



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

A. Philip Randolph High School

High School 540

**443 West 135th Street
New York
NY 10031**

Principal: Henry Rubio

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Reviewer: Louise Kapner

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

A. Philip Randolph Campus High School, located in the neighborhood of Harlem in Manhattan, is an academic comprehensive school serving 1446 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The majority of students, at 62%, are Hispanic, well above similar and City schools. Of the remainder, 31% are Black, higher than similar and Citywide, and the rest come from other ethnic backgrounds. About 9% are special education students, who receive services in self-contained classes, through collaborative team teaching, or through special education teacher support services. Fifty-nine percent of students are Title 1 eligible, which is above that in similar and City schools. Forty six students, or 3%, are identified as English language learners. Attendance was at 86%, which is below similar schools but above City schools. This year attendance is approaching 90%.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has high expectations and a clear vision for improving the school.
- The administrative team works collaboratively to support the goals of the school.
- The school has a highly organized system to collect student data and uses it to monitor student performance.
- The majority of students are actively engaged and focused on learning.
- The school reviews student scholarship on-going throughout the year to inform instruction.
- Attendance is afforded a very high priority, and the school's procedures have produced good outcomes.
- There are clear expectations for student grades and behavior which are shared with students and parents.
- Positive community-based partnerships support the goals of the school.
- The school community is extremely supportive and respectful of each other.

What the school needs to improve

- Create opportunities for teachers to meet regularly and participate in professional development.
- Develop further teachers' skills in the analysis of data to inform instruction and monitor individual student performance and progress.
- Further align instructional activity and resources around focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.
- Ensure that there are efforts to increase teacher involvement in planning and creating changes to the school's programs.
- Continue to monitor data to identify what is working and areas for further development.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

A. Philip Randolph prides itself on being a college preparatory high school. Last year students earned close to \$400,000 in scholarship money and this year the amount is approaching \$1,000,000. Students who attend the school have opportunities to enroll in specialty programs focused on medical careers, engineering or the humanities, and can participate in advanced placement courses. They are engaged in learning and appreciate teachers who help “pinpoint their strengths” and help them make decisions about “what you want to do in life.” Since the arrival of the principal in November, 2006, he has focused on creating a school in which teachers are involved, feel supported, and can attend to the academic needs of all students. The assistant principals are highly supportive in this effort. Data collection has been enhanced, is very comprehensive, and is well used to review students’ performance, identify and address behaviorally difficult students, and to inform instruction. Professional development is integral and plans for next year include revisiting scheduling to enable greater collaboration. Parents are well informed and appreciate the educational challenges and high standards of the school. For one parent this is her third child graduating from the school, and for another, her daughter travels an hour each way and loves coming to the school.

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 wide range of data on groups of students and individuals to understand their performance and progress. Daedalus, a comprehensive internal data system, bridges the collection of scholastic data from the high school scheduling and transcript system and demographic information from Automate the Schools database system. These systems are very well used to monitor subject, individual and sub-group performance and progress toward meeting graduation requirements, and is highly effective in quick targeting of students who require additional support and interventions. Available data, and assessments administered during spring orientations, are well used to program in-coming students. The school pays careful attention to English language learners who are able to accumulate course credits, but are not successful in passing Regents. These students receive special programming. Variations by ethnicity are not monitored, but these students are reviewed within the existing data collection.

The principal compares the course pass rate within each cohort by grade and subject to ensure teaching and learning are effective. Pass rates on Regents is carefully reviewed and used to plan instruction. Analysis of the January 2007 global history Regents helped identify areas of weakness and inform the planning and implementation of appropriate instructional strategies. Further interrogation of the data for sub-groups of students within academies provides additional information regarding effectiveness of extra supports afforded to targeted students. For example, students who are enrolled in Gateway, a more

intensive program within the medical academy, receive additional academic support. Their performance and progress is compared to those students in the academy who are not involved in Gateway. Performance of the school is under constant review. Comparisons with similar schools, as well as to their own past progress in all subjects, classes, and for each marking period, is an integral part of data review.

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 transparent use of data is at the core of the school’s planning. The principal uses data to set short-term goals that will have implications for long range improvement both in instruction and student outcomes. For example, by reviewing the percentage of student pass rate by subject for each marking period, trends are identified that have implications for immediate instructional strategizing and future planning. Disaggregated data from the New York State English as a second language achievement test was the basis for implementing a Saturday academy for English language learners to address their needs.

Staff members work collaboratively by department to set goals, create grading policy, pacing calendars and exams. Students’ results enable the school to measure the effectiveness of this planning. However, although classroom assessments are a regular feature of classes, it is not presently an integral part of differentiating instruction. The school pays particular attention to those students who are identified with the greatest needs. Students are provided with academic intervention services after school for remediation and credit accumulation. Assessments provide teachers with data on student specific needs and enables on-going monitoring of performance and progress. Regents’ preparation classes are scheduled during the day and are well attended.

The school has high expectations that students will meet and pass standards. Information disseminated at the beginning of the school year clearly outlines course requirements and school rules and regulations. Parents and students sign off on this in a contract. Interim progress reports and report cards further provide on-going information. One teacher meets mid-year with each student individually to enable them to reflect on how they are doing, and discuss what else needs to be done to meet their personally set course goals. Students “know what teachers want” and parents appreciate being well-informed. One parent shared that the entire school community is “on the same page. They want the kids to do better.”

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 uses data well to set curriculum. There is a good range of core classes, electives within each academy, such as bio-ethics in the medical house, and an extensive number of Advanced Placement courses including macro-economics and pre-calculus. Scheduling is also well adjusted. For example, higher achieving students in 9th grade were programmed mid-year into an Advanced Placement world history course. Double

periods or additional periods in content area subjects support remedial and Regents' level instruction. Students are generally engaged and behave well. Teachers use group work and probing questions to encourage sharing of ideas to involve and focus all students in class. Staffing and budgeting decisions are appropriately based on the school's plans to raise student outcomes. Strengths of teachers are capitalized on. For example, a dual certified teacher in mathematics and English as a second language is teaching both mathematics A and B. Allocating funds for summer school programming is reflective of students' needs in credit recovery to support timely graduation.

Teachers are held accountable for teaching and learning. Administrators meet with individual teachers to discuss marking period achievement rates. Teachers are asked to address and provide documentation to explain students' grades and evidence of out-reach and support for failing students. The school recognizes that some teachers do not consistently use data to differentiate instruction to sufficiently meet the needs of individual students. Each department is further required to develop course specific performance standards. The principal also holds his cabinet accountable and engages them in tough conversations. They are asked to create specific plans which include how, when, and by whom specific issues will be addressed.

Relationships between adults and students are built upon mutual respect. One teacher said, "They give you what you give them." The students appreciate the support they receive and as one graduating student shared, "If you do what the teachers want you to do you will be prepared." Student attendance, which previous to this year was below similar schools, has been afforded a high priority. By targeting students with specific interventions attendance has improved by close to 2% since November and is nearing the school's goal of 90%.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The newly appointed principal brings strong leadership skills to the school. He is well supported by his assistant principals. Parents and students respect his vision and ideas and appreciate having a voice in the school. Teachers respect him and are involved in various activities, but do not always feel empowered as contributors to changes in the school. Candidates for department vacancies are selected through a rigorous screening process that includes their ability to use data to improve student performance and progress.

Classroom observations are routine and teachers have the required formal ones by the principal or an assistant principal. Formal observation reports are reviewed for trends and implementation of prior recommendations. Professional development is a high priority and is based on information from a variety of sources, including teachers' observations, review of data and teacher needs. Monthly department conferences present opportunities to review administrative items and to work on instructional issues. For example, a meeting of the humanities department focused on incorporating literacy into social studies. Team meetings and study groups are further opportunities for common planning. A team of mathematics teachers are presently working on the new integrated algebra curriculum. However, although the principal is focused on building capacity and involving teachers in meaningful professional development, this is not consistent. Some teachers do learn from

each other. For example, teachers in the mathematics department fulfill a requirement of three classroom inter-visitations and log their experiences.

School routines and procedures are shared with the school community thus allowing it to run smoothly. However, there is not always clear and timely communication with staff concerning forthcoming changes.

The school is very well supported by a team of student counselors including a highly skilled college advisor who begins his outreach with 9th graders. The school has excellent partnerships with the School Business Institute, City College, Bronx Community College, Hunter College and Learning through Expanded Arts Program. These collaborations are well-used to support the school's goals and enhance the education to raise student achievement.

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school is proactive in evaluating student, class, and cohort performance data and constantly looking at ways to improve learning and the progress of students. The rigorous self-review is appropriately based on data and a review of the Comprehensive Education Plan. The administrators reflect mid-year on where they are and what they need to do to reach the school's yearly goals. Review of on-going student performance in content areas, comparisons with Regents' results, and tracking by cohort and individual students identifies what's working and areas that need further development. Review of student cohort data relative to missing coursework, and the impact on potential graduates, is driving summer school planning and planning for the fall term.

The school is flexible in ways in which it modifies programming and teaching in response to information from diagnostic assessments about students' progress and needs. For example, curriculum was modified in a non-Regents science course to enable students to meet the requirement for graduation. There are uniform assessments in all subject areas so that student progress is monitored and evaluated. Students who need remediation, credit accumulation, or enrichment are provided with additional instruction during and after school.

Many recent initiatives are due to the leadership of the principal and the increasing use of data to guide instruction. The school has a strong capacity for further improvement as it looks to identify school needs and realign practices and resources to improve student outcomes.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: A. Philip Randolph High School (HS 540)	∅	✓	+
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	