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**RENEWAL IN PROGRESS: MAYOR DE BLASIO TOURS AUTOMOTIVE HIGH SCHOOL,
IMPROVING ‘RENEWAL SCHOOL’ IN BROOKLYN**

Once maligned as a ‘warehouse’ for failing students, Automotive High School has new momentum

Renewal school benefiting from expanded after-school programs, new CTE classes in law, coaching from retired principal with track record building successful schools

BROOKLYN—Mayor Bill de Blasio met with students and faculty at Automotive High School in Brooklyn, one of 94 Renewal Schools where the administration is focusing resources and leadership to raise achievement. The Renewal School ‘War Room,’ launched this month, is tracking schools’ progress through CompStat-style metrics and analysis, focusing additional resources and expertise based on schools’ progress.

Automotive High School had become one of the most dangerous campuses in the entire city, creating an unsafe environment that made strong instruction virtually impossible. Under Principal Caterina Lafergola, safety has dramatically improved at Automotive. A new wave of investments made under the Renewal Schools program is making education gains. The school has added new and expanded Career and Technical Education offerings in field like Law to prepare students for careers, instituted new math and English curricula that have proven effective in other schools, and more than doubled the number of students participating in enriching after-school programs. As part of Automotive’s transformation, every teacher and administrator must reapply for his or her position, ensuring the school and students’ have the very best faculty to complete this turnaround.

“We are working every single day to deepen the progress happening on the ground at schools like Automotive. We’re ensuring they have the right leadership and the support they need to turn around and deliver the education these students deserve,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “We’re fighting for solutions that deliver for our students today, because the status quo is unacceptable. With just days left before the State budget is decided, we are calling on leaders in Albany to renew Mayoral Control so we can continue this work, and fully fund our schools so we can drive change even further.”

“We are implementing real change at Automotive and every Renewal School across the City – and we’re seeing real results. Leading indicators like a 100 percent increase in afterschool attendance and new CTE law-focused classes show that Automotive is heading in the right direction.” said **Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña**. “Our Renewal School team will continue to work closely with this school – and all Renewal Schools – as we work to raise student achievement and make sure every student is college and career ready.”

“We are laser-focused on schools like Automotive and are tracking their progress in real time. We are making sure the right tools, the right team of professionals and the right programs are in place at every Renewal School to put them on a path to success. Our kids deserve nothing less,” said **Aimee Horowitz, Executive Superintendent for Renewal Schools**.

“As an educator and a product of New York City Schools, I know that improving our struggling schools won’t happen overnight, but every day we are seeing progress at Automotive. Our restorative justice practices are reducing suspensions while enrolling more students in after-school programs and AP classes. At the same time, we’ve started a new CTE strand focused on law enforcement. There is still a lot of important work to do, but with the support of the Renewal School team and our entire school community, we will continue to drive all our students to succeed,” said **Automotive High School Principal Caterina Lafergola**.

“Automotive High School’s renewal demonstrates clearly how a school’s quality can be restored if we allow our educators to implement sound and creative educational practices backed by the appropriate financial resources,” said **Assembly Member Joseph Lentol**.

"We must to work to ensure that every student succeeds in New York City, and by providing new and targeted resources, we can work to achieve this goal. Thank you to Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña for their work in supporting Automotive High School and all of our local schools," said **Council Member Stephen Levin**.

Mayor de Blasio announced the \$150 million Renewal Schools program in November, dedicating experienced new leadership and new resources to 94 schools that have struggled for years. The effort is overseen by the new Executive Superintendent for Renewal Schools, Aimee Horowitz, a leader with a track record of turning around troubled schools and raising student achievement.

In the past three months, initial changes have gotten underway at Renewal Schools, including the addition of extra instructional time in 54 schools, academic intervention teams deployed to overhaul curriculum and course offerings, and groups of experienced principals and assistant principals sent to high-needs schools to strengthen leadership and help change direction. This spring, every Renewal School will begin its transformation into a Community School to help students overcome barriers to learning with counseling, mental health services and family supports.

At Automotive High School, the Renewal School program has meant:

- **Leadership Coaching:** Corinne Vinal, a retired successful principal who turned her former school into a community school and has mentored other principals, has joined the leadership team to help innovate.
- **More Learning Time:** The number of students participating in after-school extra-curricular activities is up 114 percent compared to last year. Only 50 students participated last year, compared to 107 this year.
- **Expanded Career and Technical Education Offerings:** 55 students are participating in a new, law-focused, CTE program. The program is chaired by a former attorney, and students involved participate in hands-on learning experiences through the District Attorney’s Office and crime labs.
- **Stronger Curriculum:** Automotive has implemented a more rigorous math and English curriculum with a track record of success.
- **Real-Time Progress Measures:** There are new Teacher Inquiry sessions where teachers across grade level analyze student work, with a focus on writing, to assess progress and gaps, and determine next steps. Teachers review their own and each other’s lesson plans to determine if their methods are improving student work across the grade level, and if different tools are needed.
- **Expanded Professional Learning Opportunities:** Every educator at Automotive has participated in professional learning opportunities in addition to their weekly PD sessions thanks to the new teachers’ contract.

- **Focus on Writing and Math:** Automotive High School has received special Renewal Coaches to provide professional development to teachers with a focus on students' writing and math. The coaches have helped teachers assess student writing for signs of progress and signs of students falling behind, and helped teachers implement Common Core aligned curriculum.

Signs of Improvement at Automotive:

- **More students on track to graduate:** The number of juniors and seniors who completed the necessary credits in the first semester to be on track to graduate has jumped 11 percent.
- **Attendance Up:** Attendance has risen to 83 percent, the highest it has been in a decade.
- **Safer on campus:** The most serious two classifications of violent incidents have dropped 33 percent compared to this time last year. Suspensions are down 47 percent compared to last year (98 versus 52 last year).
- **More Parents Engaging:** Last year, the school lacked a legally constituted PTA and School Leadership Team. This year, Automotive has increased parent engagement dramatically and now has a legally constituted PTA, with both the PTA and PTA Executive Board meeting monthly. The School Leadership Team now also meets monthly.

Learn more at nyc.gov/renewalschools.

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