



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Automotive High School

High School 610

**50 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11222**

Principal: Melissa H Silberman

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Reviewer: Eileen Hill

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

Automotive High School is a Career and Technical (CTE) High School for students in grades 9 through 12. There are approximately 830 students enrolled. The school is a school of choice and students attend from all over the City. The overwhelming majority of students are male with only about 8% female. Fifty five per cent of the students are Black and 41% are Hispanic. There are around 23% special education students and 7% English language learners. The school is Title 1 eligible for around 83% of its students. This figure is high compared to similar and City schools. Attendance is around 73%. This figure is below both similar and City schools. In line with its core focus, the school offers additional graduation credits and career preparation to its students in auto technology. A high proportion of the students come to the school with very low literacy scores. The teaching staff is relatively stable, but the principal has hired a number of teachers and reallocated leadership positions in her time at the school.

Automotive High school is an empowerment school. Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school makes good use of an increasingly sophisticated range of data for understanding the overall progress and achievement of students.
- The curriculum is effectively aligned to the needs, interests and vocational aspirations of the students.
- Professional development is extensive and is very carefully aligned around the development priorities of the school.
- The principal offers dynamic leadership and is committed to bringing about improvements in the achievements and life chances of the students.
- The principal is highly respected by staff and students and has significant capacity to effect change.
- Leaders and other staff are chosen well with excellent arrangements in place for succession planning.
- Whole school planning and goal setting draws upon the expertise and energy of a wide range of staff, including teachers in their first year of teaching.
- Teachers meet together regularly in teams to develop curriculum initiatives and to plan their classroom teaching.
- The school aligns youth development and support and interventions services effectively around its stated academic goals and whole school development priorities.
- The school has extensive and productive partnerships with community based organizations.

What the school needs to improve

- Make better use of periodic assessments to measure the impact of the literacy plan on the progress of individuals, classes and groups.
- Make more focused use of data to guide the evaluation and revision of school plans and priorities.
- Find ways to involve more parents in the life of the school, and enable them to make a greater contribution to their children's progress.
- Provide more consistently good quality instruction that motivates and engages students.
- Find ways of improving attendance to lessons, particularly first thing in the morning and during the last classes in the afternoon.
- Find ways of increasing book resources in the library and of providing better access for students to well-maintained computer technology.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Under the leadership of the current principal, Automotive High School is making steady improvement. It generates a good range of data and has introduced its own interim progress reports to monitor and track the progress of students. Interventions based on the analysis of data have led to significant improvements in the school's graduation rates. All data is available on-line for teachers to access and use, although not all teachers yet make use of this facility to help them plan for classes and individual students. The school is unique in being a single trade career and technical school. Students perform well in auto technology and many go on to study the subject at college or go in to the automotive trade. Community based partnerships with the automotive industry make a significant contribution to the school curriculum and to its funding. In addition to auto technology, the school provides a diverse range of curriculum choices to the students, including drama and music. Students value this diversity.

The principal is dynamic and has made many changes, including hiring effective teachers and leaders. However, there is still much to do in improving the literacy levels of students, raising the expectations that teachers have of the students and improving the low levels of attendance. Planning identifies priorities accurately, but whole school data is not always used directly to set measurable targets for improvement. Revisions to plans are not always sufficiently flexible in allowing adjustments to be made quickly. The principal is aware of where improvements are necessary and has the energy and enthusiasm to bring about further change.

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 collects a good range of data on the performance and progress of the students which it stores electronically. Data is available for staff access although not all staff make use of this facility. Report cards are issued twice a year and have been supplemented by twice yearly progress reports between marking periods. Report cards provide a detailed breakdown of progress and performance and, in addition, allow teachers to comments on the attitude and engagement of individual students. Progress reports and other data are used systematically to establish interventions and set goals for individual students. Except in auto technology, additional periodic class assessments are not recorded in a consistent manner to help leaders and others to monitor the ongoing progress of individual students or the impact of whole school curriculum plans. The data generated by the school provides a clear overview of the performance and progress of each class, grade level and student and is used regularly by school leaders to review progress with individual teachers.

The school carefully analyzes data to monitor the progress of special education students and English language learners. It does not look closely, however, at the comparative

performance of its two main ethnic groups to help it identify trends and patterns. Students' achievements in literacy are of particular interest to the school. Initial tests on 9th grade students have revealed the extent of the problem but teachers have not planned further periodic assessments to monitor the impact of their instruction and interventions. The retesting planned for the end of the year will not allow them to make flexible interim adjustments for individual students. The school compares its performance against other similar schools and also makes systematic comparisons against its own past performance. Such comparisons show the school is making significant progress in increasing the numbers of student who graduate.

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 principal involves most teachers, including those in their first year of teaching, in collaborative whole school planning and review through the twice yearly weekend retreats she organizes for her staff. The first retreat this year led to a concise and well formulated set of goals and priorities for the Comprehensive Education Plan. Following the retreat, teachers continue to work in teams to help implement the various planned initiatives. Although the school has data to support its planning, it does not always make full use of it to set quantifiable measures for improvement. For example, school leaders have not set measurable targets to monitor the success of their literacy plan. School leaders and teachers look closely at data on academic progress and are quick to establish action plans for individual students, including special education students and English language learners. Students are encouraged to attend after school and Saturday classes.

School leaders have detailed data on attendance at classes and know that there is extensive absence from classes at the end of the school day, but this data is not used systematically with staff to detail the extent of the problem or to set objective measures for improvement. The school has high expectations of the behavior of students and this is reflected in the generally quiet and responsible attitudes of students in lessons and around the school. Expectations of academic achievement are improving, as shown by the improvements in graduation rates, but the school's efforts here are undermined by poor attendance. Parents receive regular and informative communications from the school but few are otherwise involved in the life of the school or in setting goals for their children's progress. Goals and plans drive the activity of most members of the school community, including external partners, and are known to all.

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 carefully aligns its instructional activity to the needs and interests of the students. The curriculum reflects the mandated curriculum and generates meaningful data on performance and progress. Students are offered a range of classes. For example, an auto business class has been added to the successful auto technology classes. Students are offered electives in English language arts, such as journalism. French as well as Spanish classes are provided and music and drama opportunities are also available. Advanced placement classes are in place for a number of subjects to extend more academically able students. Strategies for improving literacy permeate the work of all subject areas. Instruction is regularly supplemented by advisories and other interventions to support and promote academic success.

Budgeting decisions are well focused on supporting the main goals and priorities of the school. However, book resources in the library are too limited and students do not have sufficient access to well-maintained computer technology. Staffing and scheduling decisions are also driven by the needs and interests of the students. For the most part, staff know and respect students. They recognize and respond to their personal needs and students feel safe, secure and valued in the school. The principal holds teachers accountable for improving instruction, but while the quality of instruction has improved overall, expectations of students’ academic progress are still too low and teachers rarely differentiate their instruction. Although students generally respond positively in class, they are sometimes unengaged by instruction, particularly when it lacks challenge and interest. Attendance remains a high priority for the school. Students’ attendance is monitored and letters sent home routinely to notify parents of absence. A new community associate has just been hired to help monitor students’ attendance and liaise with parents, but systems for preventing students from cutting the last two classes of the day are not yet adequate. Lateness also adversely affects attendance in the first class of the morning.

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 with well-developed features.

The school has rigorous arrangements for selecting staff. New teachers are expected to understand and engage with the school’s use of data and to demonstrate a commitment to improving students’ progress and performance. The principal has been successful in hiring well qualified and highly committed teachers and school leaders to move the school forward. All professional development activity is driven by the school’s plans and priorities, as revealed by data. Much of it is in-house, but the principal also encourages her teachers to take part in national training where this is relevant. Teachers are encouraged to review the work of other teachers on school walk-throughs in order to develop good instructional models. Teachers in their first year are supported well by mentors. The principal frequently observes classroom teaching, both formally and informally. As a result, the principal has an excellent understanding of what individual teachers need to do to improve instruction and has secure strategies in place to help those who are struggling. The principal offers dynamic leadership and is respected by staff and students. She has significant capacity to effect further change.

Planning regularly takes place in teams to enable the sharing of practice and collaborative curriculum planning. A literacy team, for example, meets very regularly to plan and review the implementation of the literacy plan. Assistant principals are responsible for faculty and they work well with their teams on planning and evaluation. Although planning is indirectly based on data, data is not always evident in meetings. In most respects the school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, although not always followed. For example, some teachers allow students to eat in class, although they are aware that this is not acceptable. Procedures for improving attendance at classes are not generally effective.

The school provides good career guidance to the students and aligns youth development and support services effectively around its academic goals. The principal is very active in developing partnerships with community based organizations. For example, she has attracted significant additional funding for next year to support student attendance. The school has strong partnerships with the automotive industry. One such partnership has recently helped the school to refurbish and extend its library. Partnerships also provide industrial work experience for students and employment opportunities when they leave school.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The Comprehensive Education Plan sets out clearly the main priorities for the school with review points and interim goals. Planning is entirely appropriate, but plans do not always specify success criteria in objectively measurable ways. As a result, while there is a great deal of activity around implementation, there is not always sufficient clarity around what is to be achieved.

A lot of data is generated on individual students, classes and groups and this is used appropriately to monitor students' performance and progress, as well as to monitor the effectiveness of teachers. However, data is not always brought together systematically to provide an overview for all staff. Scholarship and graduation data are the main indicators of success and this drives interventions and the review of plans. All subjects and faculty plan for improvements and some, in auto technology for example, have quantifiable measures of success and use periodic assessment data to monitor progress. Periodic review is not used consistently across the school, beyond its use for report cards and progress reviews. This limits the school's ability to act quickly and intervene to bring about improvements where necessary, for example, in monitoring the early impact of the literacy plan or in monitoring and acting upon poor in-class attendance.

The planning cycle is well-established and involves the majority of staff. Practices are realigned at the end of each major phase, usually the end of each year. The school is not yet sufficiently flexible in realigning practices in response to interim evaluation, partly because it does not use its data early enough to help it to do so.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Automotive High School (HS 610)	∅	✓	+
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	