



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Academy for College Preparation and Career  
Exploration**

**High School 382  
911 Flatbush Ave  
Brooklyn  
NY 11226**

**Principal: Ditta Korbeogo**

**Dates of review: June 4 - 5, 2007**

**Reviewer: Stephen Szemerenyi**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Academy for College Preparation and Career Exploration opened as a new school in September 2006 with 152 students enrolled in grades 6 and 9. The school is set to expand to full capacity over three years, when it will enroll students from grade 6 through 12, with an estimated enrolment of 560 students. Sixty-four percent of students are Title1 eligible, which is lower than that found in similar and City schools.

The school population is comprised predominantly of Black students (89.47%) with a small number of Hispanic students (9.87%). Special education students account for 4% of the student population. There are no English language learners. Attendance is very good at 98% for grade 6 and 92% for grade 9 and is above the average for similar and City schools.

The school was unable to take possession of the building before Labor Day weekend and this led to a number of initial operational difficulties. The school is housed in a self-contained unit within a large multi-school campus. There are nine teachers on the staff.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has made an encouraging start in setting up systems for the collection, analysis and use of data.
- Teachers work hard and collaborate well.
- There are high expectations of student performance that are communicated well.
- The principal is highly respected and has demonstrated the capacity to effect change.
- There is a clear emphasis on meeting the needs of students as individuals.
- Parents are very happy with the school and feel that their children are well cared for in a family community.
- A wide range of professional development that takes good account of teachers' and students' need.
- The school has forged very beneficial links with external bodies.
- The school is developing well as a reflective, learning community that runs very smoothly.
- The school sets appropriate long-term and short-term goals for all students.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop further the use and analysis of data to pinpoint students' strengths and weaknesses more accurately.
- Increase the rigor of systems for the monitoring and evaluation of programs, goals and student performance.
- Develop the range of instructional strategies to include more differentiation in order to enhance student concentration and engagement.
- Build on the strategies already in place to achieve greater uniformity and consistency in terms of expectation, assessment and perceptions of student achievement.
- Develop the use of teams further with regard to planning, the revision of plans and the evaluation of results.
- Develop more consistent and more sophisticated comparisons of student performance across classrooms and against similar schools.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

The school has taken considerable strides forward in its first year of operation and has established a solid base in terms of procedures, systems and processes. It is well set to capitalize on the progress made to date and to use this platform as a springboard for further advancement in the coming years. Some of the school's good practice, however, is still in its relative infancy. The school acknowledges the need to consolidate, so that the practice becomes firmly embedded in its normal routines. Teachers are able to access a wide range of professional development that reflects their needs. Reflection on existing practice is actively encouraged, particularly in the professional development periods that are arranged on Monday afternoons.

Students are generally happy at the school, feel that account is taken of their academic and personal interests and concerns, especially by the principal, and mostly behave well. The parents are extremely satisfied with the school and rate it and the principal highly. It is acknowledged that the principal has had to do too much by herself and that she has been put under unreasonable pressure at times.

A 'Best Practices Rubric Longitudinal Progress' assessment carried out by the Department of Education rated the school more highly than the rest of the campus on most of the relevant criteria. The key themes of consolidation, greater consistency across the school and further development, particularly in relation to evaluation, team-building, differentiation and the use of comparative data, are highlighted in the areas identified for improvement.

### **How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria**

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.**

#### **This area of the school's work is undeveloped.**

The lack of reliable data from outside has hampered the school's development in this context. Data relating to the test performances in grades 5 and 8 of the students in grades 6 and 9, respectively, did not reach the school until October (English Language Arts) and December (mathematics) so that the school only had the outcomes of the tests in grades 4 and 7 to go on initially. As a result, the school had to rely on data from internal tests on entry and subsequent teacher progress monitoring reports to assess students' progress.

The measures taken to address the difficulties encountered, especially the weekly professional development sessions, have been effective in enabling teachers to become more confident in the use of data. The school recognizes the need to extend the use of data considerably and to ensure that practice is applied consistently across the school.

Data is analyzed by subject, class, gender, ethnicity and grade through regular and systematic monitoring of teachers' assessments, portfolios and running records, both

internal and external observation, and informal discussions. The progress of special education students is also tracked. The analysis, which is undertaken by the principal, the cabinet and teachers generally, provides accurate checks on students' progress and leads to adjustments in goals, programs and instruction. It also confirms that the systems in place are having a positive impact on the performance of all students. The quality of the documentation, however, is not yet of a uniformly high standard and the degree to which the different data sources are analyzed varies.

Comparison with the school's previous best performances or with similar schools was not possible in the context of a new school, but provision for the collection of such data has already been made for next year.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school's primary goals and plans are set out in the original proposals and are well known and understood. The available data has been used effectively to assess progress towards these goals during the year. Goals are set for immediate and long-term improvement for all students as individuals and for classes. While the main impetus comes from the principal, teachers also contribute collaboratively to the process. Timeframes for achieving these goals are set and appropriate plans are put in place.

Long-term goals and plans go well beyond the standards expected at the end of grades 6 and 9 and encourage students to achieve their full potential. The plans to take Mathematics A in two rather than three semesters and to provide Advanced Placement courses as a means of cultivating a college-bound culture illustrate this expectation. Particular attention is given to the most needy students, one of the school's specific goals, but not at the expense of others, as there is a clear focus on all students as individuals, whatever their level of achievement. Goals and plans to improve performance involve all members of the community and the parents, in particular, articulated this.

The school communicates its high expectations very effectively. It actively encourages parents and caregivers to be involved in raising students' performance and progress through the activities of the Parent Teacher Association, the calendar of events and schedules, student reports and various workshops. The parents feel involved and value the fact that they can speak to any teacher. They rate the principal very highly and stated that they believed in her, that they have never felt more secure, that she set the bar high, that the goals were challenging, but realistic, that they had never known a principal who knew their children's strengths and weaknesses in such detail and that she was always there for them: high praise indeed!

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school has integrated the mandated curriculum with the College Board Springboard curriculum to good effect. This approach has successfully promoted the development of critical, analytical and creative thinking skills. The allocation of ten periods a week in English Language Arts and mathematics has impacted positively on teachers’ capacity to monitor the progress of students as groups and as individuals in the basic subjects. There is little budgetary flexibility in a small school, but the principal has used the available resources effectively to provide additional intervention services.

Teachers are held accountable for student outcomes and some have been put under considerable pressure by the principal. Appropriate arrangements are in place to stretch potential high fliers and some will take the Regent’s examinations early. Assessments have been used effectively to differentiate programs, to improve instructional planning and to adjust groupings to make up any deficits. Classes were re-grouped when the data that came through towards the end of the first semester showed that only some 33% of students in grade 9 had achieved levels 3 and 4 in their end of grade tests at their previous schools and that the students were weaker than expected on the basis of their grade 4 and grade 7 test data.

Students are actively involved in their instructional programs, in the main, but many of them are not sufficiently challenged. They behave well, but their concentration and attention can waver if they are not fully engaged. Appropriate differentiation is not always discernible. Students are generally happy at the school and feel that their teachers, especially the principal, whom they described as ‘the first person they would run to, because she would listen to them’, are ready to help them with their academic and personal difficulties.

Student attendance is very good because the school has effective strategies in place to pursue absence and even sets work for students while they are away and puts on catch-up sessions for them on their return to make good any deficits.

**Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

In selecting staff, the school initially had to rely heavily on the College Board recruitment fairs and the Department of Education open market hiring system, which had some drawbacks. A committee, that includes students, has now been formed to select staff against specific criteria and the principal rightly feels that this has improved both the process and the outcome and will help to attract the brightest minds to the school. Demonstration lessons are a requirement at interview and are seen as a prime means of securing quality.

There are numerous opportunities for professional development, which is targeted on identified need and aims to promote growth. The teachers value the development provided, especially the input from College Board on data and the support from Writers’

Express on writing. The Collaborative Analysis of Student Learning (CASL) has been used effectively to engender collaboration and a greater consistency of approach with regard to standards and to the establish norms for student learning. External consultants are also used effectively to improve and extend teachers' pedagogic skills and strategies.

The principal observes teaching formally and informally, and provides constructive feedback. She is well aware of teachers' strengths and areas for development and encourages them to be reflective about their practice. Teachers work well together and the introduction of two common preparation periods has stimulated the sharing of ideas and inter-visitation. The formation of the cabinet has helped to develop more consistent practice.

The school is very much a family community which runs very smoothly. It provides a warm welcome to students, parents and visitors. The principal is highly respected and is perceived as being very caring and passionate, yet flexible. In a short time, she has demonstrated the capacity to manage change well. The range of partnerships with external bodies, including the programs arranged for the summer vacation, is impressive and will do much to enhance students' learning.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school is a reflective community and has developed effective systems to assess and monitor the progress being made towards the achievement of its goals and plans. The school adjusts its short- and long-term goals and plans to address deficits, to accelerate learning and to secure improvement and increased student outcomes. Comparisons of progress are carried out within and across classrooms on the basis of internal data. When this showed that one of the grade 9 classes had made more progress than the others, the principal intervened expeditiously. The quality of such comparisons, however, particularly across classrooms, remains uneven. The school is also well aware that girls tend to perform better than boys, particularly in English language arts, and has taken appropriate action to redress this.

Effective monitoring, undertaken mainly by the principal and the cabinet, takes the form of regular meetings and discussions, formal and informal classroom observation and data analysis. When monitoring revealed that a test on which the school relied heavily was not working, appropriate adjustments were introduced without delay. Systems of evaluation are in place, but they are relatively embryonic and not as well developed as those for monitoring. The school has already made plans to access external data earlier in the year and to undertake comparisons of performance with that of similar schools next year. It has a well-developed understanding of student progress and takes account of longitudinal progress against potential from the point of entry, as well as short-term progress.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Academy for College Preparation and Career Exploration (HS 382)	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>	X		
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.	X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>	X		

\* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.	X		
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.	X		
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.		X	
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>		X	
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>		X	
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.	X		
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	