



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

All City Leadership Secondary School

Intermediate and High School 554

**1474 Gates Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11237**

Principal: Elvis Estevez

Dates of review: May 3 - 4, 2007

Reviewer: John Hudson

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

The All City Leadership Secondary School provides education for 250 students from grade 6 through 12. Three quarters of the enrollment are of Hispanic background, and nearly a quarter is Black. There are very small proportions of other groups. The main languages spoken are English and Spanish. Six percent of students are special education students and four percent are English language learners. The proportion of students with Title 1 entitlement, at 92%, is significantly higher than the average for City schools. Attendance, at 92%, is well above similar and city school averages.

The school developed from a middle school with its first grade 9 in September 2003. It marks its first graduation year in 2007.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal, who is highly respected by students, staff, parents and the local community, leads the school very effectively through continuous growth, change and improvement.
- The school is a highly ordered learning community where carefully considered procedures are followed by all.
- High expectations of personal and academic development are shared between the principal, his staff, students and their parents.
- Peer-generated discussions are enabling the majority of teachers to analyze assessment data and gain in depth understanding of student skills and knowledge.
- Teachers collaborate well to align curriculum and instruction to the needs of learners.
- Lessons are well planned and encourage high levels of engagement and good attendance.
- The school makes very good use of available resources to improve academic outcomes.
- A climate of mutual respect and trust permeates the school.
- The whole school community is involved in a continuous cycle of goal setting, planning and evaluation.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop assessment in some subject areas so progress towards demanding longer term goals is rigorously tracked.
- Fine tune individual teacher's curriculum plans to accord flexibility of instruction on learning skills which are not yet sufficiently developed.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The school's mission is to develop student scholarship, strength of character and service to the community. Its plan to achieve this mission is characterized by highly effective leadership, a climate of care, mutual respect, courtesy and trust, high expectations for personal and academic success and a learning focused environment. Students want to achieve and be successful and teachers want to support them. They have the capacity to do so. Teachers and students are supported by determined and enthusiastic parents as well as the good will of the local community.

The school plans to reach its goals for every student through focused curriculum plans leading towards demanding but achievable goals. The school frequently assesses student achievement and analyzes outcomes to understand students' strengths and weaknesses. Where essential skills are found to be under developed, teachers respond rapidly by realigning curriculum plans and instructional methods. Lessons are well planned and interesting, and students are engaged. Attendance is good.

The school is located in a community center and makes very good use of the accommodation available to it.

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 with well-developed features.

The school collects much objective, frequently updated data across all grade levels in English, mathematics and science. This data is carefully analyzed to provide teachers with valuable information about individual student's achievement and progress. In addition to State tests, performance data in grades 6 through 8 are derived from tests set, assessed and analyzed by a commercial provider three times each year. Similarly, past Regents exam papers are used in grades 9 through 12 and marked and analyzed by the school. Detailed records of student achievement enable the principal and his staff to track the progress of individuals, classrooms, grade levels and other groups. Groups include English language learners, special education students and students struggling with reading and writing skills. Data is also used to provide good information about the performance of ethnic groups, boys and girls. Two other significant groups whose progress is tracked are students transferring to the school and those in their final stages of preparation for college entry.

Detailed analysis of this data enables teachers to gain a deep insight into the quality of individual student's understanding and their level of mastery of essential learning skills. The quality of these analyses enables the principal and his staff to make comparisons of students' performance across all groups of interest to it in these three subject areas. The

school is currently planning to track, compare and improve students' progress in other subject areas. The school compares its performance against similar and city schools and intends to extend the scope of this beyond English, mathematics and science. The principal compares the performance of each grade level with outcomes of previous years.

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 well developed.

All members of the committed staff team engage in frequent and thorough discussions about individual student progress and achievement. All teachers have a good knowledge of every student at the school and a very detailed understanding of the academic progress of those students they teach. This shared interest and understanding provides a good basis for formalized collaborative meetings of grade level and subject based teams. These teams, which meet weekly, review student achievement in the standardized tests marked and analyzed three times each year. Teams use this information to set challenging interim and longer term goals with plans to realize them. Teams include the principal, his assistant principal, the mathematics coach, subject and grade level teachers and others with a direct interest in raising achievement. Collaborative teams track and review progress against interim goals, and fine tune plans towards the next assessment event.

Teachers work extremely cooperatively with parents, who together with students share the very high expectations of student personal and academic development set by the principal. Very strong relationships with parents and constant sharing of information relating to progress and achievement ensure that parents feel involved in the planning and review of their children's progress and the development of plans for achieving demanding longer term goals. Parents are able to discuss concerns and can work with the school to resolve any problems.

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 well developed.

The principal, assistant principal, mathematics coach and teachers have a very good knowledge of their students' achievements. Substantial areas of the curriculum are assessed in regular, standardized tests and the great attention to detailed analysis of performance give the staff a deep insight into students' academic strengths and weaknesses. Regular collaborative planning meetings ensure that the mandated curriculum remains aligned with the learning needs of students.

The school makes very good use of its budget, carefully targeting resources to where they are most needed as revealed by detailed analysis of performance data. Staffing decisions are based on the learning needs of all students to achieve as highly as they are capable. Within the scope open to it by its relatively small size and limited budget, the school manages student and teacher time extremely well. Classrooms are stimulating learning environments, students are grouped appropriately, instruction is differentiated, activities

are suitably paced and learning activities are varied. In a mathematics lesson, the teacher asked small groups of students in turn how they knew that the particular form and content of an equation on the board described the circle they were investigating. This led to purposeful discussion among the group with regular, targeted probing by the teacher. The other members of a class of 25 seventh graders remained highly engaged throughout. Another grade 7 classroom of 22 students was divided into heterogeneous groups of four or five. These groups were discussing the meaning of a specific passage in a novel. Conversation included most members of the groups and was focused on the meaning of specific sentences in the passage. Groups readily reached agreement but only after some give and take by its members. The teacher spent time with each group to find out what they had learnt and to ask carefully structured questions to individual group members.

All students benefit from small group advisory sessions for 15 minutes every morning and easy access to teachers to resolve work issues, particularly before and after school. Homework is regularly set and marked and actively supported by parents. The high level of mutual respect and trust between staff and students is palpable. Students report that they have confidence to confide in any member of staff if they are concerned about anything. The school actively encourages good attendance, takes immediate action when a student is absent and students understand it is their responsibility to catch up with any work they have missed.

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 well developed.

The principal recognizes that his teaching and support staff are the school's most important resource. New members of staff are selected on the basis of their high expectations of student achievement. Teachers are hired after a giving a successful demonstration lesson, on their commitment to continue learning and willingness to work with students over the extended day. There is a clear commitment by all staff to use data to understand student learning and promote highest achievable outcomes.

The principal holds teachers to account for the continuing academic progress of their students towards demanding but achievable goals. Teachers, both individually and in teams, use data to keep lesson plans and instructional methods aligned to the needs of each individual student. Teachers are enthusiastic about developing their skills in using data to align lessons to students needs and raise achievement. Detailed data from recent interim assessments in three subject areas was used at a collaborative grade level meeting to highlight differentiated instructional practice. Teachers observe each other's classroom instruction with the goal of raising achievement. Self- and peer-evaluation is a rapidly emerging process in the school.

The principal and the assistant principal observe nearly all classrooms on a daily basis with formal observations taking place at regular intervals throughout the year. The school appreciates that this is the major opportunity to improve the life chances of most students. Teachers understand that the quality of their instruction has to be differentiated to the needs of their students and of a consistently high standard.

The principal is very highly respected throughout the school community and in the school's neighborhood. Teachers, students and parents strongly believe he has the capacity to effect change and improvement. All members of the school follow agreed procedures.

The school is located within a community center which provides very good support services to augment the already strong resources provided for its students by the school. All students benefit from a range of opportunities available to them as members of the school's marine cadet force. Parents are very pleased that their children remain at the centre up to 6.00 p.m. and beyond. Students do their homework and enjoy a range of recreational facilities in a very safe environment.

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 well developed.

The school makes very effective use of interim assessment in English, mathematics and science to measure student achievement at least three times each year. These results are compared within and across classrooms and grade levels to determine whether plans are effective in moving students forward towards their interim goals. Comparisons across similar schools are made annually. Frequent analysis of weekly tests and other assessment measures is used to track student progress between regular interim assessment dates so that curriculum and instructional plans can be fine tuned immediately and interim goals met. When there is compelling evidence to support it, achievement goals are adjusted.

The principal leads the setting of annual and longer term goals and plans contained in the comprehensive education plan through a collaborative process involving staff, students and parents. The effectiveness of the previous year's plans in delivering goals within reasonable timeframes, and the impact of those goals on student achievement are evaluated and revisions made for the coming year. Data analyzed at each of the three interim assessment dates throughout the school year is used to revise goals and plans, and realign practices and resources to meet student learning needs in successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning. All goals and plans are clearly aimed at raising achievement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: All City Leadership Secondary School (IS/HS 554)	∅	✓	+
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