



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

World Academy for Total Community Health

**High School 510
400 Pennsylvania Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Kim Lawrence

Dates of review: February 7- 8, 2007

Reviewer: Cheryl Baker

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

World Academy for Total Community Health, commonly referred to as WATCH, is a high school that currently serves 282 students in grades nine through eleven. The school anticipates adding an additional grade in 2007-2008. The student population is 75% Black, 16% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 1.7% White and .7% American Indian. Approximately 11% of the population consists of special education students while 7% are English language learners. The ratio of female to male students is approximately four to one. The school receives Title I funding with the proportion of eligible students nearly double that of similar and City schools. Attendance at the school is rising from a two year average of only 84.5%, which is below the average for the City.

The school was founded in 2004 and shares a building with four other small high schools. Despite its small size, population growth has exceeded its space allocation and some classes are held in rooms located some distance from the school's section of the building. The allocation of rooms for the next growth phase remains a matter for discussion.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is succeeding in growing towards the full complement of grades: nine through twelve.
- Strong relationships with outside agencies provide students with introductions to the career concentrations in which they have expressed interest.
- The principal collaborates with a number of teachers, partners, consultants and support staff in leading the school forward.
- High expectations for student learning and quality teaching are communicated to all members of the school community.
- The school provides a supportive and nurturing environment in which students feel safe and cared for.
- The school program includes opportunities for students to explore and celebrate their cultural heritages.
- Analysis of disaggregated school-wide data, undertaken by partner organizations, is well used to target improvement efforts and design interventions.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve organizational practices and structures to provide clear and timely communication, the efficient use of space, and improved use of instructional time.
- As the school expands, continue to ensure that the instructional program is adequately supported.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the current periodic assessment tool in providing useful data for the differentiation of instruction.
- Maintain expectations and support for the development of the standards-based curriculum with embedded assessment practices.
- Continue to provide professional development in the analysis of assessment and other data in order to help teachers gain a deeper knowledge of what each student knows and is able to do, and where they need additional targeted support.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal assumed leadership of the school in November 2004. With assistance from the school's lead community partner, the Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center, and others, she has succeeded in fostering the school's focus on health careers. As a young empowerment school, WATCH is increasingly data-driven and has benefited from support from New Visions in disaggregating the school-wide data. The school continues to explore the best sources for and uses of data to support instruction and student achievement. It looks forward to its first school report card and Adequate Yearly Progress report which will provide a concrete baseline measure of performance against which to measure growth.

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 uses data such as Regents scores, the scholarship report, middle school testing records, credit accumulation, progress reports, teacher's report card grades, attendance reports and periodic assessment results to understand the progress and learning needs of each student. The principal, with her guidance counselor, programmer and lead teachers, routinely track the academic, social and emotional progress of students, and provide teachers with the statistical and anecdotal data necessary to further inform their instructional planning. The principal possesses a deep understanding of every student's performance profile. Increasingly, results from the periodic assessments are providing additional insight into students learning needs.

The performance of special education students and English language learners is tracked by data from the assessments embedded in their specific programs and is analyzed by specialists assigned to their cases. Data regarding the relative performance of the school's ethnic groups is compared to other schools working with New Visions, a partner of the school, and reveals that students at the school are closing the achievement gap with increasing numbers of students are on track to graduate. Since its inception, the school has analyzed the relative performance of males as compared to females. Evidence indicated that males had poorer attendance and academic performance. In response, the school developed a fraternity that meets daily to support them in their growth as students and as young men. This intervention has made a significant difference in the attendance of approximately half of the identified students, with similar results in academic performance.

The school has tracked its performance over the nearly three years of its existence with respect to the preparation for incoming students, its ability to attract students committed to its mission and, for the last year, performance on the Regents examinations. Improvements in all three categories have been noted. Data permitting the comparison to

other high schools with health-related missions is evolving as the school continues to grow.

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 leadership team used a process similar to the Pass Review to analyze the needs of the school for the development of the Comprehensive Education Plan. Targets for improvement are ambitious and annual. The school leadership team meets regularly to address the short term progress of all aspects of the school’s development as it continues to evolve. At the mid-year, progress towards the attainment of the goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan is reviewed with respect to data from the Regents examinations and students’ pass rate from the scholarship report.

The principal's own performance review reveals goals specific to continuing to raise the number of students on track to graduate, institute instructional reform, and increasing the use of data to improve instruction. The school’s monthly professional development plan evidences support of these goals and results of training sessions are routinely analyzed to plan next steps with respect to teacher support. Lead teachers in math and English also develop annual plans for their monthly activities in support of instruction and the induction of teachers new to the school. Goals embodied in these plans provide the general direction for the activity of all constituencies.

For individual students whose progress in a particular course is lagging, teachers are required to develop an intervention plan identifying actions to be taken to support the students in making progress. Students are enlisted to set goals for their improvement as well. These plans are monitored by the teacher and the principal. Data from the periodic assessments is beginning to provide additional diagnostic information about students’ learning needs.

For groups of students whose progress is lagging, such as ninth grade hold-overs and eleventh grade students off-track for graduation, interventions such as tutoring, assistance through instructional software, and support from guidance and social service personnel is provided. These academic intervention services are scheduled during the school day to ensure student attendance and engagement, both of which have improved. English language learners and special education students receive pull-out services and additional support through software designed to assist reading, language and mathematical skill acquisition.

Students and parents are well aware of the high expectations set for the academic achievement and college or career preparation that the school holds for them. Communications such as parent newsletters, PTA meetings, conferences with teachers, progress reports and report cards provide parents and caregivers with information about student progress. Internships at numerous health-related institutions help students to clarify their goals. Whole class instruction in all aspects of college search and application, embedded in the English language arts instruction for juniors, assists students in understanding how their achievement matches their aspirations and informs their targets for higher education.

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’s curriculum is evolving as it grows each year and new courses are added. Teachers develop course outlines and pacing guides that align to the State standards, Regents and Advanced Placement expectations, and the components of balanced literacy. To bring greater consistency to the expression of the written and the delivery of the taught curriculum, training in Understanding by Design, an outcome-based format, has begun.

The principal monitors students’ grades routinely, meets with teachers to discuss the reasons for each student’s progress, or lack thereof, and requires teachers to craft intervention plans for students who are not progressing, thus enforcing differentiation. The results of periodic assessments are beginning to inform this planning. Teachers whose instruction is not effective are not retained if, after reasonable assistance is provided, they fail to improve.

The needs revealed by student data and the overall goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan help to drive decisions regarding budget allocations, staffing and the schedule as the school adds a grade each year. The demands of annual growth within limited space and resources sometimes demands compromise. In order to maintain small class sizes, more staff and classroom space was needed resulting in shared classrooms, some located away from the school’s section of the building. The decision to move to a block schedule, based on research indicating that this configuration supports increased student achievement, is under review. As the school moves forward and grows by another twenty five percent in the 2007-2008 school year, planning for the provision of resources necessary to support increased student achievement presents a challenge.

The school’s instructional program with its health-related theme, increasingly engages students as they move closer to their areas of interest. Most report that they like their school and feel that it has met their expectations. They point especially to its small size as a positive quality in that they know one another and their teachers very well. Students feel safe and supported in the family-like atmosphere the school has established. Attendance is monitored closely, homes are contacted immediately if students are absent and the school recognizes and rewards attendance. Daily attendance has improved approximately three percentage points from its previous average of 84.5%.

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.

The principal has hired nearly all of the staff in the last two years. As far as possible, she selects candidates that, along with the requisite educational background and certification, possess some understanding of the workshop model of instruction with its embedded assessment practices. She requires that new hires hold high expectations for all students, regardless of their backgrounds or perceived abilities. Increasingly the capacity to routinely use data to inform instruction is addressed in the interview process.

The performance of teachers is observed and evaluated by the principal who is a regular presence in the halls and classrooms. She has set forth expectations that instruction includes accountable talk, essential questions, and the development of student portfolios within the workshop model. Feedback to teachers is explicit with respect to areas for improvement. The school also supports teachers' instructional growth through scheduled inter-visitations and one-on-one coaching from lead teachers in the core tested content areas. Teachers, many of whom are relatively new to the profession, collaborate to support one another through formally scheduled planning time and through routine informal sharing of techniques and strategies.

Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in formalized teams such as the school leadership team, the pupil personnel team, the achievement team and through ad hoc teams such as those the principal gathers for bi-annual planning retreats. The communication of the goals and action plans of these teams is varied. As the school has grown, previous dependence on word-of-mouth communication has become less effective, creating a lack of clarity among staff as to direction and expectations. The pace of growth and increase in initiatives has increased demands on teachers, some of whom feel pressured to complete required tasks with little advanced notice.

The school's relationships with outside bodies, especially the Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center and New Visions for Public Schools, substantially support the mission of the school, the academic performance of its students and the capacity of the school to analyze data reflecting its performance.

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 leadership team provides a structure for the monthly review of school needs and the bi-annual assessment of student performance data to measure progress towards goals. Measures of progress towards the goals of the principal's performance review occur through her routine monitoring of instruction and through the results of bi-weekly professional development programs. Her regular review of student progress, teacher by teacher, drives the development of classroom interventions and signals the necessity for diagnostic assessment by teachers.

The progress monitoring of students identified for academic intervention, special education or English language learner services is embedded in their respective programs. Teachers measure student learning through tests, quizzes, portfolio selections, Regents examination results and, increasingly, through information provided by a periodic assessment tool administered by the school. This tool, an on-line assessment designed by the Northwestern Evaluation Association, was chosen by the school because it appeared to provide a deep analysis of aspects of students' skills in mathematics and English language arts. The school has found that the format in which student results are reported to be cumbersome and confusing to interpret, thus inhibiting the routine use of these results by all staff. The achievement team, in conducting action research on a group of students whose performance in mathematics has been poor, has included the results of the periodic assessments among the various tools they are using to diagnose the needs of their students. As subsequent results are received and analyzed, the school intends to

evaluate the usefulness of the tool in helping them to improve student achievement beyond the practices already in place.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: World Academy for Total Community Health (HS 510)	∅	✓	+
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	