| **School Name** | Neighborhood House Charter School |
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| **Grade Span Targeted by Best Practice** | K-8 |
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| **Related Charter School Performance Criteria/Conditions for School Effectiveness** | * Dissemination * Student Performance * Curriculum and Instruction |
| **Innovation/Best Practice(s)** | School improvement strategies to increase student achievement at low-performing schools. |
| **Rationale Supporting Best Practice** | Over our 20-year history, Neighborhood House Charter School (NHCS) have developed expertise in both achieving impressive academic outcomes for our own urban students through high-quality instruction aligned to the standards, and in helping other schools to become more effective. At each of the schools with whom we have partnered, students have made significant performance and growth gains as measured by PARCC/MCAS. In addition, the principals, instructional leaders and teachers with whom we have worked have overwhelmingly rated the professional development we have provided as high-quality and would choose to continue partnering with us if given the opportunity to do so. |
| **Partner** | Partnership model developed in collaboration with Boston Public Schools. Funding provided by the Barr Foundation, the Hayden Foundation and Boston Public Schools. |
| **Target Audience for Best Practice** | Low-performing, Massachusetts public schools serving students in grades K-8. |
| **Objective for Disseminating this Best Practice** | To provide low-performing, partner schools with both instructional leadership and teacher professional development by sharing and adapting practices, systems and structures that have proven successful at NHCS. Through our work, partner schools will see 1) a change in classroom practices; 2) a change in the capacity of school leadership to support effective classroom practices; and 3) a change in student performance outcomes. |
| **Summary** | **NHCS prioritizes its role as a laboratory for best instructional and school leadership practices and has dedicated itself to disseminating those best practices to other public schools**. We target low-performing Boston schools, helping them to close the achievement gap for their students by improving their instructional practices.  **Our targeted dissemination work began in 2010, when NHCS was asked by BPS to partner with the Harbor Pilot Middle School, which had been designated a Turnaround school by the state**. After three years of providing professional development and coaching to the Harbor faculty and leadership team, the Harbor had successfully shed their Turnaround status.  **In 2015, we began the School Consulting Initiative**, through which we have had the opportunity to create meaningful, capacity-building partnerships with other low-performing Boston Public Schools, including the Donald McKay and Mildred Ave K-8 schools.  At the school level:   * **NHCS conducts an asset inventory of each partner school and develop a customized plan** that (A) responds to the strengths, needs, and vision of the school leadership, (B) complements and integrates existing school improvement plans, (C) aligns with district priorities, and (D) works to improve academic outcomes for all students. * NHCS works with the school to:   + **guide and support the transition to the Common Core state standards**   + **create action plans to address up to 3 instructional priorities for the school**   + **help develop an effective, skilled, and focused instructional leadership team** with the capacity to sustain school improvement efforts in the future   + **monitor the success of the work and make adjustments** to the implementation plan as needed. * **For each partner school NHCS strategically provides direct professional development and coaching sessions for leadership team and faculty to build a foundation of effective practice** around the transition to the common core standards and instructional best practices concerning scheduling, curriculum, intervention, and teaching practices.   **NHCS works with each partner school for two years, creating an action plan at the beginning of the first year of the partnership, and formally modifying the action plan at the beginning of the second year, and as needed after each quarterly Leadership Team meeting.**   * Results: * In 2015-2016, NHCS worked with NHCS partnered closely the Donald McKay and Mildred Ave K-8 schools. **Both schools moved from a state designation of Level 3 to Level 1 status.** * In 2014-2015, NHCS worked with the Mildred Ave K-8, which moved from one of the lowest performing K-8 schools in Boston to the highest performing as measured by median Student Growth Percentile. * 2010-2013: **NHCS worked with the Harbor Pilot Middle School,** which had been designated a Turnaround school by the state. After three years of providing professional development and coaching to the Harbor faculty and leadership team, the **Harbor successfully shed their Turnaround status, outperforming all other Level 4** schools in Boston on the MCAS schoolwide, as well as in the High Needs and Students with Disabilities subgroups. * When surveyed, 93% of **Boston’s Network F principals with whom we had worked reported that the quality of the professional development sessions provided by NHCS was “very high,” one (7%) reported it as “high**.” * **100% of survey respondents indicated that they “would like to continue professional development sessions** with NHCS in the upcoming year.” |
| **Reflection** | Through this work, we have deepened our understanding of the needs of individual district schools for instructional leadership development. In addition, we have learned to build NHCS’s capacity by developing additional NHCS teacher leaders who can take on external consulting roles, striking an appropriate balance for our consulting staff to work with partner schools while also continuing to play integral roles within NHCS. |
| **Resources** | NHCS developed a Partnerships Framework that outlines replicable practices to be used in forging successful future relationships between district and charter schools. |