEDBACK.

One of the biggest hurdles for teachers is logistical. At most schools, progress reports come once every 6 to 12 weeks. WBCHS set the expectation at once every two weeks. Realizing that this pace could easily sound overwhelming to teachers, the school's leaders set expectations around feedback early: From day one, one of the school's first nonnegotiables was that teachers would provide regular academic feedback through a biweekly benchmark system. This system had three elements:

- > The curriculum is designed in two-week chunks. Each chunk culminates in an assessment of each student's skills and content knowledge.
- > Each two-week chunk brings an accompanying progress report on each student.
- > Every progress report from every teacher uses the same overall categories. These correspond to the five basic categories of the lesson structure: Do Now, Classwork, Participation, Homework, and Benchmark Assessment.

In this system, students would never be more than one week from an update on their progress in a course.

In Year One, the first two or three cycles of these two-week benchmarks provided teachers with an opportunity to get comfortable with the system and the frequency with which they would need to enter grades. Many of the staff meetings during this period focused on the system of biweekly feedback and how to keep it on track. *(For a sample two-week curriculum, see Appendix 6.1. For an associated assessment, see Appendix 6.2.)*

IMMEDIATELY INTRODUCE AND MODEL INSTRUCTION FOCUSING ON CRITICAL THINKING.

The school also introduced a focus on critical thinking during the first months. This had to be introduced early: It would take significant time for many teachers to grasp how to teach critical thinking, a challenge very different from simply delivering content.

The first step was to ask teachers to review their current assessments. How could they enable teachers to give feedback to students not only on the content they had learned but also on their critical thinking skills? To make this feedback meaningful to the students, teachers needed a common language to discuss and refer to critical thinking skills. Bloom's Taxonomy of Higher-order Thinking provided this framework. *(For more information, see Appendix 3.2: Bloom's Taxonomy of Higher-order Thinking.)*

Parallel to this request for feedback on existing assessments, the school leaders supported the development of grading and assessment in two other ways. First, the principal designed and modeled a unit highlighting critical thinking skills. That proved of symbolic and professional importance to her small staff: She did not ask them to do this important task without first doing it herself. It also helped her recognize some of the challenges involved. *(For more information, see Chapter III—Instructional Staff Development: Guided Discovery.)*

Second, the principal engaged outside instructional coaches to help lead professional development. Together, the principal and the coaches devoted many of the early full-staff professional development sessions to unpacking critical thinking skills, modeling examples of thinking in action, reviewing state exam questions to determine the levels of critical thinking they called for,

and helping teachers see the relevancy of these skills across content areas. This work further familiarized staff with the language surrounding Bloom’s Taxonomy. *(For more information, see Chapter III—Instructional Staff Development: Guided Discovery.)*

YEAR ONE: FIRST FOUR MONTHS OF STAFF MEETINGS

FIND EXAMPLES OF RUBRICS AND MAKE THEM YOUR OWN.

While the principal and consultants used professional development and modeled instruction to support their teachers, the teachers needed a way to engage themselves in the process without immediately moving into new practice. Using benchmark assessment rubrics that specified various levels of proficiency for various areas of student learning proved an effective way to develop this discussion.

To develop the rubrics, teachers needed a common understanding for what a grade meant on the basic categories of the lesson structure: Do Now, Homework, Participation, and Classwork. Through discussions in full-staff meetings, teachers shared their perspectives and were involved in defining each of these. The discussions, focused on the broad skills involved in each area, delineated markers of basic quality: work that is completed on time; contributions to discussion that are constructive; and writing that shows response to instructions. From this, teachers drafted rubrics for school-wide use.

The most challenging area in which to develop rubrics was in defining critical thinking skills and unpacking what these would look like in actual benchmark assessments. To make the rubrics more meaningful, it was agreed that each successive “level” would correspond to a deeper level of critical thinking.

This was not what most teachers were accustomed to. For example, many of the teachers were more familiar with the type of English language arts rubric that defined one level of Idea Development as “Student provides no more than 1 example of an idea and no more than 1 piece of evidence to support it,” and a

higher level as “Student provides 2-3 examples and 2-3 pieces of evidence to it.” Critical thinking rubrics demanded a shift in focus. An ELA rubric at WBCHS would, for example, define one level as “Student states idea without engaging in deeper analysis of evidence behind the idea,” and a higher level as “Student states idea and meaningfully analyzes information using that idea and providing evidence to back it up.”

To help develop this understanding, the leaders provided teachers with samples illustrating each level. Choosing from the many such resources available online from educational organizations that promote critical thinking, WBCHS focused on those from the Center for Urban Education. It would have been easy—but ineffective—for the leaders to simply hand out existing rubrics to teachers and have them use them. Having never grappled with the meaning of the boxes in such a rubric—in essence, having never engaged in critical thinking around the rubrics—teachers would no more be able to use them than they would be able to teach students to be critical thinkers. Furthermore, many of the rubrics available online felt abstruse, wordy, and difficult for students to interpret.

Accordingly, the leaders asked teachers to look at the sample rubrics in small groups and discuss key qualities, such as:

- > Precisely, what skills are these rubrics assessing?
- > Why is assessment of those skills important?
- > What would a demonstration of those skills look like in student work?

These discussions helped teachers take ownership over rubrics, becoming more focused and engaged in thinking about critical thinking. Similarly, as teachers’ understanding of critical thinking skills became clearer, the language they used to discuss the rubrics often became simpler and more practical and concrete. This common language became increasingly important as the school moved to build its own rubrics.

START WITH A NARROW FOCUS.

When first introducing the focus on critical thinking, the school leaders asked teachers to use the sample rubrics they had studied and pick a single skill in humanities and one in math/science that WBCHS would assess school wide. This extremely narrow focus recognized

the complexity and interconnectedness of the critical thinking skills the staff was exploring, and these often still felt unfamiliar to newer teachers. It would be more effective to start with a narrow foundation and build from that than to start broadly and narrow the focus in the future.

After carefully considering the sample rubrics, the teachers came to consensus on the two skills they would use. They chose idea development in the humanities and problem solving in math/science as the initial focus.

The departments took the existing rubrics on idea development and problem solving and modified them to fit their own content areas. They then brought these content-specific rubrics to a full-staff meeting and compared them, looking for similarities and differences across departments. They brought student work to the same meeting and used it to test the effectiveness of the rubrics. Throughout the process, staff and leaders fine tuned the rubrics, while staff members broadened their understanding of the goals of the policy of using them in all their teaching. *(For a sample WBCHS rubric, see Appendix 6.3.)*

YEAR ONE: SECOND HALF OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

MOVE FROM RUBRICS TO ASSESSMENTS, BUT KEEP GRADES OUT OF IT.

In the second half of Year One, armed with their new rubrics, teachers soon found that not all the school's assessments tracked to the critical thinking goals. Often, tests or projects simply asked students to recall

content without asking for deeper analysis, evaluation, or synthesis of information. On the flip side, some teachers were asking only for higher-order analysis without first giving students a chance to demonstrate that they could recall basic content.

This realization about assessments, perhaps inevitable, would have been difficult to tackle without the rubrics in hand. By moving from rubrics into assessments, teachers could confront the new challenge. Staff development now focused on using rubrics to create assessments that ask students to engage in incrementally deeper thinking: first showing that they could recall basic facts; then demonstrating the application of those facts to the real world; then using evidence to analyze an argument; and finally evaluating an argument based on those facts.

Teachers worked together to shape the assessments and ask questions that would get at all levels of critical thinking. As always, a spirit of gradual implementation and self-reflection guided this work, making teachers comfortable with trying new forms of questions and creating stronger, better-scaffolded assessments. *(For an example of "before" and "after" assessments, see Appendix 6.4.)*

Next, the staff began bringing both the rubrics and the new assessments into the classroom. To ease student and teacher anxiety over the new tools, initial implementation was "soft," using rubrics for guidance and written feedback but not as determinants of grades. During this phase, teachers explicitly pointed out to students the rationale and purpose behind the rubrics, taking care to go over exactly how they would use them to grade an assessment. This low-stakes implementation paved the way for both teachers and students to accept and adopt the grading system quickly.

HOW WBCHS USES ASSESSMENTS

Teachers design assessments to engage students in incrementally deeper thinking by asking students to:

1. Recall basic facts;
2. Demonstrate the application of those facts to the real world;
3. Use evidence to analyze an argument; and
4. Evaluate an argument based on those facts.

YEAR TWO: MOVE FROM ASSESSMENTS TO UNIT PLANNING, AND START BRINGING IN GRADES.

By developing rubrics and redesigning assessments, teachers grappled with the idea of giving frequent feedback and assessing critical thinking. For many, this work would continue in the second year at full-staff and department meetings and in one-on-one work between teachers.

At the same time, WBCHS leadership wanted to move forward and use assessments to improve instruction. Just as prior assessments had not always focused on the kind of critical thinking that the rubrics asked for, the teachers now found that their instruction did not necessarily promote the kind of critical thinking the new assessments demanded.

To boost the level of instruction, WBCHS leadership promulgated a new expectation: Teachers' curriculum maps and lesson plans would include the critical thinking skills demanded on the assessments. Curricular overviews became framed by example questions that illustrate the types of question students would ask when they are engaged in deep critical thinking. Similarly, WBCHS now expected teachers to scaffold critical thinking skills within their lesson plans and sequences, so that students learn first to exhibit the lower-level recall skills, then application, then analysis, and finally evaluation and synthesis. To support this process, teachers would provide updated weekly course outlines that instructional leaders could use as starting points for one-on-one discussions on good instruction. *(For an example of a curriculum overview with feedback, see Chapter III—Instructional Staff Development: Guided Discovery.)*

Although simple in concept, the implementation of this reverse unit planning—from rubrics and assessments to instruction—was not easy. Ideas that appeared clearly on rubrics only slowly trickled into lesson plans. However, at every step of the process of raising the level of instruction, it proved invaluable to have tangible copies of rubrics and assessments. At any point, both teachers and administrators could point to them to ask whether classroom instruction was reaching the expected level.

It was also during this time that the school asked teachers to begin tying results on critical thinking assessments to grades. Neither teachers nor students nor counselors were quite ready to do this for every two-week progress report. Instead, once every six weeks, students received an additional piece of information with their progress reports: an assessment of their level of critical thinking in idea development and problem solving in each class in which they were enrolled. *(For two examples of the six-week progress report, see Appendix 6.5.)*

CONTINUALLY REVIEW AND REFINE, MOVING AMONG RUBRICS, ASSESSMENTS, AND CURRICULUM.

With a successful model in place, stretching from rubric creation to classroom instruction, WBCHS broadened the diversity of critical thinking skills targeted, while continuing to refine overall implementation of the entire model.

Moving away from the focus on a single skill across multiple departments, each department now had the freedom to arrive at a skill its faculty members would focus on together. Meeting as departments, teachers revisited process of reviewing sample rubrics. They built their own rubrics on the skills chosen within their content area, then reviewed their assessments in light of the new rubric. As these discussions developed, the language around critical thinking spread beyond the original benchmark assessment rubrics. It began infusing all documents assessing student progress, such as conferencing goal sheets and postsecondary planning documents.

While this refinement was most challenging in the area of critical thinking skills, it was also a factor for other elements of the grading policy: Do Now, Classwork, Homework, and Participation. As teachers reviewed and redefined what it meant to produce a high-quality Do Now, or to complete Classwork and Homework to standard, the staff modified the rubrics slightly each year, leading to corresponding modifications in assessments and instructional planning.

APPENDIX 6.1 WEEKLY CURRICULUM OUTLINE

ELA 3 BM 1 WEEK 2 – SEPTEMBER 12-16, 2011

	MONDAY SEPT 12, 2011	TUESDAY SEPT 13, 2011	WEDNESDAY SEPT 14, 2011	THURSDAY SEPT 15, 2011	FRIDAY SEPT 16, 2011												
GOAL	Students will interview a book in order to make a final selection for independent reading.	Students will explore WBCHS gmail and blogging system in order to prepare for weekly homework and blogging.	Students will build background knowledge in order to deepen their understanding of the class text.	Students will ask questions about the text in order to begin the practice of thinking while reading.	Students will differentiate between thick and thin questions in order to develop thinking while reading strategies.												
DO NOW	Peer Interview	Strength Challenge Matrix <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Strength</td> <td>Challenge</td> <td>Goal</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reading</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Leave blank</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Writing</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Leave blank</td> </tr> </table>		Strength	Challenge	Goal	Reading			Leave blank	Writing			Leave blank	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Reading Novel Ideas for Night (this took too long) 	Independent Reading (8) Do Next: Handout: Have student list 5 things that stand out/make you think and explain why in the margins. (5)	Independent Reading Do Next: Read two questions, which is better? Why?
	Strength	Challenge	Goal														
Reading			Leave blank														
Writing			Leave blank														
MINI-LESSON	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Modeling interviewing a book–Working in the Dark Read Aloud–Working in the Dark Model Think, Pair, Share & journal entry in response to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Why do you think we read this together? » What stood out to you and why? Pair Share Model Interviewing a Book 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Protocol for using Computers at WBCHS Purpose for using email Model signing on and composing an email (mini Work Period A) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipation guide Genocide PowerPoint Model Stations Activity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review do next (5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Pair Share » Let’s each try and ask 1 question Set Purpose (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » To practice thinking while reading strategies to aid us in critically unraveling a text » To learn about the Holocaust » To understand the big ideas of inhumanity, relationships, religion, and survival. Discuss Thinking while reading/ Asking questions and RATATA (2) Walk students through first pages (1). Read Aloud and model: Asking questions (10) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> RATATA: Modeling Questioning Leveled questions Mini-lesson; sort Cinderella questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Level 1: Right there (Thin): What did she wear? » Level 2: Me + Text (Thick) Why do you think . . .? » Level 3: Beyond (Thickest) What does the book say about . . .? 												

	MONDAY SEPT 12, 2011	TUESDAY SEPT 13, 2011	WEDNESDAY SEPT 14, 2011	THURSDAY SEPT 15, 2011	FRIDAY SEPT 16, 2011
CLASSWORK	<p>Students use the charts from Friday to start the search to interview books and make a final selection.</p> <p>Once a book is selected, students will begin reading.</p>	<p>A. Students will have an opportunity to email me with some of the following information (depending on time):</p> <p>Biology:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When were you born? <p>Personality:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. What song/album do you listen to when you're really angry? What about when you feel on top of the world? <p>At School:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. What do you like the most about West Brooklyn? Why? 4. What have you learned about yourself since your arrival to WB? <p>Likes/Dislikes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. What's one place you would like to visit in your lifetime? Why do you want to go there? <p>Community:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. What's one thing you would like to change about your neighborhood that would make it a better place to live 	<p>Students will go to 3 different stations: Ghettos, Death Marches, and Concentration Camps and write down two things they want to remember about each. Students will be given time to share this information with their peers.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Look at the front/back of your book—write three things that stand out to you or make you think. (5) 2. Read their IR book and ask 3-4 questions while reading (15) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will take the questions I asked yesterday & today and categorize them by levels. 2. Students will try and answer the level 1s, and if possible even answer the level 2s (this will require some inferencing).
EXIT TICKET	Hand in Library Cards: Why did you finally select this book?	What do you think will be the benefit of using a blog in class?	Quick Write What do you hope to learn from reading Elie Wiesel's memoir? Why?	STAR your best question! Why is it your best and why did you ask it. (5)	How will questioning help you understand the text?
HOMEWORK		EMAIL HW 1: Letter to me All HWs will be emailed out on Mondays and completed via email by Friday!			HW #1 DUE

APPENDIX 6.2

CULMINATING ASSESSMENT FOR WEEKLY OUTLINE

Name: _____ ELA 3/WBCHS

BENCHMARK I: FORMAL ASSESSMENT

Read pages ____ - ____ and Write a 4 paragraph literary EMAIL to ME (teacher@wbchs.org). Follow the format below. The email will be graded based on the rubric below.

Greeting (Dear Nicole)

P1: Introduction—Historical Info

- > What is the title of the book? > From what perspective is this book written?
- > What do you understand about what was going on in history when this story takes place?

P2: Asking Questions—Write about questions that came up while reading Night.

One question that came up is _____. We asked this question because _____. This question is important because _____. Additionally, it makes us think about _____. Pursuing this further, it deepens our understanding of the book because _____.

P3: Connections—Write about connections you made while you were reading.

In the memoir Night, I read _____. This reminded me of _____ because _____. In relation to the text, this connection helps me to understand _____. Thinking even deeper, this leads me to think/wonder about _____.

- > Remember, the connection does NOT have to be a direct experience. You can connect to a:
 - » Belief » Relationship
 - » Feeling » Something that you know about
 - » Experience » Another book/movie (T2T)
 - » Passion or Interest » Something in the World at large (T2W)

P4: Conclusion—Metacognition

- > How have the strategies helped you to create a deeper understanding of the book?
- > What stands out to you about this book?

Closing (Sincerely, “student’s name”)

RUBRIC

QUESTIONING		CONNECTIONS	
Questions		Connections	
1	No questions and/or poses irrelevant questions.	1	No response/schematic connection.
2	Poses literal question(s) that relate to the text.	2	Can talk about what text reminds him/her of but cannot explain; reference to schema may not be clearly connected to text.
3	Poses questions to clarify meaning.	3	Relates background knowledge/experience to text.
4	Poses thick questions to enhance meaning of text (critical response, big idea); may explain how posing questions deepens comprehension.	4	Expands interpretation of text using schema; may pose questions.
5	Questions may be rhetorical and lead to interesting discussion. Can explain how asking questions enhances understanding.	5	Explains how schema enriches interpretation of text; connections extend beyond life experience and immediate text.

APPENDIX 6.3 WBCHS CLASSROOM RUBRIC

CLASSWORK RUBRIC

√+ 10 points	√ 8.5 points	√- 7 points	√0 5.5 points	0 0 points
Classwork demonstrates a complete and detailed understanding of the strategies and skills important to today's lesson.	Classwork demonstrates a complete understanding of the strategies and skills important to today's lesson.	Classwork demonstrates an incomplete or basic understanding of the topic and/or strategies and skills important to today's lesson.	Classwork demonstrates that the student's understanding of the topic is so incomplete or has so many misconceptions that the student cannot be said to understand the topic.	No judgment can be made of the classwork because none was turned in or student was absent.

APPENDIX 6.4

IMPROVING ASSESSMENTS: BEFORE AND AFTER THE REVISION PROCESS

This first sample is an assessment before revision to integrate higher-order skills.

Name: _____ ELA 3/WBCHS

BENCHMARK I: FORMAL ASSESSMENT

Literary Letter: Due Friday, September 19th, 2008

Heading: "Literary letter on *Book Title*"

Date

Greeting (Dear Nicole)

Paragraph I: Introduction

- > Title and author's name in the first paragraph and current chapter/page
- > Summary of what you have read so far

Paragraphs II & III:

- > Use each of the following reading strategies with your book (one/paragraph).
 - » Ask a question about the text
 - » Connections (T2S, T2W, or T2T)

Paragraph IV: Conclusion

- > Reflect on the Strategies: How have the strategies helped you to create a deeper understanding of the book?
- > Reflect on what you've read so far. Questions to think about:
 - » Are you enjoying this book? Why? (Be VERY specific)
 - » What is the author trying to tell you? Do you agree or disagree with him/her?

Closing (Sincerely, "student's name")

RUBRIC

These are the Rubrics I will use to evaluate your work.

STRATEGY:	1	2	3	4	5
<p>Questioning:</p> <p>The reading creates questions about the text.</p>	Asks irrelevant questions	Asks obvious questions	Asks questions to clarify meaning (THIN)	Asks questions to uncover meaning in the text (THICK)	Asks questions to uncover meaning and explains how asking the question deepens understanding Uses questions to challenge the author's position, motive, or point of view
<p>Connections:</p> <p>The reader uses background knowledge to clarify and extend their understanding of the text.</p>	Makes no response Does not make background connection	Can talk about what text reminds her of, but cannot explain why May not be clearly connected to the text	Relates background knowledge/ experience to the text and explains WHY	Expands understanding of text using background knowledge and explains how it helps her to understand the text/character better May pose questions based on a connection between the text and background knowledge	Explains how the connection extends beyond background knowledge and the text and offers a different way of looking at it

The second sample is the same assessment after revision to integrate higher-order thinking skills better.

Name: _____ ELA 3/WBCHS

BENCHMARK I: FORMAL ASSESSMENT

Read pages ____-____ and Write a 4 paragraph literary EMAIL to ME (teacher@wbchs.org). Follow the format below. The email will be graded based on the rubric below.

Greeting (Dear Nicole)

P1: Introduction–Historical Info

- > What is the title of the book? > From what perspective is this book written?
- > What do you understand about what was going on in history when this story takes place?

P2: Asking Questions–Write about questions that came up while reading Night.

One question that came up is _____. We asked this question because _____. This question is important because _____. Additionally, it makes us think about _____. Pursuing this further, it deepens our understanding of the book because _____.

P3: Connections–Write about connections you made while you were reading.

In the memoir Night, I read _____. This reminded me of _____ because _____. In relation to the text, this connection helps me to understand _____. Thinking even deeper, this leads me to think/wonder about _____.

- > Remember, the connection does NOT have to be a direct experience. You can connect to a:
 - » Belief » Relationship
 - » Feeling » Something that you know about
 - » Experience » Another book/movie (T2T)
 - » Passion or Interest » Something in the World at large (T2W)

P4: Conclusion–Metacognition

- > How have the strategies helped you to create a deeper understanding of the book?
- > What stands out to you about this book?

Closing (Sincerely, “student’s name”)

RUBRIC

QUESTIONING	
Questions	
1	No questions and/or poses irrelevant questions.
2	Poses literal question(s) that relate to the text.
3	Poses questions to clarify meaning.
4	Poses thick questions to enhance meaning of text (critical response, big idea); may explain how posing questions deepens comprehension.
5	Questions may be rhetorical and lead to interesting discussion. Can explain how asking questions enhances understanding.

CONNECTIONS	
Connections	
1	No response/schematic connection.
2	Can talk about what text reminds him/her of but cannot explain; reference to schema may not be clearly connected to text.
3	Relates background knowledge/experience to text.
4	Expands interpretation of text using schema; may pose questions.
5	Explains how schema enriches interpretation of text; connections extend beyond life experience and immediate text.

APPENDIX 6.5 TWO-WEEK PROGRESS REPORT, SAMPLE 1

STUDENT BIWEEKLY REPORT, SAMPLE 1

MODEL TRANSFER SCHOOL

Student: John Doe

Counselor: Maria Gonzales

PERIOD	COURSE	TEACHER	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	C1	A	L	TEACHER'S COMMENTS
1	Art	Shane Mulhern	70	56	89	98	50		73	7	10	
2	Living Environment	Jessica Furer	87	67	78	98	65		79	2	6	
3	Economics	Mike Rothman	67	89	77	78	98		82	3	3	
4	English	Jean Thomases	56	67	78	89	90		76	2	3	
6	Spanish	Meghan Eison	89	78	67	87	89		82	4	2	
7a	PE	Anna Graizbord	76	78	89	90	90		85	8	1	

TWO-WEEK PROGRESS REPORT, SAMPLE 2

STUDENT MULTI-SECTION REPORT, CATEGORY SUMMARY

Student: John Doe

ART-SHANE MULHERN					
CATEGORY	NUMBER OF ASSIGNMENTS	TOTAL POINTS EARNED	TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	PERCENTAGE	LETTER GRADE
Do Now	10	60	100	60%	F
Classwork	10	86	100	86%	B
Participation	10	90	100	90%	A
Homework	4	50	80	63%	F
Projects/Test	1	67	100	67%	D

LIVING ENVIRONMENT-JESSICA FURER					
CATEGORY	NUMBER OF ASSIGNMENTS	TOTAL POINTS EARNED	TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	PERCENTAGE	LETTER GRADE
Do Now	10	88	100	88%	B
Classwork	10	98	100	98%	A
Participation	10	87	100	87%	B
Homework	4	79	80	99%	A
Projects/Test	1	67	100	97%	D

ECONOMICS-MIKE ROTHMAN					
CATEGORY	NUMBER OF ASSIGNMENTS	TOTAL POINTS EARNED	TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	PERCENTAGE	LETTER GRADE
Do Now	10	60	100	60%	F
Classwork	10	79	100	79%	C
Participation	10	66	100	66%	D
Homework	4	70	80	88%	B
Projects/Test	1	90	100	90%	A

ENGLISH-JEAN THOMASES					
CATEGORY	NUMBER OF ASSIGNMENTS	TOTAL POINTS EARNED	TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	PERCENTAGE	LETTER GRADE
Do Now	10	78	100	78%	C
Classwork	10	67	100	67%	D
Participation	10	68	100	68%	D
Homework	4	70	80	88%	B
Projects/Test	1	75	100	75%	C

SPANISH-MEGHAN EISON					
CATEGORY	NUMBER OF ASSIGNMENTS	TOTAL POINTS EARNED	TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	PERCENTAGE	LETTER GRADE
Do Now	10	90	100	90%	A
Classwork	10	98	100	98%	A
Participation	10	87	100	87%	B
Homework	4	65	80	81%	B
Projects/Test	1	87	100	87%	B

Chapter VII.

COUNSELING INTERVENTIONS: RECONNECTING STUDENTS TO THEIR EDUCATION

One-on-one counseling is at the heart of WBCHS. More often than not, students in a transfer school face socio-emotional challenges at home, at school, or both. Whether those challenges have caused their poor performance in the past or resulted from it, they follow the students to their new school. By providing opportunities to talk about the challenges with an advocate counselor, funded by Learning to Work, and find ways to either solve them or succeed in school despite them, WBCHS achieves three key goals: rebuilding strained relationships with students; maintaining a consistent and strong school culture; and connecting students to outside resources.

Interventions encompass a range of responsive outreach techniques that advocate counselors use to guide, advise, and respond to student behavior.

Each advocate counselor carries a caseload of about 30 students, meeting with them twice a week as a group and one on one at least once every two weeks. Advocate counselors, as the leaders of counseling interventions, coordinate with teachers, administrators, and family members to determine the appropriate actions for each situation, guided by nine key steps.

STEP 1. AT INTAKE, DESCRIBE A COMMUNITY CENTERED ON CLASSROOM LEARNING

The intake process introduces students to the WBCHS culture and community as advocate counselors explicitly present the basic expectations required of students. The counselors highlight their core role: to help students spend as much time as possible in the

GOALS OF COUNSELING INTERVENTIONS

Rebuild strained relationships with students. Authentic personal relationships between staff and students are the heart of WBCHS's reengagement strategy. Counseling interventions maintain and enhance those relationships during periods of stress. This form of outreach is crucial for transfer students, many of whom are suspicious of offers of care and expect to be dropped at the first signs of trouble.

Maintain a consistent and strong school culture. Surrounding students with a consistent school culture is one of the most important aspects of WBCHS. Central to that culture is one core belief: school is for learning, and learning is critical to a good life beyond school. The staff wants students to view the school as an authentic community built around learning, in stark contrast to their previous schools where many felt disrespected and disengaged from learning. By intervening quickly and responsively when students violate the school's expectations, counselors reinforce the WBCHS culture and guide them back to the classroom.

Connect students to outside resources. Given the wide range of its student needs, WBCHS staff connects students to outside resources that help them succeed and grow academically and socio-emotionally. Counseling is a key mechanism for identifying students in need of, and helping them receive, outside services and support.

classroom learning so they can succeed in school and life after graduation.

By clearly and consistently reiterating these expectations, the counselors not only define the culture for incoming students but also set a baseline understanding they can return to as the year moves forward. The success of subsequent counseling interventions depends on firmly establishing these expectations at intake. (*For more information, see Chapter IV—Intake: Introducing Students to a New School Culture.*)

STEP 2. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS EARLY THROUGH FREQUENT, BRIEF MEETINGS

The beginning of the school year serves as a time for building the interpersonal relationships that underpin the school. In the group advisories, the counselors use icebreakers, goal-setting games, humor, enthusiastic greetings, and interpersonal sharing to create a safe atmosphere, where both staff and students are free to let down their guard and trust each other throughout the school year. This trust provides counselors with a platform for conducting the more difficult and sensitive areas of their work.

To build one-on-one relationships, the advocate counselors meet with new students on their caseload informally several times in the first week or two of school. These check-ins may be informal “conversational greetings” or hallway chats, as well as formal meetings, phone calls, and other activities. Attendance and academics serve as important topics, but they do not dominate these check-ins, particularly when counselor and student are getting to know each other and setting the tone of their relationship. Instead, counselors focus on positive areas of their students’ lives, both inside and outside the building. This attention to the positive, especially when discussing areas not traditionally of concern to school officials, can deepen the counselors’ relationships with students.

Most of these meetings are brief. Counselors take care to not act as therapists. They also do not let students escape classes by using that time to talk with a counselor. If the counselor determines the need for a longer conversation, she either schedules that a time that does not conflict with class or asks whether the student wants a referral to an outside resource.

STEP 3. QUICKLY CONNECT REACTIVE INTERVENTIONS TO INCIDENTS

During every counseling session, whether group or one on one, the counselor seeks to ensure that students see the connection between the points made in the discussion and their lives. This is particularly important if the session leads to a disciplinary intervention or other corrective action.

In all such cases, WBCHS emphasizes timely responses to behavioral and academic issues. The shorter the lag time between an event and the school’s response, the more the response will feel authentic to the student and central to the school culture. Counselors make attendance phone calls as early as possible on the day a student is absent. Meetings about discipline occur as soon as all parties can meet, before the issue is forgotten or brushed aside. The emphasis on timing often requires flexibility in scheduling and a willingness to work on the fly.

STEP 4. IDENTIFY STUDENTS IN NEED OF OUTSIDE RESOURCES AND MAKE REFERRALS

Counselors must know their limitations. WBCHS advocate counselors make referrals to outside social services when issues come up that fall into any of three categories:

- > Issues that are *beyond the time* of the counselor to deal with reasonably given other job requirements;
- > Issues that are *beyond the expertise* of a counselor; and
- > Issues that are *beyond the resources* available to the school.

In these cases, the counselor works as a bridge to connect students to the appropriate outside services, following up on the student’s experience and making adjustments accordingly.

STEP 5. INITIATE PROACTIVE INTERVENTIONS BASED ON BENCHMARKS

Advocate counselors meet one on one with every student in their caseload once every two-week benchmark for 20-minute sessions. During these proactive interventions, counselors and students

examine the student's benchmark grades, unpack trends, and make connections between the student's academic approach and his results.

For students who are passing all their classes or failing just one, the benchmark conversations focus on ways to improve in specific areas of challenge. If a student is failing several classes, this conversation takes on a more serious tone. Using a strengths-based approach, the counselor works with the student to specify goals for improvement. These must be immediately achievable and generated directly from the benchmark data. For instance, the goal for a student with an overall grade just under 65 might simply be to raise it to passing. Another student might agree to do all homework assigned for a benchmark to determine the effect that has on their overall performance. The counselor refers students failing four or more classes to the director for an additional meeting. If the student shows no improvement over the course of the next benchmark, the counselor addresses this lack of progress during the one-on-one biweekly meetings. (See *Appendix 7.1: Counseling Protocol for One-on-one Meetings and Appendix 7.2: Questions for Academic Counseling and Goal Setting.*)

Collectively, interventions follow an escalating "ladder of referral," beginning with teachers, continuing to include parents and other interested family members, and culminating with the presence of school administrators. (See *Appendix 7.3: Ladder of Referral.*) In practice, though, the school uses various escalations as a menu of options rather than a rigid pathway. This list represents one potential framework for how WBCHS students could progress up the ladder of referral:

- > **Step One.** Counselor and student discuss the benchmark a student failed to meet. They set goals to improve two workable aspects of the benchmark.
- > **Step Two.** Two weeks later, they review the benchmark again. If there is no improvement, they set new goals and schedule a new meeting.
- > **Step Three.** If the pattern persists and the student shows no signs of improvement, a three-way meeting takes place with a teacher.
- > **Step Four.** If the pattern persists and the student shows no signs of improvement, a parent is asked to come to WBCHS for a family meeting to discuss the student's performance.

- > **Step Five.** If the pattern persists and the student shows no signs of improvement, the student meets with an administrator. They set up a contract that explicitly lays out the progress needed for the student to improve.
- > **Step Six.** If the student shows no signs of improvement, the counselor and other staff help the student explore options such as evening school, GED, or job placement. Discharge becomes a likely possibility.

STEP 6. HOLD STUDENT MEETINGS WITH TEACHERS

A key initial escalation in the ladder of referral is the three-way conversation among the student, the counselor, and a teacher from a class the student is failing. These meetings typically take place during school. They focus on the work the student is missing and establish specific steps to help the student succeed.

In any meeting, counselors use several key techniques. First, no matter what level of frustration an issue brings, they seek to maintain the strengths-based approach that characterizes all relationship building at WBCHS. This means starting the meeting by pointing out a student's successes or positive aspects of his progress. Second, they do not shy away from the fact that the meeting is to address at least one specific concern. It is the counselor's job to clearly lay that issue out for a student and not take student behavior or reactions personally. Dealing with negative student emotions is part of the work, and counselors know that this behavior probably has its own narrative, independent of the counselor-student relationship.

Finally, counselors keep in mind the big picture of an intervention. Change is complex. Effective interventions demand significant time and extend well beyond a single meeting. When change does not appear to be occurring, this big picture includes the need to consider other options beyond the school. The issues affecting transfer students are wide-ranging, complex, and often deeply entrenched, and counselors cannot take the outcomes of a specific student as a statement about her personal abilities.

STEP 7. JAR STUDENTS INTO ACTION WITH FAMILY MEETINGS AND HOME VISITS

If a student does not improve over the two weeks after meeting with a teacher, the counselor escalates the intervention and schedules a meeting with a parent or guardian as well as the student.

Given the demands of the typical workweek, scheduling family meetings requires flexibility, and all parties must be comfortable rescheduling when necessary. WBCHS somewhat alleviates the difficulty of scheduling by clearly stating expectations to parents during intake.

The preparation of all participating parties is important when holding family meetings. WBCHS counselors typically let angry parents vent their frustrations over the phone before the meeting. By listening to and validating parents' views, the counselors strengthen their relationships with the school. Similarly, any teachers who will be involved in the meeting prepare to discuss the student in a non-judgmental manner.

To begin a family meeting, typically a counselor states the immediate causes for the gathering and reminds all parties of their ultimate goals. After this overview, all parties get an opportunity to contribute their views and experience and ask questions about the situation. During this exchange, counselors explicitly explain to parents that they have responsibilities. However, counselors do not give parenting advice; instead, they lead with questions, allowing parents to come to their own conclusions. Once agreement has been reached on what the situation is, the meeting shifts toward identifying solutions and setting goals for improved behavior over the next two weeks.

If the student still shows no signs of improvement or if the parents are unresponsive, a counselor and a colleague visit the student's home. Home visits often shake an unresponsive parent into action. The counselor shows up at the student's home, brings literature and information from the school, and holds an impromptu meeting with a responsible member of the family, focusing on pushing the student to succeed. Given the nature of this intervention, school officials approach home visits with the utmost care.

STEP 8. FOLLOW UP

Invariably, the success of each intervention is determined after the meeting, by the level of follow up and accountability. Talk is cheap—is the student doing what he contracted to do?

At WBCHS, there is an expectation that all student meetings include regular check-ins and follow up. As dictated by the ladder of referral, this typically means formally revisiting the issues every two weeks to examine progress. In the case of behavioral problems, this schedule is often modified depending on the number of times a behavior occurs. Regardless, in the follow-up meetings, the counselor recaps the issues that caused the intervention and examines the student's academic, attendance, or behavioral record to see how closely it reflects the contract.

In cases of semi- or noncompliance, counselors often remind the student about her aspirations identified during intake. This reminds students of the school's baseline expectation, and, more important, of the reason they came to the school.

APPENDIX 7.1

COUNSELING PROTOCOL FOR ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS

ACADEMIC COUNSELING: ONE-ON-ONE CONFERENCING PROTOCOL

PRE-MEETING

- 1. Review student's counseling history.** Determine the major issues impacting the student and review any previous goals created with the student.
- 2. Begin with tangible document.** Print a copy of the student's biweekly progress report, attendance report, or other tangible document that can be used to track student progress. Mark the document using different colored highlighters for increases, decreases, and failures.

DURING ONE-ON-ONE MEETING

- 3. Start with the student.** Every conversation should be grounded in the student's perspective. Ask the student to explain how she sees the report and what it reflects.
- 4. Look at the highlighted progress report together.** Have the student analyze the changes he sees and put the green, yellow, and red markings into his own words.
- 5. Have the student assess her successes and failures.** Ask open-ended questions (such as, "What's going on in math?") and use the document as a non-judgmental check if the student starts to stray from reality. Avoid dwelling on the negative without asking the student the more important reason of why that negative may be occurring.
- 6. Move past the data.** Push the conversation from pass/fail discussions into more concrete discussions dealing with what the student is learning, doing, and being motivated by.
- 7. Push back at inconsistencies and seize openings.** Examine the differences between what the student says and his data. When opportunities come up during this process, go further into student motivation. Often this will take you far afield from the data, but will bring you closer to the issues that really matter to the student.
- 8. Set attainable goals for improvement.** Create concrete goals for improvement out of the observations from the counseling session. Whenever possible, problem solve with the student, but don't offer solutions until the student does. No matter how far behind the student is, never set more than two goals for improvement.
- 9. Write it up.** Come up with a summary of the conversation with the student. Use this summary to create an accountability plan.

POST-MEETING

- 10. Log the results.** After the meeting is complete, log a summary of the discussion to consult with prior to the next meeting.
- 11. Consider outreach to parent.** Depending on the issues discussed, consider triangulating with the parent and/or sending the highlighted copy of the benchmark to them.

APPENDIX 7.2

QUESTIONS FOR ACADEMIC COUNSELING AND GOAL SETTING

ACADEMIC COUNSELING: EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR CONFERENCING

SUCCESS STORIES

1. What are two classes in your current schedule that are working for you?
2. How do you know you are doing well in those classes?
3. What do you do that makes those classes different?
 - » Differences in class?
 - » Differences in assignments?
 - » Differences with attendance?
 - » Differences at home?
 - » Differences with teacher?

ROOMS FOR IMPROVEMENT

4. What are two classes you feel like you need to improve in?
5. How do you know you need to improve in those classes?
6. What do you do that makes those classes different?
 - » Differences in class?
 - » Differences in assignments?
 - » Differences with attendance?
 - » Differences at home?
 - » Differences with teacher?

GOAL SETTING

7. Looking over your Success Stories and your Rooms for Improvement, choose two or three goals that you want to achieve in the upcoming benchmark.
8. Choose one of the goals and list everything that could stand in your way of achieving it.
9. Using the same goal as above, list three steps you will need to take to achieve it.
 - » Step 1
 - » Step 2
 - » Step 3
10. Now, next to each step, think of a reasonable date in the future when you will complete the step.

APPENDIX 7.3 LADDER OF REFERRAL

ESCALATING COUNSELING INTERVENTIONS, DEPENDING ON STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

	STUDENT HAS SHOWN GOOD BEHAVIOR - AND - IS PASSING ALL OR ALMOST ALL CLASSES	STUDENT ENGAGES IN BAD BEHAVIOR - OR - IS FAILING 2-3 CLASSES	STUDENT ENGAGES IN VIOLENCE OR DRUG USE - OR - IS FAILING 4+ CLASSES
If Goals from Prior Benchmark Have Been Met	Set goals for improvement with counselor	Set goals for improvement with counselor	Meet with school director and sign contract for improvement
If Goals Are Not Met Within 2 Weeks	Review goals with counselor and discuss why they have not been met	Meet with counselor and teacher and set goals for improvement	Meet with school director to review contract
If Pattern Persists and Student Shows No Improvement	Review goals with counselor and discuss why they have not been met	Parents are invited to school for meeting and set goals for improvement	Begin process to discharge student
If Pattern Persists and Student Shows No Improvement	Review goals with counselor and discuss why they have not been met	Meet with school director and sign contract for improvement	
If Pattern Persists and Student Shows No Improvement	Review goals with counselor and discuss why they have not been met	Begin exploring options for discharging student	

Chapter VIII.

ATTENDANCE OUTREACH: CONNECTING TO STUDENT LIVES

Attendance outreach affords the opportunity to achieve three important goals: connecting with students' lives outside the building; reinforcing school culture and academic expectations; and continuing to develop the personal relationships with students that are central to success at transfer schools.

KEY STEPS

At WBCHS, attendance outreach begins the first day of the school year. Each morning, absent students are identified and staff begins immediate follow up to locate them. The work is led by advocate counselors, each assigned a caseload of approximately 30 students,

who, in addition to phoning students directly, reach out to family members, friends, and job sites in an effort to pull absent members of their community back into the building. Advocate Counselors are supported through funding from the Department of Education's Learning to Work initiative.

STEP 1. STAFF THE DOORS DAILY

Attendance outreach begins as students enter the building. Advocate counselors stand by the front entrance with clipboards where they note the arrival of each student on their caseload, enthusiastically greeting students as they arrive. In addition to creating a welcoming atmosphere, the regularity of this

GOALS

Connect to students' lives outside the building. By reaching out to students while they are outside the building, attendance outreach provides WBCHS staff with an opportunity to connect and authentically interact with crucial aspects of students' lives that might otherwise escape notice. This interaction can be particularly important when serving the older population of a transfer school, where students tend to have more well-developed, complicated lives outside of school. Often attendance outreach is the first place the school encounters the realities—such as family dynamics, financial demands, and social pulls—that shape a student's day-to-day experience.

Reinforce school culture and academic expectations. Transmitting expectations and maintaining the consistency of the school's culture is one of the most important focuses of the WBCHS community. The staff's quick, targeted response to student absences sends an unmistakable message to students: You are noticed and will be held accountable for your actions. By connecting student behaviors to their effects on learning in the classroom, attendance outreach allows the school to express and reiterate its high academic expectations for every student.

Continue developing relationships. The responsive, strengths-based, targeted, and caring approach that characterizes WBCHS attendance outreach provides another important venue for developing the supportive, strengths-based relationships at the core of the school's reengagement strategy.

interaction ensures that students, many of whom once thought of themselves as anonymous and invisible at their previous schools, know that they are going to be noticed and held accountable if absent.

STEP 2. TAKE ATTENDANCE IN EVERY CLASS

While taking attendance daily is required in all NYC schools, WBCHS takes attendance in every class, as well. Attendance is entered in an online student information system (PowerSchool) that immediately makes this data available to advocate counselors. In this way, counselors can regularly look for patterns in student cutting.

STEP 3. RESPOND IMMEDIATELY

At their previous high schools, transfer school students often felt as though they could slip through the cracks and simply disappear. In this environment, a single unnoticed late day can bleed into a pattern of lateness or even whole cut-days, both with serious academic consequences. WBCHS is quick to establish a new expectation. When students are identified as late or absent through the monitoring of the front door or through in-class attendance, they are called as soon as possible. Attendance outreach phone calls are most effective before 9:30am, as counselors want to convey urgency and a sense that the school day is continuing without the students. This sense of urgency and responsiveness is continued as attendance interventions escalate, with letters home, home visits, and family meetings.

STEP 4. CALL THE PARENT

Effective attendance intervention involves both locating a student and triangulating with family members to ensure support. By keeping parents informed and working with them, advocate counselors prevent students from playing the two sets of authority figures off each other. Work with parents is a primary responsibility of the advocate counselor, and continues whether or not the student is making it into the building.

For instance, during an attendance outreach phone call at WBCHS, even if contact is made with a student and the student says that she is on her way into the building, advocate counselors will always reach out

to the student's parents. This triangulation serves multiple purposes. First, it keeps parents informed about truancy issues of which they might otherwise be unaware, allowing them to bring the issues up on their own. This creates a unified team working on behalf of the student. By always calling the parent without exception, the school avoids any opportunity for the student to ask to be "given a break" this one time: The expectation is consistent, clear, and unwavering. Second, by giving parents necessary information on their child's whereabouts, the triangulation builds trust between parents and the school. This relationship can be leveraged to draw the parent into other activities over time. Third, an attendance outreach phone call provides the school with an opportunity to reiterate the common expectations of the school. By connecting attendance with academics through a discussion of the school's grading policy, advocate counselors can explain how attendance affects a student's academic progress.

It is important to note that at WBCHS, outreach to parents does not consist solely of communicating negatives. Counselors make sure to alert parents to positive changes in their child's attendance profile as well. Phoning with good news is a quick way to strengthen a shaky or mistrustful relationship with almost any parent.

STEP 5. BUILD MOMENTUM BY STAYING PERSISTENT AND POSITIVE

Outreach to both parents and students requires persistence and a positive attitude. Often, initial efforts will yield frustrating results, with repeated phone calls going unanswered and little visible change in student behavior despite vocal assurances to the contrary. Students may be screening calls. Phone bills may be unpaid. Parents may be unavailable, unresponsive, overwhelmed, or unwilling to continue supporting their child.

In this atmosphere, persistence is vital. It is impossible to determine why a phone call goes unanswered, or at what point an often-delivered message will sink in. In those cases where a connection is being missed, continuing in the face of adversity sends a strong caring message to the student. In those cases where a connection is being dodged, the same persistence indicates accountability, reinforcing the school culture that students signed up for at intake.

When a connection is made, counselors at WBCHS always lead with the good things the student has done, expressing concern at the student's absence without assuming the student was cutting. Similarly, they invite the parent's suggestions for how to address the problem without suggesting that they are to blame, a careful balancing act that shares responsibility between parent and school. This non-judgmental, strengths-based approach is crucial to leading students back to the building. Energy and enthusiasm are infectious, and by reminding a student of their previous successes, an advocate counselor can motivate them to come back to continue.

STEP 6. GO TO THE HOME

Counselors are often averse to home visits, because they take far more time and are potentially more uncomfortable than a phone call. Nonetheless, they are necessary and effective. Face-to-face contact at home represents one of the deepest ways a transfer school can connect with its students' lives outside the building. As such, it is important for the school's advocate counselors to approach these visits with the utmost care.

At WBCHS, advocate counselors conduct home visits with a colleague when there has been no contact with a student for two straight days. Counselors bring a standard form letter—often personalized with a brief handwritten note—urging the student to get back in contact, which they can slip underneath the door in case no one is home. When the door is answered, counselors greet and make introductions, always explaining the purpose of their visit and apologizing for the lack of notice. Since home visits typically occur after attempts to contact family members by phone have failed, they of necessity occur with little or no formal arrangement beforehand so that the trip is generally a surprise for the family. Conscious that their presence may be unexpected, and often viewed as an intrusion, counselors never enter an apartment unless they have been invited in.

Unlike longer counseling sessions, the purpose of a home visit is to get the student back to school as quickly as possible if they are able to come. As such, home visits interactions are quick and pointed, checking in on the student and then immediately offering to drive them back to school so they can

continue with their studies. Longer, more in-depth conversations exploring the reasons behind the student's absence occur only once the student is back in the building and reconnected with his studies.

STEP 7. LOCK IN SUCCESS WITH RECOGNITION

Praise, encouragement, and visible reminders are vital final steps of WBCHS's attendance interventions. Once a student has shown progress, counselors are quick to reinforce the change by praising the student's new behavior. As with attendance outreach phone calls, counselors at WBCHS make sure to triangulate with parents, sharing the student's successes in the same manner they previously shared their difficulties. The school also promotes student successes around the building, creating a culture of positive recognition through bulletin boards that highlight students with excellent attendance, and through events such as monthly community gathering meetings, parent and staff community meetings each cycle, and honor roll events each cycle. Finally, WBCHS leverages leadership roles and internships, offering them as rewards to students in the midst of positive change.

STEP 8. INITIATE DISCHARGE PROCESS

In cases where the attendance intervention process appears stalled, it is important to initiate the process of discharging a student from the school. This process, while in part a practical necessity if a student must be taken off the school's register, can often be a tactical move that shows the family that the school is serious. It thus serves as a wake-up call to both parents and students and can jump-start an attendance intervention.

In particular, the discharge process requires a home visit from an "officer" of the school. This type of dramatic outreach often makes the idea of community tangible in a way that letters home, assemblies, and phone calls simply cannot. Faced with this level of persistence and commitment from the school, some parents who had been resistant turn around and begin taking phone calls, agreeing to meetings within the school, and more fully supporting their child's attendance.

A Graduated Approach to Attendance Outreach

ACTION STEP	PURPOSE	WHEN	WHO	OUTCOME
Staff the doors of the school to greet students and monitor attendance	Welcome students and convey that they are noticed/known	Every morning	Advocate Counselors	Students feel welcomed to school with personal contact
Take attendance in every class	Have formal record of student attendance	Every class	Teachers	Counselors are aware of cutting patterns
Call missing students	Convey urgency and get student to school	Within first half-hour of school day	Advocate Counselors	Students feel noticed even when they are not in building
Call parents/ caregivers of missing students	Alert parents to truancy; build relationship with parents; reiterate school expectations	In first half-hour of school day, continuing until adult is reached	Advocate Counselors	Students see school and parents are in consistent communication
Recognize and reward positive behavior	Create a culture of positive recognition	Ongoing	Advocate Counselors	Parents and students receive positive feedback; school builds positive culture
Home visits	Reach parents who are unresponsive	After multiple prior efforts fail	Advocate Counselors and Colleagues (in pairs)	Family sees that school is persistent in its concern
Initiate discharge	Handle cases in which truancy persists despite repeated efforts	After more than one trimester if other efforts fail	Director	Ideally, student finds better setting for growth; message is sent to school community about limits

Chapter IX.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT: TRIANGULATING FOR SUPPORT

Students are more likely to succeed in school if their parents or guardians are connected, supported, and supportive. This can be especially challenging to achieve in transfer schools. Parents may be reluctant to become involved, given the advanced age of their children and the problems many of them have had in previous schools. Engaging a student's family helps WBCHS achieve three goals: building a cohesive support structure for students' lives; strengthening their connection to the school community; and reinforcing the school's culture.

Family engagement begins before the school year, when WBCHS invites parents to a comprehensive Parent Orientation. The work continues throughout the year, led by administrators and counselors who draw parents into the building for positive outreach and for

academic and discipline interventions. WBCHS takes five key steps to engage families constructively in their children's schooling.

STEP 1. HOLD A PARENT/STUDENT INTERVIEW AS PART OF THE INTAKE PROCESS

During the intake process, WBCHS requires a parent or guardian to come to an interview, with the student present. This meeting is a companion to the prior interview with the student but framed to help parents best support their child's progress in the school.

Mirroring the student interview, the parent/student interview is a conversation explicitly detailing the school's expectations and requirements. The advocate counselor gives a detailed explanation of the behavior,

GOALS FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Build a cohesive support structure for students' lives. Shepherding a student through high school requires more support than a school alone can provide. Successful students receive guidance and support from a variety of interested adults with relationships touching on all aspects of the student's life. Typically, family is a cornerstone in this support effort. Accordingly, WBCHS places a high priority on integrating supportive family members into a student's academic experience.

Strengthen students' connection to the school community. The stronger the ties between a student's life inside and outside the school building, the more connected she or he will feel to the school community. Family engagement promotes communication, the sharing of expectations, and joint support for accountability, all of which knit the student more closely to the school.

Reinforce school culture. By echoing the values and goals of the school community to family members, WBCHS expands the presence of the school's culture in student lives. This increases the likelihood the school's cultural expectations will be received. It also creates an adult partner in their transmission and enforcement.

academics, and attendance required of attending students, then explains the school's corresponding expectations for the families supporting these students. The counselor places emphasis on actions the school may take that can feel invasive or overreaching, such as phone calls about attendance or a mandatory parent meeting for serious issues.

By presenting these expectations up front, and describing them with both the student and the parent present, the school lessens the chance of mixed messages later on. Throughout the school year, counselors and the director can return regularly to the commitments made at the intake interview. *(For an example of those expectations, see Appendix 9.1, WBCHS Student and Parent Commitment Letter.)*

STEP 2. MAKE THE PARENT ASSOCIATION A PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE PLANNED WELL IN ADVANCE

WBCHS holds Parent Association meetings monthly, with the calendar set before intake and circulated to all parents at intake and afterward. *(For an example, see Appendix 9.2, WBCHS School Calendar Letter.)* In addition, in the weeks before a PA meeting, counselors and the office manager call every parent with a reminder.

The PA meeting highlights learning. The school repeatedly emphasizes, both to students and parents, that students who have fallen behind have little time to focus on anything other than academics and learning. As a result, the school has no prom or sports teams but instead puts its resources and effort into academics. This translates into PA meetings that focus on academic topics: clarifying the grading policy; explaining what students are learning in classes; addressing topics useful for parents (e.g., child rearing, time management, personal budgeting). This makes the PA meeting a practical experience for parents, helping them understand and support their children's learning.

STEP 3. TALK TO MOST PARENTS AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK

To create authentic relationships with students' families, WBCHS stays in regular contact with parents during the school year. This contact is initiated

regardless of a student's behavioral or academic progress, and it often intentionally emphasizes the positive over the negative. Positive reports help parents feel connected to the school.

Counselors contact most parents once a week but at minimum once every two weeks. Counselors with a caseload of about thirty students are typically in daily contact with about five parents. They contact another five every two to three days, and another 10 once per week. Thus, they reach out to two-thirds of their caseload every week.

This contact largely consists of progress updates, with counselors reviewing progress in student grades and attendance and offering personal highlights from around the building. Leaving a message is not considered meaningful contact; if parents are unresponsive, counselors continue calling and sending letters until they make a connection. If that fails, they visit the home to talk to the parent in person.

STEP 4. LISTEN TO PARENTS, THEN REMIND THEM OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

Before beginning any outreach, the advocate counselor assesses the relationship of the parent and student, gauging the willingness and effectiveness of any support that might result. This can initially be part of the intake process, when the counselor interviews the parent and student together. Since many parents feel at their wit's end by the time a student reaches a transfer school, it is easy for them to blame the school for problems—and feel they have handed over responsibility to WBCHS. To change this dynamic, counselors maintain the respectful strengths-based approach when discussing student issues with a family member. This is a cornerstone to their practice. It means highlighting the student's strengths, as well as shifting responsibility to help the student back to the parent—highlighting their strengths. For instance, the counselor might ask how “we” will solve a problem when the parent has asked what “you” will do about it. Or the counselor might ask the parent for insight into their child's behavior to engage them in the process of finding solutions together.

This strengths-based approach includes a lot of listening. Especially for students with histories of

negative interventions, it can be important to let parents vent. While this might mean devoting as much as 40 minutes to thoughtful listening for the first few conversations with the parent of a new or struggling student, it is crucial to establishing a positive working relationship.

When discussing student issues, counselors often leverage their relationships with parents to remind them of the expectations outlined at intake. This can include directly telling family members they have responsibilities for a student's education or asking questions that guide the family member to that conclusion. Often, it is helpful to ask parents to talk about the ideas they have discussed with their child.

STEP 5. INVITE PARENTS TO HONOR ROLL BREAKFASTS

WBCHS incorporates parents into the entire range of events that make up the school community. This includes obvious parental events like parent-teacher conferences, Parent Association meetings, and graduation. But WBCHS adds something that few of the parents in the school community are accustomed to: celebrations of academic success. The presence of parents at such celebrations further transforms the relationship between family and school from one of skepticism, apathy, or antagonism to one of collaboration and shared hope.

WBCHS has identified and addressed several obstacles to parental participation in these events, and 30 or more parents now attend each one.

- > Parents need a positive reason to come to the school. Events center on Honor Roll celebrations, and the school invites the parents of honored students. To ensure that students get honors early, the school focuses these not just on strong or improved grades and but also on the improvements in attendance that necessarily come first.
- > Generally, parents have harried lives. Instead of holding events in the afternoon, after the school days, such celebrations take place at breakfast. This dramatically increases attendance.
- > Clear, personal reminders shortly before an event can do wonders. WBCHS sends letters to parents when their children will be honored at an Honor Roll breakfast.

APPENDIX 9.1 WBCHS STUDENT AND PARENT COMMITMENT LETTER



Liliana Polo
Principal

WEST BROOKLYN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

1053 41st Street
Brooklyn, NY 11219
TEL 718.686.1444 FAX 718.686.1189



Stephen Marcus
Director

STUDENT AND PARENT COMMITMENT LETTER

____/____/____ (date)

Dear _____,

This is your official Student and Parent Commitment Letter. By signing this letter, you and your parent(s) are agreeing to follow the Expectations and Norms of West Brooklyn Community High School. We expect you to keep this commitment while you are a student here. In addition to highlighting basic rules and expectations, this letter explains our commitment to you!

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU!

West Brooklyn is a community created and maintained by staff, students, and families. We are committed to doing everything we can to help you reach your goals. Our goal is to support you in earning credits, passing all of your required exams, and to prepare you for postsecondary opportunities.

RULES ARE FOLLOWED. SAFETY IS A PRIORITY.

Students and staff work to make sure that our school is a safe and respectful learning environment. Behaviors that put safety at risk will not be tolerated. Fighting and Possession of Drugs are non-negotiables in our community. All school rules, including our Electronics and Hat policies, should be followed at all times.

ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMICS

Attendance is a priority! School is from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Being on time and staying here until dismissal is part of our expectation. If you are absent or leave early, then expect a call home. When you are doing well, then expect a call home.

You will receive benchmark report cards with grades approximately every two weeks.

COLLEGE & POST-HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING

You will apply to college as part of your post-graduate plan. Even if you are not sure what you want to do, we want to make sure you have every option available to you once you graduate. We also strongly encourage students to work in one of our Paid Job Internships after school.

MEETINGS, MEETINGS, AND MORE MEETINGS!

- > Every two weeks you will meet with your advocate counselor to discuss your benchmark, your attendance, your goals, and to support you in your efforts.
- > Also, you and your teachers can request a STAC meeting where the **s**tudent, **t**eacher, and **a**dvocate **c**ounselor meet to make sure to resolve any situations that may come up.
- > You, or you and your parent will meet with your advocate counselor, and/or a school administrator to address any behavior or performance issues.
- > You will participate in a Student Mediation meeting whenever a student or staff member feels that a meeting is necessary.
- > Parents and students attend our Open School sessions to talk with the teachers about their classes.

student signature

parent signature

advocate counselor signature

- As a student, I agree to follow the Expectations and Norms of West Brooklyn Community High School. (*You will find a complete overview of our Expectations and Norms in the Student Handbook.*)

The parent and advocate counselor agree to support you as you work toward your high school diploma and plan for college and/or other post-high school work.

WELCOME TO WEST BROOKLYN!

APPENDIX 9.2 WBCHS SCHOOL CALENDAR LETTER



Liliana Polo
Principal

WEST BROOKLYN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

1053 41st Street
Brooklyn, NY 11219
TEL 718.686.1444 FAX 718.686.1189



Stephen Marcus
Director

August 30, 2010

Dear Parents and Guardians:

We are very excited for the new school year at West Brooklyn Community High School! Enclosed, please find the 2010-2011 School Calendar. You will notice that all of the important dates are listed including when each Benchmark grading period ends, as well as the dates for Parent Association meetings, Open School days (families meet with teachers and staff), and Honor Roll Celebrations.

Some of the highlights this year include:

- > **Tutoring is scheduled after school every Thursday** at 3:05 p.m. during Teacher Office Hours. All teachers are available to help students better understand work in their classes.
- > **College, College, and more College:** Students will participate in an increased level of activities and class work preparing them for college or other post-high school plans.
- > **Ramapo Camp:** Applications will be available for students to attend one of the overnight trips planned for October, November, and May. At Ramapo, students will self reflect and engage in outdoor activities that build community and character.
- > **Youth Leadership Board:** This will be the second year of this important student group. All students are encouraged to become involved to improve the school and develop their leadership skills.
- > **Paid Job Internships through Learning-To-Work (LTW):** Students are eligible to gain work experience and earn a stipend in the LTW program afterschool. Internship examples include working at a law firm, in a college office, or in a hospital.
- > **Photography is being offered as a new Elective class**, along with other popular electives such as Spoken Word, Theater, Drumming, Art, and College & Careers.

Please call your student's Advocate Counselor for any questions or issues regarding this letter or with regard to your student. We look forward to a year of learning and growth for our students, and are grateful for your support and involvement in their education.

Best wishes,

Liliana Polo
Principal

Stephen Marcus
Program Director

Chapter X.

INTERNSHIPS: CHALLENGING AND MOTIVATING THROUGH OPPORTUNITY

Student internships provide an opportunity for WBCHS to achieve four goals: helping students understand postsecondary requirements for their career interests; empowering students and teaching responsibility; authentically engaging student interest; and strengthening students' connection with the school's culture and expectations.

Funding from a collaboration of the New York City Department of Education and the Mayor's Office through Learning to Work enables WBCHS and some other transfer schools to offer stipends to about 90 interns each year. An internship coordinator builds relationships with students looking for internships, advises and guides them during the selection process, and continues to monitor their progress throughout the internship.

GOALS

Help students understand the postsecondary requirements for their career interests. For students who have felt disconnected from school, the real-life connection that internships provide can help them see how their work today leads to their potential tomorrow. Internships can be a highly effective way for students who rarely imagined life beyond high school to see what is possible and what is required in the world of work.

Empower students; teach responsibility. The internship process places students in work situations that require increased levels of leadership and responsibility. Supported in new and challenging situations, students gain self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-assurance. They also get something critical for many of the older students in transfer schools: income. But rewards are balanced against responsibilities. The internship program clearly delineates expectations. Students quickly learn that if they do not live up to their obligations, they may be dropped from the program.

Authentically engage student interest. Most WBCHS students arrive academically disengaged and see no connection between their interests and school. By tailoring internships to their interests and offering real-world experience, WBCHS excites students with meaningful, remunerative work that bridges their experiences in school with their aspirations beyond.

Continue developing relationships. Each internship is a unique opportunity for a specific student. An internships can be a discipline strategy, a leadership opportunity, an academic extension, or, often, all three. By building a relationship with each student, the internship coordinator can identify positions that appeal to his or her particular situation, interests, and needs. This personalized process continues the relationship-building central to student success.

STEP 1. OUTLINE THE PROGRAM; ADVERTISE THE FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY

Conscious of the significant value a remunerative internship can have with its older transfer population, WBCHS announces and explains the program at the first opportunity: at orientation. Often, the internship coordinator will continue advertising the program directly to students through posters or visits to advisory classes early in the year. Throughout the year, the coordinator remains in touch with counselors and teachers to inform them of internship openings and think with them about which students will benefit most from the opportunity. This approach helps ensure that all interested students have an opportunity to apply and increases the program's desirability by creating a cachet for those students selected. In particular, the school highlights the financial opportunity, which addresses a source of stress for many of the school's older students.

STEP 2. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH SITES IN ORDER TO OFFER A RANGE OF INTERSHIPS

An internship program cannot succeed without a variety of placement options. WBCHS offers internship at four basic types of site; each corresponds to a level of student readiness for the workplace.

For students who have the skills to show up at work on time every day, complete projects when requested, and treat colleagues with respect, WBCHS offers placements at local businesses. These professional workplaces, whether automotive shops, restaurants, offices, hospitals, or any of hundreds of other places, give students the opportunity to connect their aspirations to the work involved in reaching them.

However, many students arrive at WBCHS without these professional skills. For a student who is developing those skills, a better fit is often a placement at a local nonprofit agency accustomed to accommodating volunteers. These agencies are more willing to forgive late arrivals or occasional inappropriate behavior, setting the stage for learning experiences for the student.

Still other students are not yet ready for either of these types of placement. The internship coordinator looks closer to home: setting up internships with teachers or counselors during or after school. This may be the equivalent of an extracurricular activity—for example, WBCHS set up a comic book club for students to use art to tell stories. Or it might be similar to a teaching assistantship, asking the student to collect papers, organize rooms, and the like.

A few students—those who have had the most problems in school—will be unprepared for any of these roles, but an internship may be the only way WBCHS staff members feel they can reach them. For these students, WBCHS offers an internship with the internship office itself, where the internship coordinator can keep a watchful and encouraging eye on them.

STEP 3. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS TO FIND PLACEMENTS THAT ENGAGE THEM

The internship process pairs students with opportunities that resonate with their individual needs, goals, and interests. Accordingly, the process begins with the coordinator getting to know the student: asking about goals and interests, listening to the student's hopes and aspirations, evaluating abilities, and learning about social, financial, or family responsibilities.

Once a relationship has formed, the internship coordinator recommends several possible internships based on each student's situation. These recommendations are deliberate suggestions, often balancing the student's desires with the coordinator's opinion of his or her needs. For example, the counselor paired a physically dominating student who had a strong need for supervision with an ex-Marine for Boot Camp Fitness. In a very different example, the coordinator found a placement at a local hospital for a student who was academically disengaged but wanted to become a radiologist; the student soon began to flourish both inside and outside school. As with every relationship at WBCHS, these recommendations allow for ample give and take; students are free to discuss their feelings and reject suggestions.

STEP 4. USE INTERNAL INTERNSHIPS TO GIVE STUDENTS LEADERSHIP ROLES

Given the emphasis at WBCHS on student empowerment, the internship program focuses on placing students in leadership positions. For internships within the school—whether with a teacher, counselor, or the internship coordinator—these experiences are tied to leadership positions whenever possible. The idea is to offer opportunities for students to gain self-confidence and self-esteem, increase their understanding of responsibility, and connect to their community. Internships tied to leadership positions can also further motivate students.

STEP 5. LAY OUT EXPECTATIONS CLEARLY

The flip side to empowerment and motivation is an emphasis on expectations and responsibility. Before formally assigning a student to an internship, the coordinator explains the expectations surrounding their participation in detail. Students learn about the environment they will find on the job, as well as any steps or requirements they must complete before accepting the placement. The counselor and student sign a contract that clearly delineates all this.

STEP 6. CHECK IN CONSISTENTLY WITH BOTH STUDENTS AND COUNSELORS

After students begin their internships, the coordinator continues to guide and advise them as they complete their placements. The internship coordinator also checks in with advocate counselors on the students' progress. By maintaining this ongoing connection, the coordinator can help ensure that students meet their responsibilities and can hold them accountable if they do not.

These check-ins occur both in informal settings, such as chats in the hallway, and in more formal scheduled meetings, emails, and site visits. The coordinator sends brief, daily emails to each counselor with an update on every student who has participated in an internship that day. As with all aspects of the internship process, expectations for check-ins are clearly delineated before the internship. If students fail to live up to the expectations of their internship, usually the coordinator will lead a series of interventions. First, the coordinator and the student meet to revisit and possibly rewrite the contract. The process can culminate in docked pay or removal from a position.

Chapter XI.

DATA: USING NUMBERS TO FOCUS ON PEOPLE

WBCHS uses data on a routine basis to help make decisions and provide focus to discussions. While the school draws upon many invaluable sources of information and guidance—through relationships and shared accountability—the availability of and ability to understand data make it possible to react more quickly and effectively to emerging patterns.

RULES FOR LOOKING AT DATA

FOCUS ON PEOPLE, NOT NUMBERS

With 200 students, WBCHS is small enough that data numbers easily translate into short lists of students. Discussions of data tend to move quickly from the former (what was our attendance rate last week?) to the latter (which students were absent for three or more days?). Staff spend little time on numbers, devoting far more time to identifying individual students and acting from there.

START FROM THE TOP

While WBCHS encourages all staff members to look at and think about the school's data, the principal and director routinely lead the implementation plans for collecting and monitoring data and reviewing them, involving all the staff. This gives a shared understanding throughout the school of which data are most important and how to look at them. It also makes it easier to follow up and decide what to do about the data findings.

USE DATA TO IDENTIFY INDIVIDUALS AND PATTERNS

When the leaders review data, they are partly concerned about the school's overall numbers and a sense of accountability for those numbers. However, two other concerns are much more important. First, they want to identify individual students who need more help from their teachers and counselors. Second, they look for patterns, both among individual students and across the school, that indicate potential problems. The goal is to address problems before they become major.

DATA REVIEWED DAILY

From the beginning, WBCHS collected daily, school-wide attendance, which the city requires all schools to do. In its third year, the school began collecting daily attendance in every class period, keeping track of absences, late arrivals, and class cutting. Analyzed regularly, these data are a sure early indicator of potential problems. (*For more information, see Chapter VIII—Attendance Outreach: Connecting to Student Lives.*)

ABSENCES

The director reviews a list of student absences, noting those students with two or three consecutive absences. Generally, three consecutive absences leads to a conversation between the director and the student's advocate counselor to find out more about the situation and determine how the counselor may be able to get the student back into school.

LATE ARRIVALS

While reviewing the day's absences, the director also reviews the list of students who arrived late. In general, a large number of students have trouble getting to school on time (even though the day starts later than at most schools, at 9:00). While there are no hard and fast rules about how much lateness will be tolerated or how to respond to repeated lateness, the director focuses on identifying patterns. Is lateness getting worse? Are students who used to arrive on time starting to come late? Either situation may call for a conversation with the individual counselors or the full staff.

CUTTING CLASSES

At the same time, the director reviews attendance for each class period. As with late arrivals, cutting is all too commonplace. The director looks primarily for significant increases in cutting or patterns of specific class periods that appear to have high cutting rates. Unlike late arrivals, the response to cutting is easier to control. If a pattern is discerned, individual counselors or the entire counseling staff can focus on that pattern by being more present in the hallways, the front door, and in certain classrooms.

DATA REVIEWED BIWEEKLY

Every two weeks, students receive progress reports in each of their classes. These include grades, a summary of attendance for the last two weeks, and a breakdown of grades into five categories per class. (See *Appendix 6.5 for a sample progress report.*) These data also provide a great deal of valuable information to teachers, counselors, and the school's leaders.

CHANGES IN GRADES

When new progress reports come out, the director compares each student's marks for the current two-week period against the previous one, noting large increases or decreases. This helps to keep the director aware of emerging patterns. It also becomes information for counselors to use in their conversations with students.

STUDENTS FAILING SEVERAL CLASSES

- > **Students failing more than three classes:** Counselors refer any student who is failing four or more classes in a two-week period to the director to discuss the situation.
- > **Students failing three classes:** The director notes any student who is failing three classes in a two-week period as a top priority for the counselor. The director will most likely focus on these students during supervisory meetings with the counselor.
- > **Students failing two classes:** Any student who is failing two classes in a two-week period is a high priority. The counselor will set aside time for a conversation with the student.

PATTERNS IN RESULTS ON BIWEEKLY ASSESSMENTS

Every two weeks, teachers administer assessments they have created on the material covered. (See *Chapter VI for a sample assessment and a discussion of how assessments are used.*) The principal looks at grades on these assessments to determine if any teachers are getting consistently low scores from their students. If so, the principal confers with the teacher to determine possible changes in instructional strategy to address the gap. Most recently, these assessments have been aligned with the Common Core.

Similarly, each teacher looks at performance patterns in these assessments to see if there are specific questions that students got wrong. If this is the case, teachers often re-teach topics or engage in individual conferences on the first day of the next biweekly period.

DATA REVIEWED EVERY SIX WEEKS

ASSESSMENTS OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

In assessments every two weeks, teachers include an assessment of the level of critical thinking students exhibit. This is not an easy task, and teachers who are less familiar with designing assessments for this purpose may not generate meaningful data. In addition,

responding to the findings from these assessments requires more than one or two days. Rather, they tend to generate discussions among teachers over several weeks as they meet in professional development or department meetings. As a result, WBCHS reviews certain data about once every six weeks.

FIRST TIME: DIFFERENCES IN CLASS AVERAGE SCORES

The first time teachers look at the results of biweekly assessments across the school, it is primarily to “tune” their results and gain a more consistent understanding

of what deeper levels of critical thinking look like in student work. To generate discussion, the teachers review a comparison of average scores in their classes across the whole school.

They also review a class’ average scores normalized against individual students’ average scores. For instance, in Example 1, the first row shows scores for students’ skill (on a five-point scale) at asking high-level questions in class and on written assignments averaged for each class. This is a simple average: In Teacher A’s classes, the average is 3.4. In Teacher B’s classes, it is 1.4.

Example 1
Critical Thinking Skill: Asking Questions

	TEACHER A	TEACHER B	TEACHER C	TEACHER D
Average of Scores in Your Class	3.4	1.4	2.5	2.9
Normalized Average of Scores in Your Class	0.4	-0.1	-0.8	0.6

However, the second row of Example 1 provides a more useful comparison. Each student’s score is compared against her average across the school, and then this is averaged for each class. While an average in a class may simply reflect the group of students enrolled in that class, this normalized average takes into account which students have been enrolled. In this comparison, students on average scored 0.8 levels lower in Teacher C’s class, while students in Teacher D’s class on average scored 0.6 levels higher. By examining why the same students scored lower in one class or higher in another, teachers can address questions about their own understanding of what the different levels mean and how they look in practice.

to continue gaining consistency in interpretation and in part to learn from what their colleagues may be doing with individual students. To generate this discussion, they review a list of students whose scores varied dramatically from class to class. This raises the question when this was due to variations in student performance (and, if so, what caused this) or when it was due to variations in teacher perception of critical thinking (and, if so, how this can be addressed).

SECOND TIME: STUDENTS WHOSE SCORES VARIED DRAMATICALLY FROM CLASS TO CLASS

The second time teachers look at the results of biweekly assessments across the school, it is in part

In Example 2, each teacher sees each student’s average score in his class and across all classes in which that student is enrolled. When a student in one class is more than one level higher or lower than her average, a plus or minus sign appears. The plus sign next to Student A’s score in Teacher B’s class indicates the student scored significantly higher in that class than in most classes. The minus sign in Teacher A’s class indicates Student C scored significantly lower in Teacher A’s class than he did in most classes.

Example 2
Critical Thinking Skill: Asking Questions

	AVERAGE	TEACHER A	TEACHER B	TEACHER C
Student A	2.0	2.4	3.2 +	1.8
Student B	3.2	4.0	4.0	2.5
Student C	2.2	1.0 -	1.0 -	2.5

THIRD TIME: STUDENT CHANGE FROM EARLY TO LATE

The third time, there is generally enough data to look at longitudinal change and determine which students' average scores across classes noticeably improved and which did not. This leads to discussion, first, of whether the numeric scores appear to reflect teachers' genuine sense of student progress and, second, why some students progressed and others did not.

DATA REVIEWED AT THE END OF THE TERM

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Students who have attendance of over 85 percent for any term are recognized at a Family Breakfast. Students with attendance under about 60 percent are the subject of discussion about whether they can be reengaged or should be discharged. (This also depends on whether this is the first, second, or third term in which the student has had poor attendance.)

STUDENT GRADES AND PASSING RATES

At the end of every term, WBCHS honors students who have high grades and high passing rates.

Students who fail three or more classes are the subject of discussion. If this is the first time or the second nonconsecutive time this has happened, it is likely the counselor will remind these students about their commitment to themselves and to the school. If this is the second consecutive time but they can still realistically graduate, a conversation with the director is likely to follow. If it is their third time failing three or more classes, or if it is their second time and it is becoming mathematically difficult or impossible for them to graduate, their counselor or the director will likely initiate a meeting to discuss other options.

STATEWIDE TEST SCORES

With statewide tests administered in January and June, the school looks closely at student performance and compares the results to prior years. The analysis focuses not just on the overall passing rate but also on the number of students who scored 75 or better. This is the cutoff at the local community college for students

to place out of remedial courses and is a good indicator of college readiness. Depending on results, the school may program new classes specifically to support students in need of remediation. In general, however, the staff uses the results to look at specific questions on the exam and push the conversation among teachers about what students need to learn and do to score above 75.

CORRELATION OF TEST SCORES TO CLASS PERFORMANCE

While WBCHS does not to “teach to the test,” the principal finds it valuable to compare grades on the statewide tests against student grades in the classes they took leading up to the test. Dramatic mismatches—students who scored well in class but badly on the test, or those who scored well on the test but badly in class—are the cause for discussions with teachers about what may have caused the disjuncture.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Every term, students fill out an evaluation with their thoughts and feedback on their courses. The principal analyzes these as a way of providing additional feedback to teachers.

Back on Track Through College tools and other resources are available from Jobs for the Future online at **www.backontrackdesigns.org**



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