


Ninth Grade Academy Presented by Peter Pappas, ASI (Retired)  
Model Schools Conference June 2005



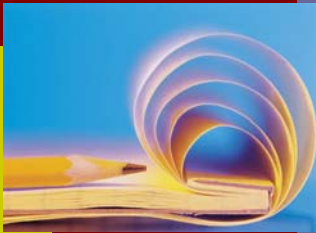
**Ninth Grade Academy**  
East Irondequoit CSD  
Rochester NY

Presented by  
Peter Pappas  
Assistant Superintendent  
for Instruction  
(Retired)

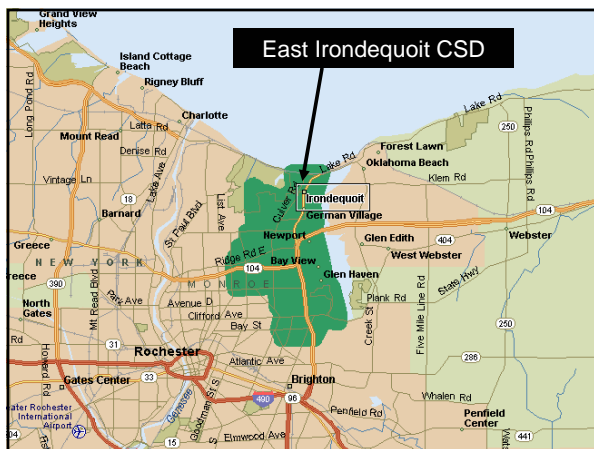
Model Schools  
Conference  
June 2005

**Agenda**

1. Background
2. How it works
  - Planning
  - Training
  - Assessments
  - Expectations
3. Voices of the NGA



**Background**



**A diverse community**



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East Irondequoit CSD

- 3,500 students
- Two K-2, Two 3-5, One 6-8, One 9-12
- 33% free and reduced lunch
- 24% Black and Hispanic



Planning the NGA



The idea for the Academy came from Ron Cooper, our high school principal.



In 2002, Matt Laniak, associate principal was charged with design of NGA

- Recruit teachers from High School
- Weekly planning meetings
- Input from parent's committee of Site Based Team
- Teachers work collectively in the planning of all curriculum and program



We first forged a common view of teaching and learning



And then we used the organization as an instrument for accomplishing the vision

It's more than new names, structures and programs - it's about quality instruction

- Consistent focus on common instructional strategies in a student-centered classroom
- Engage the entire school community in thinking critically about student achievement
- Strategic planning and professional development that models the rigorous and relevant instruction we wanted to see in the classroom

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NGA teacher:

"Two years ago we got together. Matt assigned the **teaching roles** and helped us work through the **policy development**.

We didn't set this up in one day - **we all put in many extra unpaid hours**.

It's not about debating ideas. It's been **about collaboration.**"

NGA: A dedicated section of our high school.  
Separate entrance, admin and counseling offices



Freshman-only in two halls that include 13 core area classrooms plus a freshman-only gym.



Other specials are in shared facilities



How the  
NGA works



### Schedule

- One 57 minute block that meets 3 out of 4 days for all Regents and Pre AP courses
- Students receive 1 credit per course
- Two 57 minute blocks for math for any student failing the Math 8 exam
- Students only receive 1 credit for taking Math 9 and Algebra

**We targeted Algebra –  
 “The Graduation Gatekeeper”**

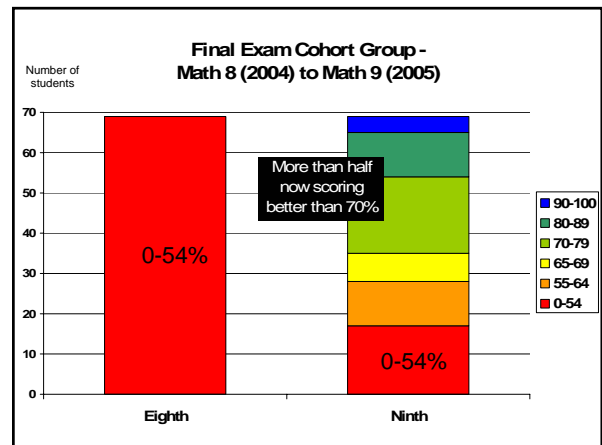
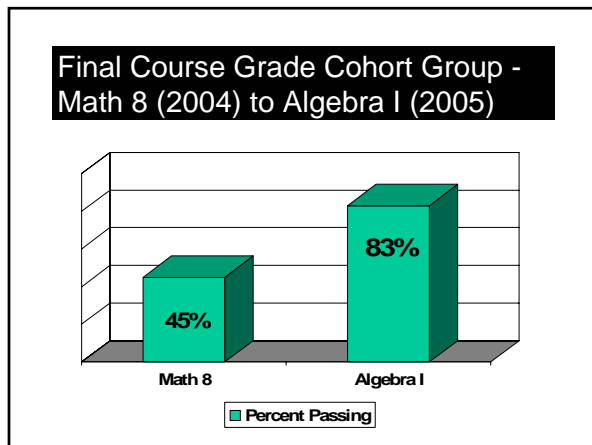
“After pregnancy, Algebra I is the leading indicator of high school dropout.

The leading indicator of success in Algebra I is English 8.

The Algebra 1 test is a reading test with numbers”

~ Doug Reeves, District Administrator April '05

**Target instruction  
 with effective  
 assessments**

**Staff teamwork**

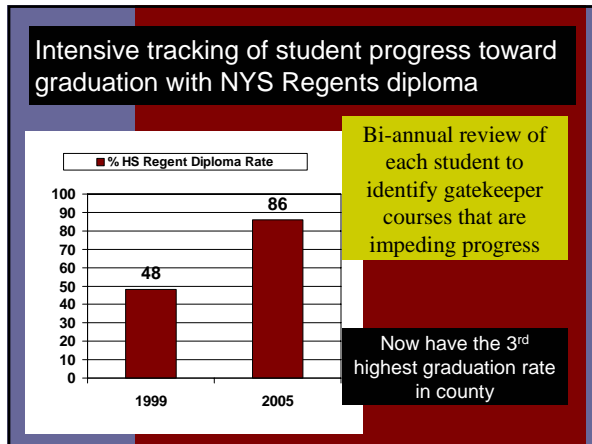
- Meetings are held each Tuesday to discuss student issues with all NGA teachers, counselor and principal.
- Teachers get to know all students.
- Issues are dealt with quickly and consistently.
- Share problems and successes.

A dedicated staff who share a philosophy and work as one cohesive group

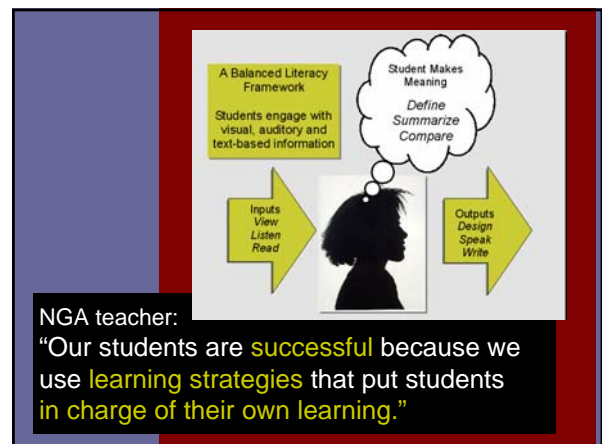
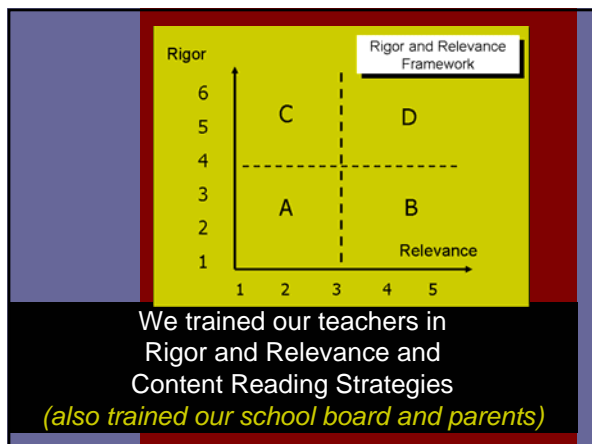
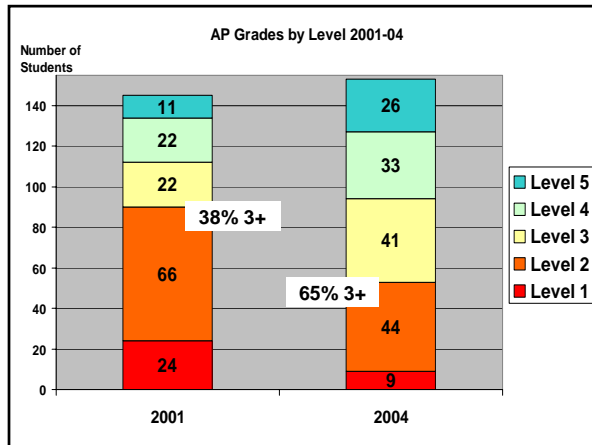
**We used the NGA as part of our initiative to foster a more academic HS climate**

- Increase graduation requirement - from 21 hours to 24 hours beginning with class of 2007
- Shift performance targets from passing to mastery level
- New attendance policy - Students denied credit after missing more than 15% of class time for any reason
- New code of conduct and dress code

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- Launch rigorous honors program with new NGA**
- The development of a **true honors program** beginning with our 9th graders
  - Maintaining **ridged standards** for students **to continue** in the honors/AP program and holding true to these standards
  - **Increased summer pre-requisite work**

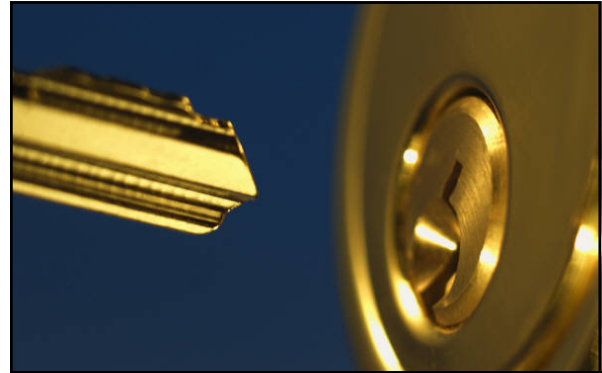


NGA teacher:

"We **shift the responsibility** of learning from teacher **to student**.

When a student understands how each step maximizes his or her achievement and or success, they enjoy modeling this type of good academic behavior.

Guided and independent practice in **critical thinking, vocabulary, summarizing, analyzing...**"



The key: high expectations create results

### NGA non-negotiable expectations

- 1. Come to class on time, prepared and ready to learn.** A responsible student will be on time and have all required materials upon entering the room.
- 2. Complete all homework assignments.** A responsible student will complete all homework assignments, with maximum effort, on a daily basis. If the homework assignment is challenging, an attempt must be made with a considerable amount of effort and quality. Homework will be completed in 5 subject spiral notebook.

- 3. Participate and ask questions.** A responsible student will ask specific questions during class time. Participation is essential to success. You will ask questions pertaining to the lesson or homework assignment when necessary. You will also answer questions during class. You will participate at least two times per class.
- 4. Listen attentively to instruction.** A responsible student listens attentively to the teacher's lesson, and asks questions immediately upon any confusion pertaining to the instruction. Notes will be taken in spiral notebook.
- 5. Complete assigned class work.** A responsible student will use class time to complete his or her assigned class work. Time in class must be used constructively. You will complete: all assigned class work.

NGA teacher:

"At the start of the year I had many students who came to class **unprepared**.

I made it clear that it **was unacceptable**.

**When students are unprepared, we all get pulled down.**

**I set high expectations** – there was no tolerance for students that did not have their homework done.

### Enlist parents as partners

- Academic pledge of support
- Presentation to 8<sup>th</sup> graders
- Summer orientation
- Parent university



Share responsibility for success – student, parent, teacher, and principal

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NGA teacher:

The **parents backed me up** on our expectations. Before long, students came to class, **fully prepared to learn** with their books, supplies and completed homework. **Now the students are making great progress.** The Academy has allowed **me to be a better teacher.**"

Since launch of NGA we've seen a 67% drop in freshman suspensions

NGA teacher:

"We're no different than most teachers, but **because of the support we're outstanding teachers.**"

I'm so grateful for the opportunity I've had to teach in the Academy for the last two years. I'm seeing that **it can happen.**

This is the **best experience I could have hoped for.**"