

Satellite Academy High School
120 West 30th Street, New York, New York State,
10001

Principal: Mr Alan Baratz

Dates of review: 7-11 April 2006

Reviewer: Roger Fry

Cambridge Education

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PART 1: OVERVIEW.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The school gives disaffected and transferring students who are under credited another chance to gain academic success and graduate
- Relationships between students and staff are positive.
- The teaching and guidance given makes a significant impact on students who attend regularly, they make good progress academically and socially.
- Students' individual progress is closely monitored by teachers.
- Teachers' expertise in their subjects is well developed; they make teaching interesting and engage students successfully; offering courses in subjects such as: law; English; science; and citizenship.
- The Atlas Learning Communities program is helping the school evaluate teaching and learning effectively.
- Family group work and the advisory program help students plan their time and gain success. The school is successful in helping students deal with issues that face them.
- Students' personal growth is well developed in the 'survival' classes.
- The program to orient new students and develop their key skills during their first semester helps them to engage with school.
- Students who attend regularly have positive views of the school, and they feel it has turned their lives around for the better.
- Leadership empowers students and staff, all are part of the educative process and all opinions are valued.
- The Midtown building is dedicated to the school and is bright and well looked after.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO IMPROVE – immediate Action

- Improve attendance. Around 30% of students are absent from school on a typical day.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT – medium to long-term

- Develop students' writing skills to match their verbal skills. Give greater attention to students' handwriting skills so that they can record information more efficiently.
- Develop further the use of data to find patterns in students' academic and attendance records so that further interventions can be made to accelerate their progress.
- Assist students in developing an understanding of the value in learning. So that they see that the end result is not only the acquisition of credits but also a life long interest in aspects of their studies.

PART 2: The School Context.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a school of approximately 840 students, from 9th to 12th Grade, located on four different sites. It was opened in 1971 as part of a drive to combat high drop out rates of students from High schools in New York. Students are drawn from a wide area and represent the five New York districts. Entry standards into 9th Grade are well below the average for this age. Most students have gained few credits by the time they enter the school. Around 5% of students are identified as having a special educational need or require assistance with English.

PART 3: MAIN FINDINGS

Main Findings: what is the school's overall performance; how well does it meet New York City's evaluation criteria; any other key observations.

Overall Evaluation

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

1. Monitoring Performance and Progress, Compilation, Analysis, and Use of Data.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Satellite Academy has some unique features, it has a waiver for most of the Regents High School Examinations so does not have all of the information that other schools have for direct comparison with other schools. Students in the senior year sit English Language Arts and Mathematics 'A' papers.

From a low entry point, the progress of students who attend regularly is at least proficient and some students make good progress. Each year, between 50% and 55% of students eligible graduate. Those who attend less regularly do not make the same levels of progress and there is a correlation between those who attend and those who graduate.

The school is proficient in comparing its past performance with the present. Results show a modest improvement in standards over time. The January 2006 tests showed that 75% passed in English and 83% passed the Math 'A' test. The school is well aware of differences in scores between sites and has targeted, for example, better exam preparation in Math for students at the Midtown site to boost their scores. Unsurprisingly students' writing skills are not as advanced as their verbal skills, and this is an area for development. Students' work is moderated effectively on the different sites and there is agreement on standards in the students' portfolios. The staff is experienced in doing this, but there is no calibration between different schools to validate judgments further.

There is a well-developed system for collecting data about individual student's progress and attainments. This is used to identify their specific needs and to follow their progress over time. The school identifies students who need additional support and appropriate action is taken to address these needs. However, insufficient attention is given to examining and analyzing whole school trends in data, such as by gender, ethnic group or age on entry to the school to discover if groups are, for example, underachieving.

2. Academic Improvement Goals and Plans.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

From well below average levels of attainment at 9th Grade, well-developed teaching ensures that students achieve proficiently by the time they leave school. Some make good progress because they enjoy learning. The school has found ways to motivate and accelerate their progress, beyond simply the acquisition of credits.

Further attention now needs to be given to strategies for motivating those students who do not attend regularly. This is an area for improvement identified by the school.

Whilst many students find the work done to complete their portfolios is interesting and stimulating, some have not yet found the subjects that would motivate them to attend school regularly.

Students are very clear about what they have to do in order to graduate. There are well-developed systems for monitoring students' progress towards the goals they have agreed with staff. Teachers look closely at their test results and for example, identify common gaps in students' knowledge, in order to rectify them. The academic needs of groups of students are met through extra support in subjects when they need it. The assessment process guides what is taught.

Teachers and advisors make good use of the full range of data available to them regarding behavior. There are few behavioral problems. Teachers know the regular attendees well, therefore they are able to identify any who are at risk of falling behind in their work and support them appropriately. Students' special educational needs and occasional additional language needs are met with support in the Resource room.

Parents receive regular reports about their children's standards and progress.

The school sets out its expectations clearly. The annual reports from each site are informative.

3. Instructional Programs, Practices, & Arrangements; Student Engagement.

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

Teaching is well developed in most lessons. Teachers ensure that work is well matched to each group of students' needs and that the curriculum is challenging. Teachers and students work closely on the portfolios that replace examination work. Their work is often detailed, informative and students show that they are well engaged in their studies. One student, for example, particularly enjoyed a unit of work about the French language and expressed this enthusiastically. The covering letters that students include to explain their work are often well constructed and clearly explain why they have completed different elements of their work. As a result of this approach, many students are articulate, reflective and display good levels of confidence.

Just occasionally teachers could take more time to answer students' well-intentioned questions in lessons. These students require much support in practical work orientated to life skills. For example, students learn to fill in important forms, look after their money and complete job application forms. They engage in this well and see the relevance to daily life.

Most students respond well to the challenges lessons provide. There were good examples of them co-operating in pairs or small groups, such as when they extracted iron from breakfast cereal in a science lesson. They learned from each other as they discussed their findings. The annual reports that Principals prepare from each of the sites show that students have the option to participate in a wide range of activities during the year. Through a program of visits and visitors, students experience at first hand, for example, theatre studies and how to improve the New York environment.

The school concentrates effectively on orientating new students to help them to learn and experience the expectations. They receive a useful program of work about key skills. Students consolidate and improve what they know; for example, about taking notes, reading for meaning and working in groups.

This program helps to accelerate students' progress, as some students have had a break in time between their previous school and starting at Satellite Academy. The school's expectations are made clear to students from the beginning. Teachers take responsibility for their students' academic performances and relationships are good.

Absences are followed up rigorously, but absenteeism is still a major problem.

It may be helpful to research ways in which other High Schools are solving this issue and implement any good ideas they discover.

4. Staff Selection, Leadership, and Capacity Building.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school's assessment of its work is accurate. Teachers have well developed levels of expertise in the subjects they teach. Each teacher is reflective and keen to use his/her experiences of teaching for the benefit of other staff and students. The school has a group of like minded staff on each site who have a commitment to helping students graduate from whatever starting point. A close watch is kept on students' progress and the initial expectation is that all will graduate. Student work is compared and teachers, check what has been learned revising their teaching accordingly. Teachers record the levels of participation students make in lessons. They also use the students' portfolios of work to see how the work contained in these reflects the teaching.

There are useful strategies to review lessons, time on subjects and how students can be taught better. Teachers receive feedback on their teaching and they gain from this. Atlas Learning Communities is helping the school to evaluate the teaching and learning, through for example, the work that students do. This is a good project that promises new insights into accelerating students' progress.

Decisions are made on each site and courses of action agreed between sites. The school's Directors and the Principal work together to meet the school's mission statement. They each evaluate work on their sites and comment on what has been happening. The results of the evaluative activities the school undertakes are shared effectively. Joint discussions include matters such as exam results; drop out rates, attendance and how well students are prepared for life beyond school. Senior staff then plan how to improve policies so that students make better progress. Priorities are often derived from staff noticing a problem and then finding an answer. Over the last few years results indicate that the process has had positive effects.

Students, parents and teachers recognize the leadership qualities of the Principal and Directors and recognize that a large number of students benefit from the school's work. The shared vision drives expectations.

5. Recognition, Intervention, and Adjustments.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

All school staff are effectively involved in assessing and evaluating students' progress. This information is gathered from a range of sources through the close collaboration of teachers in family group sessions. The school also engages all students in regular discussions about their academic performances and whether they are on course to reach the credit totals they need. The interim goals they have to reach help them to plan the pace of their studies.

Teachers give good feedback to students about the quality of their work and adapt their teaching proficiently to take account of the quality of students' work. The strength of the school's system is at the individual school level.

In addition to the academic assessments there are a number of ways in which the school gathers additional information about students' performance, such as in the regular meetings between students and their Advisors to review the data provided by subject teachers. Students who are over or underperforming are identified and individual programs are put in place for them. All parents receive progress reports.

Other key observations

The use of the accommodation in Midtown is well-developed.

PART 4: SCHOOL PROFILE

Name of school: Satellite Academy High School			Name of School Leader: Alan Baratz		
School address: 120 West 30 th Street New York 10001			e-mail of School Leader: abaratz@nycdoe.net		
School Phone number: 646-674-2800			School Leader direct line: 646-674-2803		
School website:			Fax number: 646-674-2829		
Name of district school located in: 'A' Zone			Authorizer:		
Financial Information			Year		2006
Total Operational budget	\$5 762 419	Per student Revenue		\$6 937	
Total Expenditure	\$5 862 419	Expenditure per student		\$6 937	
Balance brought forward from previous year	\$0	Balance carried forward to next year		\$0	
Student Information		Ultimate design size		To be achieved by	
Students on the school's roll	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2006-06
Number of students on the school roll	795	850	881	842	845
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free state lunches				630	634
Special educational needs					
Number of students with special educational needs				12	12
Number of students with English as a second language (who qualify for support)				7	14
Pupil mobility in the last school year				Number of students	
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission				183	121
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving				161	124
Attendance				% Attendance	
School data				68	69
Comparative data for district					
Ethnic background of students	Number of students	Suspensions -last school year		Fixed period	Permanent
African-American	354	African-American		4	0
Asian-American	22	Asian-American		0	0
Hispanic	492	Hispanic		0	0
Caucasian	43	Caucasian		0	0
Other:	2	Other:		0	0

Grade levels included in charter		Student enrollment				
Grade	Yes / No	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Pre K						
K						
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
Qualified teachers						
Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)					59	58
Number of students per qualified teacher					16	16
Education support staff						
Total number of education support staff					8	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week						
Deployment of teachers						
Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes					80	80
Average class size					25	25
Recruitment of teachers						
Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years						8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years						7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)						0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)						0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)						0
Review Data:						
Number of lessons observed, excluding short advisory sessions						6
Number of discussions with staff, other adults and students						9
<i>In addition the reviewer observed advisory sessions, out of school activities</i>						

Part 5: Grade Summary

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.	o	✓	+
<p>1.1 The school uses available data (e.g., diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, students work products, standards-based portfolios, attendance, descriptive review, security data, etc.) and generates its own to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of how well each student, classroom, grade level, and other important categories of students and the school are:</p> <p>(1) currently performing, and (2) progressing over time, on English Language Arts, math, and other important academic subjects.</p> <p>Criteria for measuring student progress are “objective” when they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards-based, • consistent across students, • capable of revealing progress or a lack of it over time and ways to close the gap between current and expected practice, <p>and when they allow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the performance of different students to be compared, and • learning activity to be broken down into component parts so strengths and weaknesses on each sub-activity may be identified. 			x
<p>1.2 The school makes effective use of the data to assess the performance and progress of students by racial and ethnic groups, English Language Learners and special education students, and all other categories of interest to the school.</p> <p>{This criterion and the next are partially aspirational as of now. City and State Report Cards and Division of Accountability and Assessment reports provide only some of the necessary data. The NYC DOE will soon provide schools with fuller access to better data.}</p>	x		
<p>1.1 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, racial and ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.</p>		x	
Quality Statement 2: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	o	✓	+
<p>2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable, goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and it develops plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.</p>			x
<p>2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as warranting attention.</p>		x	
<p>2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.</p>		x	
<p>2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. That information is central to setting reasonably challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.</p>			x
<p>2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.</p>			x

Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	0	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with the school's high expectations and improvement plans and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals.			x
3.2 Decisions about the use of teacher and student time are based on the organization of the day and week needed to inform teachers about each student's performance and next learning steps, set goals and plans for improved student learning, and implement and continuously improve plans for reaching stated goals.			x
3.3 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			x
3.4 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.5 Teachers are accountable for student outcomes. The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			x
3.6 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			x
3.7 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		x	
3.8 Instructional programs actively engage students.			x
3.9 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			x
Quality Statement 4: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	0	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			x
4.2 Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer- evaluation are aligned and overlap.		x	
4.3 Leaders, faculty, and staff share the same goals and frequently evaluate themselves, their interventions and each other's plans and interventions, including, when possible, by comparing outcomes across classrooms and schools. The school monitors its performance and tackles weaknesses. Even in areas where the school is successful, leadership is not complacent, but aims to improve further. The goal in all cases is to improve student and school performance and progress.		x	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results and revision of plans takes place in teams.			x
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			x
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.			x
Quality Statement 5: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.	0	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is reaching stated goals.			x
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		x	
5.3 Information generated by interim assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			x
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive each successive phase of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve students' academic outcomes.		x	

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120 West 30th Street, New York, New York State,
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Part 4: Evaluation Criteria Grade Summary

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Final Evaluation	0	✓	+
Overall Quality of the school		x	

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.	0	✓	+
<p>1.1 The school uses available data (e.g., diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, students work products, standards-based portfolios, attendance, descriptive review, security data, etc.) and generates its own to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of how well each student, classroom, grade level, and other important categories of students and the school are:</p> <p>(1) currently performing, and (2) progressing over time, on English Language Arts, math, and other important academic subjects. Criteria for measuring student progress are "objective" when they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards-based, • consistent across students, • capable of revealing progress or a lack of it over time and ways to close the gap between current and expected practice, <p>and when they allow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the performance of different students to be compared, and • learning activity to be broken down into component parts so strengths and weaknesses on each sub-activity may be identified. 		x	
<p>1.2 The school makes effective use of the data to assess the performance and progress of students by racial and ethnic groups, English Language Learners and special education students, and all other categories of interest to the school. {This criterion and the next are partially aspirational as of now. City and State Report Cards and Division of Accountability and Assessment reports provide only some of the necessary data. The NYC DOE will soon provide schools with fuller access to better data.}</p>	x		
<p>1.3 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, racial and ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.</p>		x	

Quality Statement 2: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	0	✓	+
<p>2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable, goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and it develops plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.</p>			x
<p>2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as warranting attention.</p>		x	
<p>2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.</p>		x	
<p>2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. That information is central to setting reasonably challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.</p>			x
<p>2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.</p>			x

Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	0	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with the school's high expectations and improvement plans and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals.			x
3.2 Decisions about the use of teacher and student time are based on the organization of the day and week needed to inform teachers about each student's performance and next learning steps, set goals and plans for improved student learning, and implement and continuously improve plans for reaching stated goals.			x
3.3 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			x
3.4 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.5 Teachers are accountable for student outcomes. The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			x
3.6 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			x
3.7 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		x	
3.8 Instructional programs actively engage students.			x
3.9 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			x
Quality Statement 4: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	0	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			x
4.2 Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer- evaluation are aligned and overlap.		x	
4.3 Leaders, faculty, and staff share the same goals and frequently evaluate themselves, their interventions and each other's plans and interventions, including, when possible, by comparing outcomes across classrooms and schools. The school monitors its performance and tackles weaknesses. Even in areas where the school is successful, leadership is not complacent, but aims to improve further. The goal in all cases is to improve student and school performance and progress.		x	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results and revision of plans takes place in teams.			x
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			x
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.			x
Quality Statement 5: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.	0	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is reaching stated goals.			x
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		x	
5.3 Information generated by interim assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			x
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive each successive phase of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve students' academic outcomes.		x	