



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Abraham Lincoln High School

High School 410

**2800 Ocean Parkway
Brooklyn
NY 11235**

Principal: Mr Ari Hoogenboom

Dates of review: January 8 – 11, 2007

Reviewer: Charles Lupton

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Abraham Lincoln High School is a large, 9th through 12th grade, high school that has served the diverse needs of its students for over seventy five years. There are currently 2614 students on roll. The student population reflects the local community with the greatest proportion of students (37%) from Black families, 27% are White, 22% Hispanic and other and 14% Asian. There are seven American Indians. Students come from sixty countries and twenty-eight languages are spoken. Instruction is in English.

Twelve per cent of students are English language learners. This is slightly higher than similar schools. Title 1 eligibility, at 39% is well below the City average of 51.2%. However, the City provides lunch for each student.

School attendance rates are lower than the City average at 85%.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is very well informed about the school's activities and constantly aims to improve all areas of the school with good pedagogical knowledge and tenacity.
- The relationships between staff and students are positive and respectful, enabling the school to focus continuously on improving student behavior.
- The 9th grade academy is very successful and has had a positive impact on the education, attendance, and attitudes of the students involved.
- The separate 'echoes program' of instruction for 9th grade students who have been held-over by the school successfully enhances the educational opportunities for both groups of students.
- The whole school maintains a consistent instructional approach with lesson aims derived from a 'do now' exercise that the students undertake upon entry to each class.
- The critical self-appraisal of the principal and the cabinet leads to a continuous drive to improve the school allied to the willingness to change, rather than repeat practice that is ineffective.
- The English language learner (ELL) program supports the learning and development of English language learners and their families in a wide variety of ways.
- The school has a successful and clear focus on driving up attendance rates and reducing the number of classes that are being 'cut' by students.
- The school's use of special resource rooms successfully promotes on-going professional development and supports student learning, while further developing positive interactions between students and teachers.
- The quality of the partnerships the school has with outside agencies such as Good Shepherd, Young Adult Borough Center (YABC) is a positive feature of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Utilize the good existing school data to develop robust analytical systems to identify and track individual and groups of students, setting aspirational goals.
- When planning for future improvement, increase the use of measurable interim goals to monitor success.
- Based upon curriculum standards, develop consistent assessment rubrics for each marking period to facilitate the collection of more meaningful comparative data in each department.
- Develop the 10th, 11th and 12th grade academies with particular focus on student and teacher accountability and instructional differentiation.
- Improve student transition between classes.
- Ensure that professional development includes a balance of theoretical and practical input, including modeling by professional development providers and peer observations.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal is tenacious in continuously seeking to improve the school and realize his vision for its future. He has a clear understanding of how this school compares to city and similar schools and works with administration, teachers and students to move the school forwards. There is a growing culture of self-evaluation and use of data, which underpins the desire to try things out and make them work. The school has some areas for development, many of which are already recognized by school leaders.

The school works hard to build positive relationships with students and as a result, they generally feel safe and supported. The principal knows most students by name and is a visible presence in the school. He is well respected by the students, parents and staff who believe he has had a significant impact on the school since his appointment.

The 9th grade academy is a successful feature of the school. Some positive aspects of the academy are currently being applied to other grades and it will be used as a model to restructure the rest of the school in September 2007. English language learners are well supported.

The school focus on attendance has resulted in significant improvement in the number of students attending classes and an increase in academic progress.

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 proficient.

The school routinely gathers data on individual students and uses this to monitor progress continuously. This data is combined to give a clear understanding of how each grade performs and this is used to compare current and prior performance. Counselors use the correlation between student absence and academic progress well to trigger intervention. Data clearly shows the success of this strategy on both attendance and achievement. The principal has a very clear understanding of how this school compares to local and similar schools.

Thorough analysis of previous performance means that new students are placed in appropriate classes with four academic streams in 9th grade. This results in instruction that is well aligned to the needs of each individual. Data is gathered and used constructively to assign students to classes in other grades and to design programs tailored to the individual.

Good use is made of NYSESLAT and the school's own assessments to assign students into the English language learner program. The progress of these students is monitored carefully to ensure their smooth transition into mainstream classes. Similar good practice is applied to special education students.

The school uses marking period and regents test data to analyze overall grade progress, sub groups such as honors students and some courses. Data is used to monitor teacher effectiveness. However, detailed analysis of the progress of some other groups (for example ethnicity) is not routinely undertaken. The school is aware of this and is currently developing its analytical tools to address this issue.

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.

Guidance counselors meet with each student on a regular basis to evaluate learning and to offer advice and guidance on future instruction. Students who are not progressing in line with expectation plan Regents exam goals, and are given additional support including repeat or more intensive classes, after school and in Saturday classes and tutoring. Students who are meeting or exceeding expectation receive guidance on the most appropriate courses to follow including honors and advanced placement classes. Parents are involved in this process. However, aspirational goals are not routinely discussed or recorded.

In the 9th grade academy and the English language learner department, the process of goal setting is more developed with closer monitoring of student progress and increased intervention when a student is not reaching their targets. This includes increased parental involvement, greater use of tutoring, increased peer mentoring and restructuring instruction. In addition to this, in the 9th grade, individual student reviews take place with an adult who is not directly involved with the student. This is successful, as it facilitates a more critical analysis of strengths and weaknesses by the student and the adult involved, resulting in a better understanding of each student’s next learning steps.

Constructive use of amalgamated data identifies inconsistencies in performance of classes, departments and teachers and is utilized to set goals to improve teaching practice thus accelerating student learning. However, because not all departments use the same assessments for equivalent classes, comparative performance data is difficult to analyze. The development of uniform assessment rubrics to support this is an area for development.

The school has identified clear statistical correlation between low attendance rates and poor academic progress. Consequently, the school has set attendance goals and successfully worked to achieve them which has also resulting in accelerated learning. To ensure that attendance rates continue to rise, the school is focusing on improving instruction to increase student motivation to attend classes.

The Comprehensive Education Plan contains demanding, measurable, data led goals for school improvement.

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 offers a wide range of curriculum opportunities for its students. Departments offer general education classes, additional classes, honors and advanced placement classes. The range ensures that each student receives a curriculum tailored to individual need. Assessment data is used to analyze student progress and to re-align instruction if required.

Through analysis of student performance data and frequent lesson observations by the principal and assistant principals, teachers are held accountable for their instruction and student outcomes.

Budgeting and staffing decisions are made according to identified need. For example, the 9th grade academy is a priority and resources are allocated in this area. Careful staff placement into the academy and new scheduling arrangements for teachers to have joint prep time has impacted positively on student outcomes through increased teacher collaboration, professional pedagogical dialogue and accountability. These initiatives have directly resulted in students taking greater responsibility for their own learning, lower rates of absence and class cutting and increased academic achievement.

Students are actively engaged in their learning and, according to a student survey conducted in July 2006, the majority of students (91%) report that their teachers expect them to work hard in class. Due to course selection, classes tend to be relatively homogenous reducing the need to differentiate instruction. However, the only differentiation taking place in classes is through increased instructional input or by outcome. Increasing differentiation through tailored assignments is an area for development. For a low, but significant proportion of students, the transition time between classes is a social event resulting in late arrival for class with an inappropriate mind-set. This issue is being successfully addressed in 9th grade, but not in other grades.

In 2005, poor attendance rate at school was identified as a particular issue that is still being rigorously and successfully addressed. Data shows a significant increase in attendance this academic year throughout the school and is 10% up in 9th grade.

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.

Teachers are selected according to a number of criteria, in particular excellent subject knowledge and intellectual standing allied to a commitment to continuous self-reflection, professional development and rapport with students. Whenever possible, teachers from the New York City Teaching Fellows program are hired.

The 9th grade academy is a very constructive innovation. As this model is rolled out into other grades, the school is fully aware that it is essential to engender this working methodology throughout the school.

Professional development is identified through the careful analysis of data as well as frequent lesson observations by the principal and assistant principals. Following observations, teachers receive detailed, constructive feedback that provides a framework for personal development. The teacher and assistant principal are responsible for implementing this program through professional development. The United Federation of Teachers teacher's center has been established to support this process. However, the quality of professional development through greater modeling of good practice and increased peer-to-peer observations is an area for improvement. The school has identified the need for professional development in the use and interpretation of data to include target setting and identifying interim goals for students and for overall school improvement.

The principal and assistant principals have a clear mantra; "If something is not working, change it." This philosophy results in the school continuously seeking to improve. This is illustrated by the evolution of the 'echoes program' that now separates holdover students from other students in the 9th grade. After three years of alternative organization, this program is demonstrating significant impact on achievement.

Assistant principals design and implement improvement plans for their department. These include data driven goals and methodology to improve instruction and curriculum understanding. However, some departments are more rigorous than others in achieving this.

Good partnerships with outside agencies such as the Good Shepherd and Young Adult Borough Center exist to support the school and youth development out of school hours. The school has productively linked with John Hopkins University as part of 'Talent Development' to develop the 9th grade academy.

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 Comprehensive Education Plan is thorough and contains data driven goals to monitor the school's development. Progress towards the completion of the Comprehensive Education Plan is monitored by the principal and assistant principals. However, except for the 9th grade academy, the plan does not identify interim targets or diagnostic assessments. To monitor implementation of the Comprehensive Education Plan more effectively, this needs to be addressed.

Annual and interim data is used to re-align planning and student instruction flexibly during the year. This may include changing courses after each semester. Data is analyzed to monitor teacher effectiveness and to compare teacher performance. When trends are identified, remedial action is instigated. However, further development in this area is necessary.

The principal regularly monitors all aspects of the school and, if necessary, realigns practice and resources. For example, the tutorial system is less effective in 10th – 12th grade than in 9th grade, resulting in the creation of additional tutorial areas.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Abraham Lincoln High School (HS 410)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		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"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 		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"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 		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"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 		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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

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.	∅	✓	+
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
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
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.	∅	✓	+
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
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
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.	∅	✓	+
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	