

Know Your Schools ~  
for NY Kids



## **Rallying Your Leadership Team: Putting Evidence-based Decision Making into Action**

**National Association of Secondary School Principals  
Annual Conference**

**Tampa, FL**

March 10, 2012

Kristen Wilcox, PhD, Assistant Professor, School of Education  
Nancy Andress, Educational Consultant



## Agenda

- Overview of the NYKids project
- Research Findings
- Tools to help schools use the findings and resources
- Q & A





## Mission

- Inform
  - web displays of achievement data
- Inspire
  - reports, cases of high performers, best practice framework
- Improve
  - on-line tools and institutes

***“If you do what you always did, you’ll get what you always got.”***

– HS Administrator (NYKids HS Study)

<http://www.albany.edu/nykids/>

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## NY Kids

Welcome to a resource to support improvement in New York State schools.

Using the links below and to the right, you can:

- Reports about what makes great schools work well
- Details about best practices and how to support them
- Case studies of the higher-performing practices are featured
- Tools (e.g., surveys) to help you implement practices

You can also search using your own words in one of our "collections":

- English Language Learners
- Parent/Community Involvement
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Role of the Board of Education
- Special Education Students

Best Practices for High-Ranking High School

**Inform – data re: every school in state**

- Performance trend charts
- Cluster charts
- Opportunity gap charts
- Achievement by subgroup charts

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University at Albany  
1400 Washington Avenue  
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**Inspire & Improve – learn from the higher performers**

# Inspire

## Seeking to answer: What have others done? And how?

- Individual School Cases
- Cross-Case Reports
- Best Practice Frameworks w/ evidence
- Books



**Best Practices Case Study**  
FROM HIGH-PERFORMING HIGH SCHOOLS

**Best Practices from High-Performing Middle Schools**  
How Successful Schools Remove Obstacles to Learning Pathways  
Kristen C. Wilcox and Janet I. Angelis  
Foreword by Gerald N. Tirozzi

**How Successful Schools Help Students Stay in School and Thrive**  
Kristen C. Wilcox and Janet I. Angelis

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Organizing Initiatives</b><br>CURRICULUM & ACADEMIC GOALS | <b>MONITORING: COMPILATION, ANALYSIS, &amp; USE OF DATA</b> |
| <b>STAFF SELECTION LEADERSHIP, &amp; CAPACITY BUILDING</b>   | <b>RECOGNITION, INTERVENTION, &amp; ADJUSTMENTS</b>         |
| <b>INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, &amp; ARRANGEMENTS</b> |   |

Assessment data are shared frequently among students, teachers, and administrators to inform higher performance.

Diagnostic, benchmark, and other assessments are frequently administered and analyzed for levels of mastery.

Teams of teachers and specialists first adjust instruction to meet student needs before making referrals.

**Best Practices Case Study**  
Susan Sherwood, June 2009

Know Your Schools ~ for NY Kids

**Oliver W. Winch Middle School**  
South Glens Falls Central School District

**School Context**

The village of South Glens Falls, in Saratoga Springs, known for its spas and horse farms as the Saratoga Battlefield and Fort Ticonderoga, can find Cooper's Cave, popularized by the movie *War of the Worlds*.

Economically, South Glens Falls resides in a lower income neighborhood than their neighbors. In 2007, for example, the median income was \$40,120, while in Saratoga Springs, the median was \$53,514<sup>1</sup>. This disparity is reflected in reduced-price lunch rates in each: In South Glens Falls Central School District, 45% of students qualify for reduced-price lunch while only 9% of the students in the Saratoga Central School District qualify.

**What makes high schools work**

A report on best practices in New York State high schools.

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State University of New York

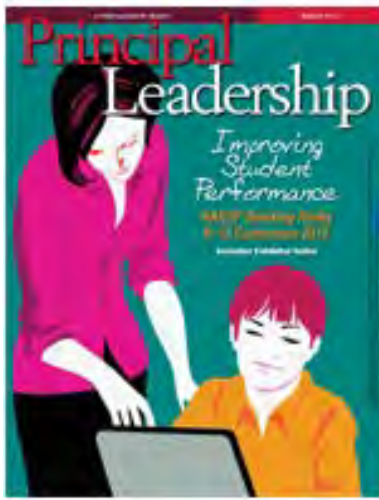


## 5 studies completed

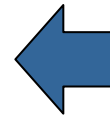


- ❖ Elementary schools (2005)
- ❖ Middle schools (2007)
- ❖ High schools (2008)
- ❖ Middle school science (2009)
- ❖ Critical needs (2011) (best practices for ethnically and linguistically diverse and special needs students - elementary)





## Most Recent Articles and Book Chapters



“Collect, Analyze, Act”

(March, 2012) *Principal Leadership*

- “Diversity as Strength: How Higher Performing Schools Embrace Diversity and Thrive,” (in press) in *Breaking the Mold of Education for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*, edited by Andrea Honigsfeld and Audrey Cohan. R&L Education
- “Poverty, Performance and Frog Ponds,” (2011). *Kappan*
- “From ‘Muddle School’ to Middle School: Building Capacity to Collaborate,” (2011). *Middle School Journal*
- “High School Best Practices: Results from Cross-Case Comparisons,” (2011). *The High School Journal*



## Methods: Our Samples

- ❖ 7-10 consistently higher-performing schools; 3-6 similar but consistently average-performing schools, based on 3 years of NYS Assessment data; control for SES, ELL
- ❖ Urban, rural, suburban
- ❖ Favor poverty (F/RL)
- ❖ Open admissions
- ❖ PPE near state average
- ❖ In consultation with Advisory Board





## Methods: Data Collection

- **Make 2-day site visits**
- **Interview teachers and administrators**
- **Collect documents**
- **Observe classrooms (MS science)**
- **Analyze, write a case study for each site then do cross-case analyses to identify best practices**





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Welcome to a resource to support school improvement in New York State.

Using the links below and to the left, you can access:

- Reports about what makes elementary, middle, and high schools work well
- Details about **best practices** at each level, with evidence to support them
- Case studies of the higher-performing schools whose practices are featured
- Tools (e.g., surveys) to help you look at your own school's practices

### 2011 Report

**What Works for Critical Needs Students at the Elementary Level**



*Best Practices from High-Performing High Schools*, by Kristen C. Wilcox and Janet I. Angelis

*Best Practices from High-Performing Middle Schools*, by Kristen C. Wilcox and Janet I. Angelis

### Know Your Schools~for NY Kids

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518-442-5171



## What makes middle schools work }

### **What Makes Middle Schools Work: Findings from a Best Practices Study in New York State**

Our study found that 5 key elements mark the difference between the higher-performing and average-performing middle schools studied:

- Trusting and respectful relationships
- Attendance to students' social & emotional well-being
- Teamwork
- Evidence-based decision making
- Shared mission and goals

To download electronic copies, please click the following:

[4-Page Summary \(pdf\)](#)

[Best Practice Study \(pdf\)](#)

[Order print copies of these reports.](#)



# What makes high schools work }

## What Makes High Schools Work: Findings from a Best Practices Study in New York State

Our study found that 5 key elements mark the difference between the higher-performing and average-performing high schools studied:

- Rigorous curriculum and expectations
- Innovative instructional programs and practices
- Transparent communication
- Evidence-based decision making
- Strategic targeting of resources

To download electronic copies, please click the following:

[4-Page Summary \(pdf\)](#)

[Best Practice Study \(pdf\)](#)

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# Overall Findings



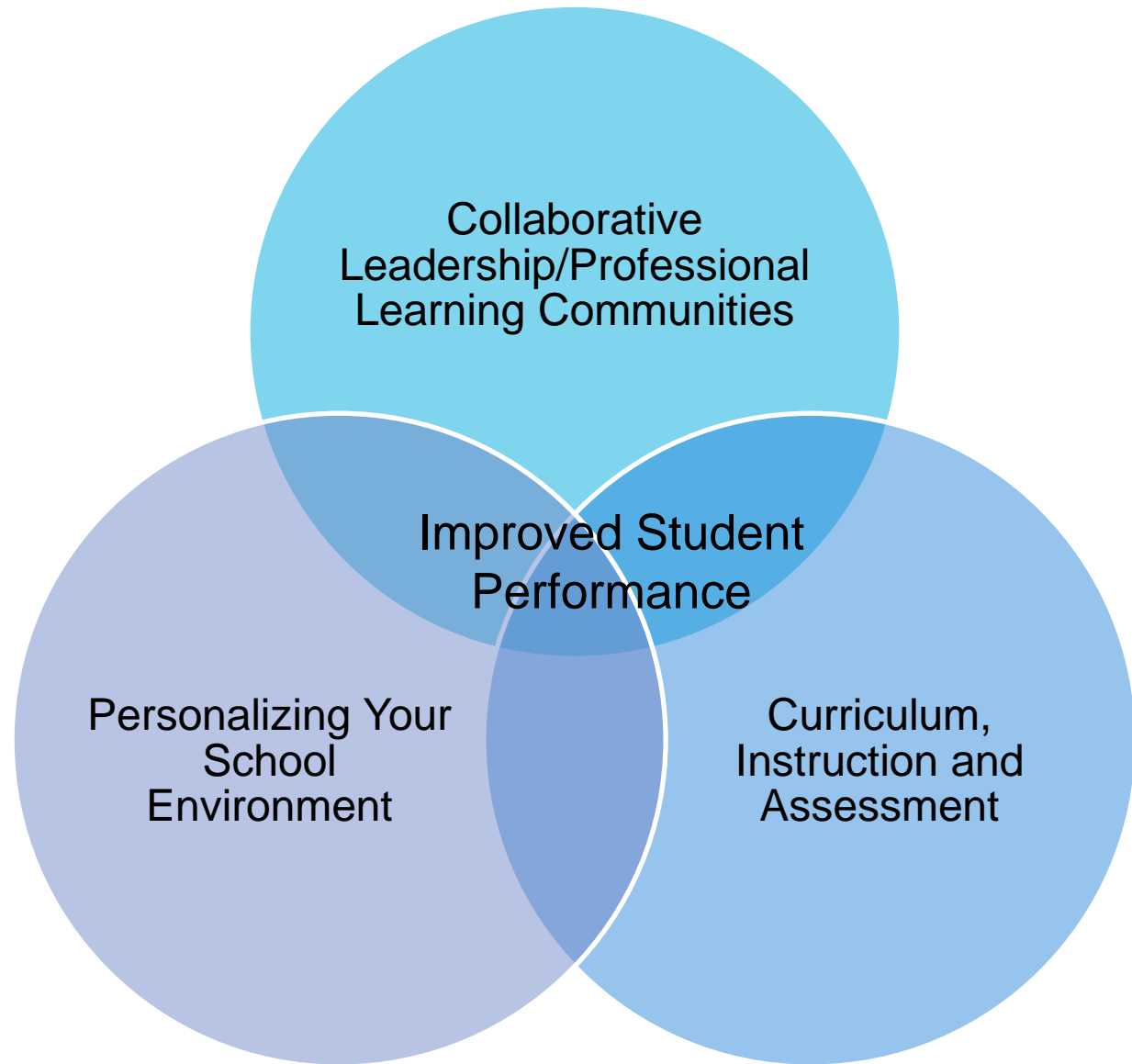
Across all levels – elementary, middle, high – higher-performing students come from schools with the capacity for continuous improvement. They do it through...



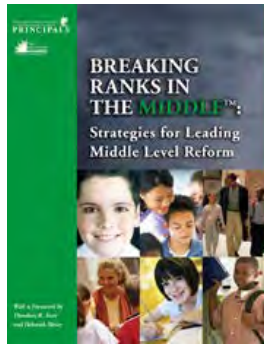
- **Distributed leadership**
- **Collaborative culture and practices**
- **Evidence-based decision making**
- **Shared vision and goal setting**



# Breaking Ranks and NYKids – A Crosswalk



# • Breaking Ranks and NYKids



## NYKids – MS BPs

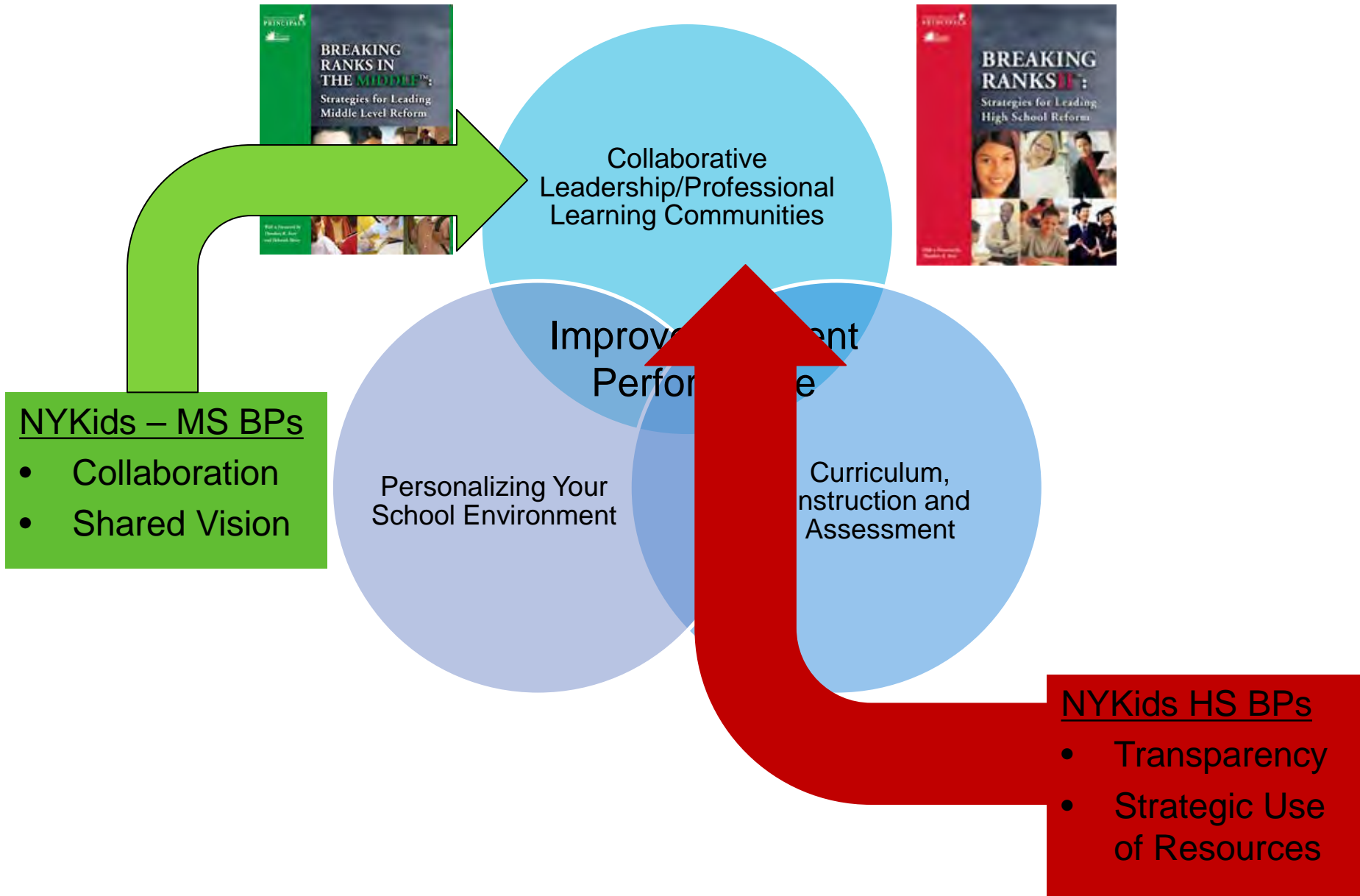
- Relationships
- Emotional Well-Being
- Collaboration
- Evidence-Based Decision Making
- Shared Vision

## NYKids HS BPs

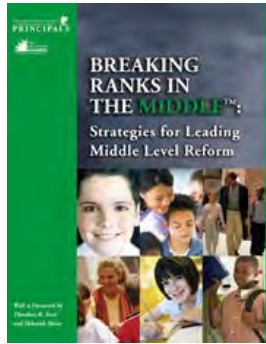
- Rigor
- Innovation
- Transparency
- Evidence-Based Decision Making
- Strategic Use of Resources



# Breaking Ranks and NYKids



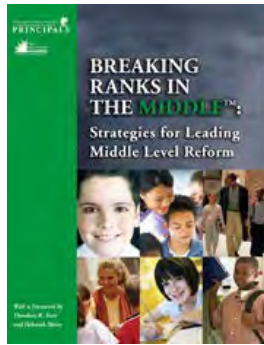
# • Breaking Ranks and NYKids



NYKids HS BPs

- Rigor

# • Breaking Ranks and NYKids



Collaborative  
Leadership/Professional  
Learning Communities

Improved Student  
Performance

Personalizing Your  
School Environment

Curriculum,  
Instruction and  
Assessment

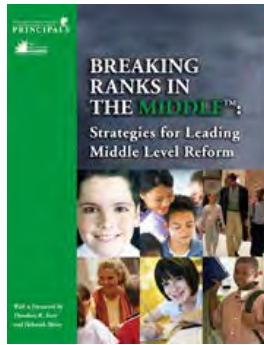
## NYKids – MS BPs

- Relationships
- Emotional Well-Being

## NYKids HS BPs

- Innovation

# • Breaking Ranks and NYKids



Collaborative Leadership/Professional Learning Communities

Improved Student Performance

Personalized Learning  
School Improvement

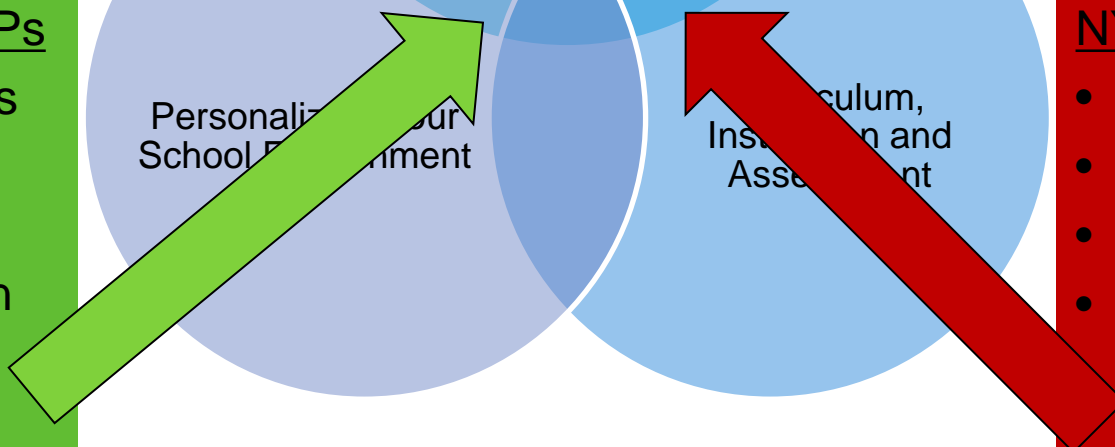
Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

## NYKids – MS BPs

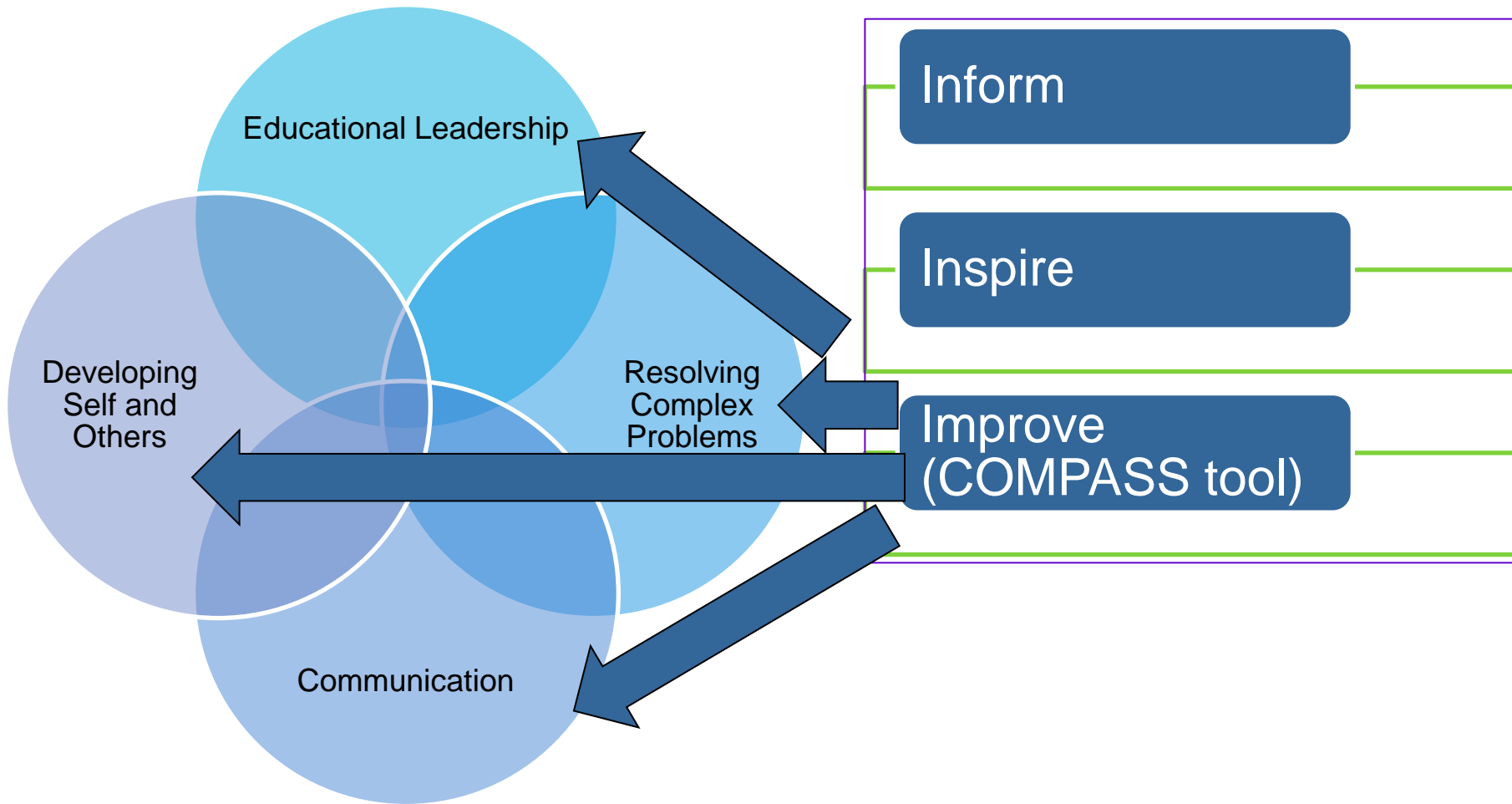
- Relationships
- Emotional Well-Being
- Collaboration
- **Evidence-Based Decision Making**
- Shared Vision

## NYKids HS BPs

- Rigor
- Innovation
- Transparency
- **Evidence-Based Decision Making**
- Strategic Use of Resources



# Breaking Ranks 21<sup>st</sup> Century Principal Skills and NYKids



# Improve



## Overview of COMPASS Steps

Step 1: Compare your practices to higher-performing schools

Step 2: Assess priorities

Step 3: Select levers to improvement

Step 4: Set SMART Goals



# *Improve*

## COMPASS Tools and Training

- University partnership with school improvement organization
- Two-day Initial Institutes
- ½-day Follow-up Institute - winter
- Full-day Follow-up Institute - spring

*This has been a great resource to further our thinking and planning within our district. It's so wonderful to connect with other districts as well.*

*- COMPASS Institute Participant 12/9/2010*



# Step 1: Compare Your Practice



**Theme: Evidence-Based Decision Making . . . What does your school look like?**

Circle the number in either the A column (1 or 2) or the B column (3 or 4) that most closely resembles your school, and think of a specific example to demonstrate the reason for your selection.

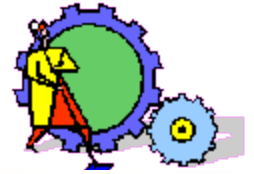
**A1=very similar; A2=somewhat similar; B3=somewhat similar; B4=very similar**

| A   |   | B   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1   | 2 | 3   | 4 |
| We rely mostly on state assessments to tell us how our students are doing.  | 2 | We have come to embrace the use of a variety of evidence to inform practices.   |   |
| We collect a variety of evidence of student performance, but our processes are not systematic and may not include classroom, school, and district levels. | 2 | We systematically collect data at classroom, school, and district levels.   |   |
| What data we do collect are not regularly and systematically analyzed, interpreted, or shared.  | 2 | After close analysis, we distribute data in forms that are comprehensible.  |   |
| We sometimes use data to inform specific interventions, instruction, or other reforms or changes.   | 2 | We typically use data to target interventions and develop and implement other reforms to improve student performance. |   |
| Add together your circled numbers and place that number in the next column.   |   | Total:  |   |
|   |   | Average (Total divided by 4):   |   |

Example:



## Step 2: Assess Priorities



For each of the elements, record your averages.

|   | Your Average | Group Average | Priority | See Pages |
|---|--------------|---------------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Rigor</b>                            |              |               |          | pp. 11-12 |
| <b>Innovation</b>                       |              |               |          | pp. 13-14 |
| <b>Transparency</b>                     |              |               |          | pp. 15-17 |
| <b>Evidence-Based Decision Making</b>   |              |               |          | pp. 18-19 |
| <b>Strategic Targeting of Resources</b> |              |               |          | pp. 20-21 |

Once you have identified your priority area, refer to the relevant pages to find suggested levers for improvement in Step 3.



## Evidence-Based Decision Making

Case in Point: Batavia

for the full case study:

[http://knowyourschools.org/pdf/Batavia\\_Case\\_Study.pdf](http://knowyourschools.org/pdf/Batavia_Case_Study.pdf)

Other cases to refer to:

- Greene
- Saunders
- White Plains

([http://knowyourschoolsny.org/site/index.php?p=bestpractices/casestudies\\_high](http://knowyourschoolsny.org/site/index.php?p=bestpractices/casestudies_high))

### 1. Embrace systematically collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data.

*One test isn't always the full picture. At each grade level, we do benchmarking where we plan out carefully to prepare kids for the English Regents. We Benchmark – then provide instruction – then do a follow-up benchmark. We know exactly where our students are.*

- Batavia teacher

*We don't make assumptions about data. We interpret the data and look for supporting evidence that reinforces what our decisions are.*

- White Plains administrator



To push this lever consider:

- Encouraging dialogue around what kinds of data matter and modeling how to discuss data in productive ways. These “productive” discussions may focus on developing or refining benchmarks within departments or across grade levels.
- Providing time for teachers to work together to develop assessments and dialogue around the results.
- Doing item analyses on a variety of assessments (state, AP, school benchmark, etc.) and using this information to inform teacher discussions around curriculum, instruction, interventions, etc.
- Analyzing and interpreting data at the student, cohort, and school levels, identifying gaps and areas of growth.

# “Jigsaw” the case studies

[www.albany.edu/nykids](http://www.albany.edu/nykids)



## Best Practices Case Study

Kathleen Nickson, Spring 2008

Just for the Kids  
New York

### Huntington High School

*Huntington Union Free School District, Huntington*

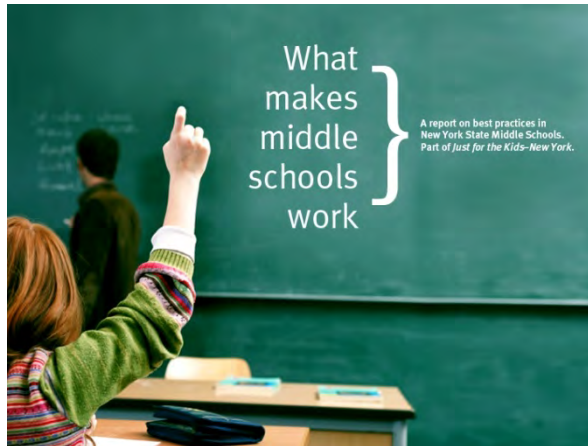
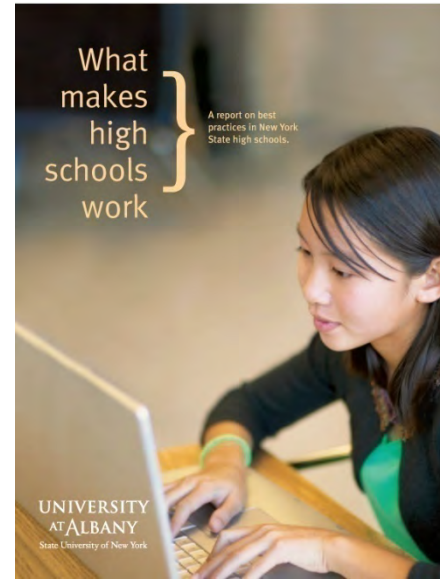
#### School Context

Huntington Union Free School District, located in Suffolk County on the north shore of Long Island, serves approximately 4300 students divided among four primary schools, two intermediate schools, one middle school and one high school. The district reports an ethnically diverse community comprised of approximately 60% White, 15% African-American, and 25% Hispanic students, many of whom are recent immigrants from Central America. The diversity is also socioeconomic, with populations of both extreme wealth and extreme poverty as well as a strong middle class.

Huntington High School is comprised of grades 9 through 12 serving approximately 1200 students. Built in 1957, the school is neat, clean and well maintained. Trophies from athletic and music competitions are prominently displayed, as are displays of student art work. Nine security monitors help keep an orderly atmosphere from the parking lots to the hallways to the cafeteria.



**Find and read about your priority in the cross case report.**













- **Which schools are mentioned?**
- **What ideas do you want to explore further?**



# Cross-Site Analysis – BP Frameworks



| Organizing Themes   | District Practices  | School Practices  | Classroom Practices  | MS        |
|---|---|---|--|-----------|
| <b>CURRICULUM &amp; ACADEMIC GOALS</b><br>                       | Involve all stakeholders in developing aligned curriculum and goals and support their participation | Ensure that the curriculum is articulated horizontally and vertically and available to all students   | Teachers collaborate to ensure consistency for students and to monitor results in order to improve the curriculum  |           |
| <b>STAFF SELECTION, LEADERSHIP, &amp; CAPACITY BUILDING</b><br>  | Hire high who "fit" provide   |   |  | <b>HS</b> |
| <b>INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, &amp; ARRANGEMENTS</b><br> | Involve administrative materials teacher needed   |   |  |           |
| <b>MONITORING: COMPILATION, ANALYSIS, &amp; USE OF DATA</b><br>  | Analyze and monitor performance teacher   |   |  |           |
| <b>RECOGNITION, INTERVENTION, &amp; ADJUSTMENTS</b><br>          | Establish respect   |   |  |           |
|   |   |   |  |           |
|   |   | <b>Best Practices</b>   | <b>Organizing Themes</b>   |           |
|   |   | <b>CURRICULUM &amp; ACADEMIC GOALS</b><br>                       | Collaborative development of goals and consistency between district, school, and classroom goals related to increasing student mastery and closing achievement gaps. Continual revision of strategic plans aligned with goals and a shared vision of success.  |           |
|   |   | <b>STAFF SELECTION, LEADERSHIP, &amp; CAPACITY BUILDING</b><br>  | A highly professional climate in which teachers and administrators are encouraged to keep up with their fields and actively contribute to the functioning of the school. A teacher evaluation process supportive of constant improvement. Active recruitment of candidates to match specific needs, goals, and fit with community and school culture.                |           |
|   |   | <b>INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, &amp; ARRANGEMENTS</b><br> | Broader spectrum of students offered opportunities to take AP and honors classes and flexible scheduling to best meet student needs. Expectations that teachers have not only content expertise but also the ability to effectively differentiate their instruction. Instructional supports such as labs and tutorials to help students succeed in rigorous courses. |           |
|   |   | <b>MONITORING: COMPILATION, ANALYSIS, &amp; USE OF DATA</b><br> | Collective accountability for student performance. Constant collection and interpretation of a variety of data from multiple sources followed by action strategically targeted to address current and future needs.  |           |
|   |   | <b>RECOGNITION, INTERVENTION, &amp; ADJUSTMENTS</b><br>        | Flexibility in developing and revising the schedule and allocating resources in time and faculty to where data show the most need. Interventions focused on keeping students on track before AIS is needed. Connecting with families to intervene early when social, emotional, or academic problems present themselves.   |           |



## FIND YOUR SCHOOL

### BEST PRACTICES

- › Reports
- › Case Studies
- › Frameworks
- › Self-Assessments

### INFORMATION

- › Presentations
- › Books and Articles
- › Press Room
- › About Us

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# Key word collections (also at [www.knowyourschoolsny.org](http://www.knowyourschoolsny.org))

## Tools

### Best Practices Frameworks

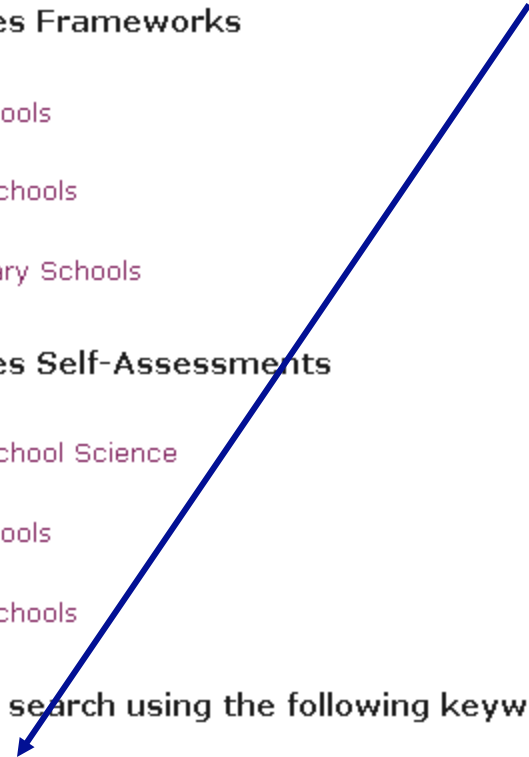
- High Schools
- Middle Schools
- Elementary Schools

### Best Practices Self-Assessments

- Middle School Science
- High Schools
- Middle Schools

You can also search using the following keywords:

- English Language Learners
- Special Education Students
- Parent/Community Involvement
- Role of the Board of Education



## Step 4. Set SMART Goals

### *Suggested Process for Setting SMART Goals*

- **4.1:** Review steps 1-3. What are your priority areas? What levers to improvement did you select as most likely to have the greatest impact on these priority areas?
- **4.2:** Review other NY Kids resources to prompt ideas for using the research and resources in SMART goal setting.
- **4.3:** Begin drafting SMART goals using the SMART goal template as a guide.
- **4.4:** Record specific actions attached to each of the goals you have decided on using levers to improvement, NYKids resources, and/or other resources.

By 2013, we will

attain a 90% graduation rate  
for students in each 4 yr. cohort by  
consistently monitoring student progress  
on a quarterly basis<sup>and</sup> by using a pyramid of  
interventions to support<sup>all</sup> students.





Write three ways you have used data based on school performance and teacher experience in your school to inform decision making.

## A few comments about the COMPASS process from the pilot school teams

*This process was really beneficial – we definitely worked through quite a bit as a team. We now need to execute, evaluate, and re-align our plan.*

- School A, 7/27/2010

*Overall, these two days were very valuable to both myself and my colleagues. The COMPASS institute provided an effective framework to develop district/building goals that will be taken back to our district and serve as a catalyst for necessary discussion and ultimately drive action.*

- School B, 7/27/2010

*GREAT program for us -- it has really formed/framed our work! Great to see qualitative data being just as important as quantitative. Great tool on many levels. Thanks for your hard work.*

- School C, 12/9/2010

# How to use NYKids resources to rally *your* leadership team

- Use the on-line survey  
[http://www.albany.edu/nykids/survey\\_your\\_school.php](http://www.albany.edu/nykids/survey_your_school.php)
- Assemble your “dream team”
- Go through the COMPASS process
- Monitor your progress
- Spread the process beyond your school
- Contact us if you need help...

# Thank you!

Know Your Schools ~ for NY Kids website

<http://www.albany.edu/nykids/>

Email

[kwilcox1@albany.edu](mailto:kwilcox1@albany.edu)

[nadress@albany.edu](mailto:nadress@albany.edu)

[jangelis@albany.edu](mailto:jangelis@albany.edu)

