

High School For Public Service

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High School 546

600 Kingston Avenue

Brooklyn

NY, 11203

Principal: Mr. Benjamin Shuldiner

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Cambridge Education

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Part1: The School Context

Information about the school

This small school was founded, with financial backing from the Gates Foundation, in September 2003 with 100 9th grade students. It has grown to 298 students from grades 9 to 11, and next year will complete its growth with a 12th grade. It is part of the Autonomy Zone. Its culture is based on commitment to public service, and applications are encouraged from students who have a positive attitude to learning. Students are selected by the school on the basis of their commitment to working hard. Two thirds of students are Title 1 Eligible, which is much higher than the city average. Most students have English as a first language. The school has a lower than average proportion of students identified as needing special education. Students starting grade 9 have a range of academic proficiency, from high attainment to special education, but overall are average for their age. Approximately two thirds of the students are girls.

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Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principal work closely together and provide effective leadership for the school, based on a commitment to academic success and the development of fully rounded students who can make a positive contribution to society.
- The staff and students share a strong sense of purpose, with a determination that all students do as well as they can. Most students have a good attitude towards learning. Both staff and students are proud of the school.
- Expectations of performance are high and much of the teaching is good, well-structured and demanding. Consequently many students, particularly the more academic ones, make good progress and achieve well.
- There is a stringent code of discipline, applied consistently, and behavior in class and around the school is usually very good. The school is an orderly place where the students and staff show each other respect and courtesy. Rare incidents of inappropriate behavior are dealt with rapidly and effectively, using a range of strategies including peer mediation.
- Students say they feel safe and secure in the school, and there are adults whom they can trust and confide in if they have concerns or worries. Staff knows all the students well and take very good care of them. The school fosters close working relationships and the culture is warm and friendly.
- The school teaches 9th grade students an innovative and successful program of skill development, so they can learn independently and maximize the learning opportunities with the curriculum offered by the school.
- There is a good community service program for the students, enabling them to make a personal contribution to society and develop a strong sense of leadership and responsibility.
- There is an effective system of grading academic progress, so that students are generally clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to move on to the next level.
- Staff members say they enjoy working at the school and give freely of their time outside class to advise and support students, and allow them additional time to complete their work.
- There are interesting and varied after-school programs, and partnerships are being developed with legal and medical institutions, all of which extend the students' extra-curricular experiences.

What the school needs to improve

- Review the scope and sequence of advisory classes ensuring that any expansion of the program is planned carefully so that both personal development and academic opportunities are maximized.
- Develop a system to provide a holistic view of each student, which not only tracks individual progress from entry into the school, but also includes other factors which affect performance. Analyze this information to show the value added by the school, across the classes and grades, in order to improve planning to meet the needs of all.
- Construct a long-term plan for the school's development, showing in detail the action

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to be taken to translate intentions into practice, particularly for the 12th grade.

- Increase student participation in the school by creating a more effective method of determining their views and by allowing them greater involvement in developing and executing their plans.
- Ensure all students are prepared fully for the Regents examinations by initiating intervention earlier in the year.
- Put in place strategies to ensure that the school is well managed during the absence of the principal in 2006-07.
- Establish strategies to ensure that data indicating individual student's progress is consistently used to provide differentiated work which is tailored to individual needs.
- Develop strategies to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Develop strategies to improve the attainment of students who are under-performing, particularly boys, so that their progress matches that of their peers.
- Develop a year-long plan for the curriculum, showing precisely which skills are to be taught in each subject at each grade; and support this through professional development for teachers, so that students make good progress in all classes.
- Ensure that the accessibility and use of facilities is maintained as the school grows.

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Part 3: Main Findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school which is building up the data it needs to monitor the progress the students are making, and has some well-developed systems, particularly for accelerating many students' learning.

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

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.

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

Standards and the students' progress are monitored in a variety of ways; through Report Cards, projects, tests, mastery work, assignments and conferencing. The school assesses students' skills as soon as they enter 9th grade in order to provide a consistent base-line. The school sets mastery assignments every six weeks and analyzes the results in order to track the progress of each student. There is a rubric to assess work in each subject, but in some subjects this is more detailed which consequently provides better data for evaluating progress. Students and parents are kept informed of the results. However, the school does not hold sufficiently detailed data to be able to measure the value it adds at each stage and in every subject.

The school's method of monitoring students is well-developed. Staff keeps track of the students through advisory groups. The information is monitored by ethnic group, gender, grade and class in order to compare the progress made by students in each group. As a result, the school has identified successful subjects, such as global history, and areas for improvement, though it recognizes that the data sets are too small for the statistics to be reliable. Areas for improvement include raising the attainment of Latino students and of boys, since both groups are not reaching the same levels as their peers. The data also indicates that students are making the most progress in the 9th and 11th grades, while those in the 10th Grade are failing to meet the school's high expectations. The school uses the data to direct intervention programs for different groups, although it is evident that in a few cases, for example for students in danger of failing the Regents exams, this intervention is not put in place early enough in the year to provide maximum support.

Quality Statement 2: 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 and some aspects are well-developed.

The school sets demanding goals, which include high pass rates, good performance and good social skills. Staff and students are mostly focused on very high expectations of work, attitudes and behavior. There is a stringent code of behavior that is applied

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consistently. Students have targets for the end of each grade, and these are discussed with them and their parents so that all know what goals they are working towards. The school government, comprising students who have been elected by their peers, is central to planning the social events. However, the school is aware that it needs to involve all its students more in the key decision-making processes.

Students who are in danger of failing are identified through assessments, homework or test results by their advisory teacher or those who teach them and interventions are put in place. The special education teacher supports those who need additional help. These interventions are mainly successful but it is evident that a few, such as those used to promote success in the Regents exams, are not put in place early enough. The school uses its regular monitoring to plan to make improvements in instruction. For example, classes or scope and structure might be changed, or the level of support. Those who reach the standards early are put into classes where the work is more demanding or at a higher level.

Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient and many aspects are well-developed.

The curricula are selected mainly by their alignment with the tests, but at a higher level, and the mastery work is more demanding than the tests. Consequently, some students fail the school courses but pass the tests. The school is committed to its mission of public service and therefore builds in a class on citizenship. Social education is well-developed. Students are required to fulfill 50 hours of community service each grade. The school is a member of the National Youth Service. Through this work, for example, cleaning a park on the waterfront, the students give something back to the community and develop confidence, self-discipline and responsibility. From these opportunities and the application of the well-developed discipline system, students behave well and form good relationships in school. The skills of teachers are used to best effect through their placement in classes where their expertise is most effective. They freely give their time before and after school to support and give individual instruction to students who ask for or need it. The students say that their teachers take very good care of them and there are many they can talk to or confide in as a result they feel safe and secure. Any incidents of inappropriate behavior are dealt with rapidly and sensitively. There is a well-developed system of peer counseling to settle disputes.

The school's scope and sequence are still developing and, while they are mostly aligned, they are not completely coordinated through the subjects and grades. There is a particular need for aligned scope and sequence, while maintaining and developing the specialist facilities, for the 12th grade, that will be in school for the first time next year. Some aspects are well-developed. There are medical and legal academies for the older students and electives which are open to all grades. The school has designed an innovative skills program for the 9th grade that develops the students' learning, study, and research skills. The program also helps them make the most of classes throughout. There are interesting and challenging after-school programs, for example in journalism and documentary film-making.

There are well-developed systems for holding teachers accountable for their students' outcomes. Teachers are observed frequently in class and given feedback on their

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practice. Many have been trained in the school, while teaching. The principal knows the strengths of the staff and the areas where they need to improve. He holds individual conversations with them and professional development is built into their work. Data is used proficiently to check the success of each class and to challenge teachers where the pass rates are low. Staff supports each other and works as a team, discussing the progress of each student in the grade at subject meetings, and identifying areas where improvements could be made. The school's target for attendance is 90 per cent, but it has not achieved this. The systems for ensuring that students come to school regularly and on time are proficient but the administration does not focus enough on those who do not attend regularly. The staff encourages students to be punctual but they are often delayed by the time-consuming security system which is shared with other schools.

Quality Statement 4: 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 well-developed overall.

The principal and assistant principal are well-developed leaders and ensure that there is effective team-work and a clear focus on high expectations. However, the principal is to take leave of absence for a year. The school will need to ensure that the administration functions well during this time and that there is well-developed support for the assistant principal. Staff is selected on the excellence of their practice after they have been observed teaching, on their sympathy with the mission and culture of the school and their willingness to contribute more than the minimum. Their use of data is not a requirement but the school expects that they will have, or develop, basic competence. Most teachers are well-developed in their use of the data available but others are not as confident. Some teachers' use of data to differentiate the students' work according to the level of their skill is well-developed but this is not a feature of many classes. The systems for using data to make students accountable for their behavior are effective.

The school's use of professional development is well-developed. It is employed for individuals, groups or for the whole school depending on the needs that have been identified. Courses are used, along with team teaching, to develop expertise. Some consultants are brought in to develop practice in areas where there is not enough skill among the staff. As a consequence, much of the instruction is well-developed, so the pass and graduation rates are high.

Quality Statement 5: 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.

Plans are checked and reviewed as they proceed. Data is used to check whether the plans are effective, or need adapting. The teachers are alert to all their students' progress and monitor it closely. Intervention programs are monitored to ensure that they are working and there are frequent alterations to plans and courses during the year to ensure that they are having the desired impact. Honor students are promoted to courses in college or through internships in order to develop their skills further.

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Part 4: Evaluation Criteria Grade Summary

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.	o	✓	+
<p>1.1 The school uses available data (e.g., diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, students work products, standards-based portfolios, attendance, descriptive review, security data, etc.) and generates its own to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of how well each student, classroom, grade level, and other important categories of students and the school are:</p> <p>(1) currently performing, and (2) progressing over time, on English Language Arts, mathematics, and other important academic subjects.</p> <p>Criteria for measuring student progress are “objective” when they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards-based, • consistent across students, • capable of revealing progress or a lack of it over time and ways to close the gap between current and expected practice, <p>and when they allow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the performance of different students to be compared, and • learning activity to be broken down into component parts so strengths and weaknesses on each sub-activity may be identified. 		X	
<p>1.2 The school makes effective use of the data to assess the performance and progress of students by racial and ethnic groups, English Language Learners and special education students, and all other categories of interest to the school.</p> <p>{This criterion and the next are partially aspirational as of now. City and State Report Cards and Division of Accountability and Assessment reports provide only some of the necessary data. The NYC DOE will soon provide schools with fuller access to better data.}</p>		X	
<p>1.3 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, racial and ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.</p>		X	
Quality Statement 2: 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.	o	✓	+
<p>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 it develops plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.</p>		X	
<p>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 warranting attention.</p>		X	
<p>2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.</p>		X	
<p>2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. That information is central to setting reasonably challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.</p>		X	
<p>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</p>			X

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Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	o	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with the school's high expectations and improvement plans and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals.		X	X
3.2 Decisions about the use of teacher and student time are based on the organization of the day and week needed to inform teachers about each student's performance and next learning steps, set goals and plans for improved student learning, and implement and continuously improve plans for reaching stated goals.		X	
3.3 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.4 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.5 Teachers are accountable for student outcomes. 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
3.6 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
3.7 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
3.8 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.9 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X

Quality Statement 4: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	0	✓	+
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 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 Leaders, faculty, and staff share the same goals and frequently evaluate themselves, their interventions and each other's plans and interventions, including, when possible, by comparing outcomes across classrooms and schools. The school monitors its performance and tackles weaknesses. Even in areas where the school is successful, leadership is not complacent, but aims to improve further. The goal in all cases is to improve student and school performance and progress.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results and revision of plans takes place in teams.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.			X

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Quality Statement 5: 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.	o	✓	+
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 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 interim 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 each successive phase of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve students' academic outcomes.		X	