



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The High School for Health Careers and Sciences

High School 468

**549 Audubon Avenue
New York
NY 10040**

Principal: Harris Marmor

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Reviewer: Jean Mackie

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 school is located in the George Washington Campus in upper Manhattan. It has 647 students enrolled, covering grades 9 through 12. The school population is predominantly Hispanic (93%), with 6% Black students and 1% of students from other ethnic backgrounds. Almost 14% are special education students and 27% are English language learners. The school's attendance, at 83.4% in 2005, was above that of both similar and City schools. An increasing number of students are recent arrivals to the country. They mostly come from the Dominican Republic. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding and is an empowerment school. The principal has been the leader of the school since it opened in 1999. There has been relatively little staff mobility over recent years.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The well-respected and highly visible principal provides clear direction and leadership to the school.
- The school scrutinizes data well to judge overall performance and the progress of students.
- The curriculum provides a clear structure towards graduation and is adjusted, where necessary, to meet the identified needs of students.
- There is some lively instruction which both challenges and engages the students.
- Staff have high expectations of both the academic and personal development of the students.
- The school runs very smoothly on a day to day basis, with good communication between the whole school community.
- Professional development is well-tailored to the needs of the whole school and individuals.
- There is a strong team culture within the school which facilitates the sharing of good practice.
- The mutual respect that exists between adults and students is reflected by the very positive relationships within the school.
- Students, very largely, are eager to do well and feel that the school provides a safe and secure learning environment.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that there are clear systems to monitor the impact of the new interim assessment program on instructional practice and student outcomes.
- Ensure that the planned changes to the Comprehensive Education Plan include clear interim goals for groups of students, especially the English language learners.
- Strengthen the informal sharing of practice and data across subjects through structured grade meetings.
- Continue the efforts to strengthen the engagement of parents with their children's learning, particularly with regard to attendance and punctuality.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal's strong focus on providing clear instructional leadership within a safe and caring environment has underpinned the development and growth of this very successful school. He is well supported in this by his assistant principals. There is a strong sense of collegiality amongst the staff who are eager to learn through the sharing of practice and other professional development opportunities. Data is used very well to analyze performance, track progress of students and to inform instructional practice. The curriculum is well aligned to graduation requirements and is carefully adjusted to meet identified needs. Students feel safe and secure and value the support from the staff. They are aware of the high expectations of the school and the vast majority are eager to do well. The school recognizes the need to continue its work to improve the punctuality and attendance of some students. There is no complacency, with staff determined to learn and develop together for the benefit of the students.

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school is very systematic in the way in which it collects and analyzes the wealth of data it has regarding student performance and progress. Examination results and graduation rates are carefully scrutinized and shared with the whole staff so that there is a good awareness of overall outcomes. The school systematically tracks trends in performance, which have shown steady year-to-year improvement. It also compares its results with those of similar and City-wide schools so that it is able to benchmark its achievements against them.

Outcomes across the subjects are studied in detail after every marking period, so that the school has a very clear picture of comparative performance. In addition, this information is used as a basis for discussion between assistant principals and teachers to identify both successes and areas for development. Given the school's high proportion of English language learners, the school is particularly concerned with tracking their progress. Analysis has shown, for example, that the proportion of these students who gain English language proficiency improves significantly as the students move through the school. At subject level, the school has also noted that English language learners are performing better in English than mathematics and this is being looked at in more detail. Special education students are similarly carefully tracked and their progress monitored.

At class level, teachers apply the common grading policy consistently to accumulate reliable ongoing data about individual performance through tests, quizzes and homeworks. These provide regular feedback on students' levels of understanding and the progress that they are making. The guidance team also has records of the students' attendance and

achievements so that they can follow up on those who are not progressing as well as they should. The school has taken further steps to refine its tracking procedures through the introduction of a new set of periodic assessments. Some very useful information has been extracted which has already informed amendments to the curriculum for some students. The school reviews the relative performance of boys and girls and the different ethnic groups when it is considering its plans for improvement. As numbers are comparatively small for the latter, this is largely undertaken at individual level.

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.

The principal’s determination to ensure that all students succeed as well as they can, ultimately through improved graduation rates and college entry, underpins the goal setting and all other aspects of the school’s work. His vision is shared by the staff who are fully committed to both the academic and personal development of the students. The principal, ably supported by his cabinet, identify clear aspirations for future achievement at whole school and subject level. Discussions between the assistant principals and teachers about past performance enable success to be recognized and challenging goals for the future to be identified at class and subject level.

Data is used very well to identify those students who would benefit from advanced placement courses and those who are in need of additional support. Special education students, for example, are quickly identified and well-provided for in either collaborative team teaching settings or self contained classes. English language learners are similarly well-supported through careful grouping and the curriculum. Their good progress is evidenced by the proportion of special education students moving into less restrictive environments and the increasing number of English language learners who move into mainstream classes. The new periodic assessments have been used very effectively to identify a number of 9th and 10th grade students who are in need of additional reading and mathematics support. Teachers use their ongoing assessments regularly to identify those students who are not progressing as well as they should be. Very good intervention support is provided by the guidance counselors.

The high expectations of the school are regularly conveyed to both parents and students. Parents value the information provided about the curriculum and their child’s progress towards graduation. Transcripts and progress reports are discussed in detail so that parents are very clear about their children’s goals. The school is taking positive steps to provide additional support for non-English speaking parents so that they can play a more active role in their children’s education. The students themselves, through meetings and regular feedback on their work, are fully aware of what is expected of them. The majority respond very positively and are extremely eager to meet the goals set for them. The goals set for the students drive the work of the whole school community.

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

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The school provides a well constructed curriculum which enables all students to progress systematically towards graduation as they move through each grade. The effectiveness of the curriculum is monitored regularly through the analysis of, for example, test scores and Regents results. The school has amended the mathematics curriculum as a result and, outcomes are already showing improvement. The school has a good range of electives, many of which are linked to health, which broaden the students’ experiences.

Staff are fully aware of their accountability for the outcomes of the students that they teach. Focused discussions with assistant principals take place after each marking period, for example. Teachers systematically follow the school’s lesson planning policy so that there is a consistency of approach across classes. Lessons are often lively and challenging, with activities well matched to the needs of the students, who respond positively and are eager to participate. Data is used well to group students in class and to inform strategies for differentiation. Group discussions, which facilitate the sharing of ideas and peer assessment, are regular features. English language learners and special education students are well supported through focused teaching groups.

The principal has used his budget judiciously, not only to improve resources but also to align staffing more closely to the needs of the students. Literacy and mathematics programs have been purchased to support a group of students identified as having low levels of basic skills. Bilingual teachers have been appointed to strengthen the support for English language learners and adjustments to the scheduling have also been made with additional time for intervention activities where the need arises.

Staff are fully committed to both the personal and academic needs of the students, who value the support that the teachers provide and the respect shown to them. Students feel comfortable about approaching adults with any worries or concerns. Attendance is a high priority with very structured and effective systems in place to track and challenge absentees. Attendance has improved as a result, but the school is determined to pursue absence and lateness with both the students concerned and their parents.

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 is highly regarded for the strong leadership and direction that he has provided for the school since it opened in 1999. He knows his school well and his significant impact over time is testimony to his strong capacity to effect further change. Although there has been little movement of staff in recent years, the principal is very clear that any new teachers appointed should have high expectations, be committed to the use of data to support instruction and show a willingness to be innovative.

Professional development is important to the school, with needs carefully identified through rigorous scrutiny of data, individual discussions and classroom observations. These are

undertaken by the principal, assistant principals and coaches. A structured approach to recording observations and feedback to teachers ensures that there is a consistency of approach and expectations. Data is used well to inform the focus of the weekly walkthroughs that take place. Findings are shared with the whole staff so that all are aware of aspects of instruction that are working well and any that require improvement. Weekly professional development sessions, shared with the other schools in the building, are also informed by this process. Staff provide mutual support, exchanging ideas and evaluating practice, through subject meetings, intervisitations and 'lunch and learn' sessions. These structures collectively provide valuable opportunities to evaluate the impact of professional development, which has resulted in improvements in instruction and better outcomes for students. The staff would like to formalize their cross subject discussions and the school is already considering ways to do this.

There are very good systems in place, rigorously overseen by one of the assistant principals, to ensure that the school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Procedures are well communicated to, and followed by, the whole school community. Very strong external partnerships, particularly with health institutions such as the Isabella Geriatric Center, effectively support the school's aims and goals by providing additional real-life experiences for the students. Links between the other schools in the building are also good, particularly with regard to opportunities in sports and support for special education students.

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 and the principal's performance review are the two key documents that drive the improvement planning process. Members of the whole school community are actively engaged in developing long term goals and aspirations for the future. Interim goals are less clearly established, however, particularly for important groups, such as English language learners. The Comprehensive Education plan has been recognized as an unwieldy tool for the continual monitoring of progress and its revision has, rightly, been identified as a priority for this year.

The various meeting structures, however, at administration, subject and individual level, enable regular review and evaluation of the work of the school. Attendance and academic data are regularly analyzed and lead to amendments to the curriculum and intervention practices where appropriate. Outcomes from the new periodic assessments, for example, have been used constructively to identify those students in need of additional literacy and mathematics support and have led to the recent introduction of additional programs to underpin this process. English language learners and special education students are carefully tracked and moved into mainstream classes when they are ready to do so. Students at risk of underperformance are also carefully monitored by guidance counselors with suitable intervention strategies provided for them. Teachers regularly review their instructional programs and adjust their approaches in the light of evaluation. The school is reflective and is continually looking to be flexible in its response to student needs.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The High School for Health Careers and Sciences (HS 468)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, 			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 			X
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* 			X
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			X
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			X
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	Ø	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	Ø	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	Ø	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	