



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Thomas Jefferson

High School 435

**400 Pennsylvania Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Michael Alexander

Dates of review: May 1 - 2, 2007

Reviewer: Richard Woolf

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

Thomas Jefferson is in its last year as a high school. The building was opened in 1922 and from September 2007 will house four new fully functional smaller high schools. Therefore there are only grade 12 students in residence with a teaching staff of nineteen.

The student population is 252, made up of 73.4% Black, 23.8% Hispanic, and 2.8% Asian and others. English language learners and special education students make up approximately 24% of the students. There is approximately the same number of male and female students in grade 12. The school is entitled to Title 1 monies.

The school has been designated to close for the last two years and the current principal and staff have been charged with undertaking this task. Whilst it has been difficult for the community to come to terms with this the morale of the staff and students remains focused and positive.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal, who is an outstanding educator, leads an excellent team of teachers and support staff.
- The school has an array of data which fully supports the school's work.
- The staff and students respect each other.
- The teachers expect their students to achieve to the best of their abilities.
- There is an imaginative number of support programs in place to help students graduate.
- The staff provides excellent information to students in preparation for post high school careers and life choices.
- The parents value and support the work of the principal and staff.

What the school needs to improve

The school closes in June 2007 and therefore needs to ensure all its students

- Graduate in June or August 2007 or are found alternative programs.
- The school closes efficiently, positively and happy.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Thomas Jefferson is in its final year as a phase out high school and for that reason has had to endure particular difficulties. The principal deliberately set challenging goals for its final year to improve attendance and reach the highest graduation rates the schools has ever achieved.

The principal was appointed two years ago, although he has been associated with the school for eighteen years, with the task of phasing out the school. Under his dynamic and charismatic style of management he has brought together staff and students to rise to the challenges. The parent body fully supports all the efforts the principal and staff are making to achieve their goals. They also feel the students are now more mature than previous graduating grade 12 and this is a result of the principal and his leadership.

The students feel privileged to have been associated with the school and the impact it has had on their lives, especially by accepting the challenges of the principal and staff for their final year. An example of this would be a female student who arrived as an English language learner and will graduate to a top New York college, she said the school “was my American family and I was their child.”

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 well developed.

There is clear evidence the school takes all available City and State testing data and systematically uses it to impact upon the performance of its students. The generation of in-house data is used consistently by the staff to inform and direct instruction. The principal has a wealth of data, supplied by a team of programmers which breaks down the data to build a very complete picture of each student.

After the marking periods and monthly assessment staff input data to a central computer where the programmers carefully scrutinize and disaggregated the information. This is used as a means to regularly monitor trends and allow students and staff to adjust targets as and when necessary.

An outstanding amount of data is derived in relation to the progress of English language learners, special education students and those from different ethnic backgrounds. The same rigor is applied when analyzing the work of different groups such as gender and higher achievers. The school has excellent comparative data against similar schools and in all measurable outcomes of Regents examinations and other test data show the school is achieving well in its final year.

Attendance is also closely monitored to use as a tool to chart against progress within the classroom and monitor trends. The school has undertaken detailed work on success rates of students against their attendance rates. This has impacted hugely during this academic year on students at risk of not graduating.

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 Comprehensive Education Plan is written annually by the senior leadership team which includes students and parents. Goals are based upon the data from the previous year and semesters and the challenge for the school in its final year is to graduate all students or to find alternative programs for those who cannot reach that level. These goals are shared with the staff at the beginning of the school year and each teacher is set a yearly target to contribute to overall improvement. The principal monitors the progress on each teacher at the end of marking period by means of a one to one meeting which then allows him and the teacher to make individual adjustments.

The attention is firmly on graduation rates and targets to assist improving all students and staff to meet these ends. The needs of all students are acknowledged as of particular concern and the school pays particular attention to this by continuously seeking ways of improving their achievements, a good example of this is the Rights of Passage program. The numbers of English language learners and special education students is significant but not large when compared to similar schools. However, a full range of academic intervention services and guidance counselors are used to support them in meeting their particular needs and reaching their individual targets.

In its current position the school is small and the administration, staff and students are in regular daily contact. This allows for the school’s expectations to be more easily conveyed to students and parents. The student governance holds monthly meetings with the principal, which acts as another channel of communication. Parents, being part of the senior leadership team, feel they have an input into the school’s goals and they are regularly informed about student performance.

The principal is happy at the way the goals of the school are being shared and impacting via regular feedback from meetings of the wider school community.

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 principal follows the mandatory curriculum framework for achieving the Regents examinations and accreditation. As the school has diminished in size certain academic programs have had to be cut. This decision was made entirely upon the available data but in order to offer students a range of subjects. Saturday programs were established using Title 1 monies. The entire campus is aided by a fully staffed health center to provide students with information and assistance on health related matters.

Teachers are held accountable for instruction and are using data more effectively to allow for differentiation to take place. Data folders held by the teachers show how progress is being made by individual students. There is good use being made of centrally generated data based on monthly assessments and marking periods to inform instruction. The vast majority of class instruction actively engages the students in their learning and they work well together in groups, pairs or as a whole class. Students feel the organization of extra curricular programs after school and on Saturdays is beneficial to improving their achievements. They are confident that the teachers plan instruction to get the best out of them. The small size of the school helps both staff and students to get on well and students feel there is always an adult on hand to help and support them.

The principal bases his staffing and budgetary decisions on all available data and has clearly identified where deficiencies have occurred. The use of data has led him to make scheduling decisions as a means of assisting weaker staff and planning student specific courses. Counselors and intervention service personnel are used effectively in supporting the staff in the development of instruction and the achievement of their goals.

A priority for the school in its final year is to increase the rate of attendance and the data supports the significant improvements that have taken place over the last year, whereby the target set has been exceeded but not readjusted. Parents endorse the efforts made to increase attendance and feel the school is making great strides to improve overall rates despite the school's imminent closure. The administration includes a member of the attendance team to support its work in reaching its targets and planning structured returns for long term truants.

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.

Due to the planned closure of the school the principal has had to adjust his staff according to the number of students enrolled. This has resulted in no new members of staff being appointed but for those remaining they are experienced and capable teachers. The principal has a team who appreciates and understands that their students can succeed in life by being given a positive and encouraging atmosphere in which to learn. This is particularly relevant with all of them committed to enabling the students to achieve as highly as possible in their final year. Teachers accept that his management style allows them professional freedom to adopt teaching styles appropriate to the needs of their students. This has the effect of making the staff feel trusted and valued.

There are good opportunities for professional development both from within and outside the school and the use of external consultants is greatly valued for example external consultants have worked with groups of teachers to raise standards of literacy. The data and professional development generated from these ventures are impacting upon instruction and understanding of student need. Teachers frequently inter visit classes and due to the small numbers of staff they are in daily contact with each other and can react positively to any changes that affect student instruction.

The principal sets high standards and demonstrates these to the whole school community on a daily basis. He is respected for being approachable and is a constant presence in the school. He and the assistant principal visit staff informally as well as conducting formal

classroom observations. The principal has a detailed knowledge and understanding of his staff. The school is well managed and organized, which encourages learning to take place. The parent body supports and responds very favorably to the administration.

The school has developed many excellent links with a wide variety of outside organizations including academic, sporting and professional groups. They have been put in place to further the learning opportunities of the students and the programs, to encourage college applications, and post school opportunities are much appreciated by the student body.

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 monitoring of the Comprehensive Education Plan takes place on a regular basis to check against the effectiveness of the school's goals. The significant moments are after each marking period when staff are interviewed by the principal to gauge the progress being made against both teacher and student targets and the contribution each is making toward the overall school goals.

All teachers, including academic intervention staff, meet regularly to discuss the effectiveness of instructional programs and the performance of individual students. The school set challenging goals at the beginning of the year in order for the students to realize their true potential and as such rigorous monitoring has been crucial to the process.

The school is able to articulate at length how, by effective analysis of data and careful monitoring, they have been able to raise the achievements of individual students and particularly groups like English language learners.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Thomas Jefferson (H S435)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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	