



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Art and Design High School

High School 630

**1075 Second Avenue
New York
NY 10022**

Principal: Scott Feltzin

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Reviewer: Peter Lewis

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Art and Design High School serves students from across the city, and provides an education for just over 1400 students from 9th to 12th grade. Just over 50% of students are Hispanic, 26% are Black, and just over 9% are White. Of the remainder, there are small proportions of Asian/Pacific Island students, and students with backgrounds defined as other. The school is not Title I funded. The percent of special education students has remained broadly constant over time, and is currently 5%. A similar pattern applies to the proportion of English language learners, which represent 4% of the population. Following a period of decline, attendance has risen to above that seen in both city and state schools.

On his appointment, two years ago, the principal faced a range of major challenges. There had been five principals in the previous eight years and, as a result, staff and parents felt that there had been a loss of vision and direction. Morale was low among staff and students so that attendance rates had fallen considerably. School safety was a major issue, and considerable time was spent in establishing a calm, safe and orderly environment from which the school could build a culture of high expectations.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- With exceptionally clear vision and strength of purpose, the principal has transformed the tone and character of the school in a very short time.
- The activities of senior leaders and, increasingly, of staff and students are characterized by high expectations.
- Data on the performance of different students is used increasingly well to identify areas of strength and aspects of the school's work that require improvement.
- Meetings of senior leaders and faculty are strongly focused on accelerating learning.
- A good start has been made in establishing a strong sense of accountability for student achievement among teachers and other staff.
- The best lessons fully engage students and are planned to ensure that rapid learning takes place.
- Very clear organizational structures have been implemented so that systems are clearly understood and operated consistently and to good effect.
- In contrast to the situation which applied only a short time ago, students are proud to belong to the school.
- Students have very positive attitudes and set exceptionally high goals for their own achievement, particularly in the arts.
- Parents, too, celebrate the changes that have been introduced and know that the school is achieving a higher and more positive profile.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure the consistent application of the instructional characteristics so clearly delineated in the Teachers' Handbook'.
- Continue to develop teachers' understanding and use of data in planning activities which meet the needs of all students.
- Develop the role of assistant principals in evaluating the effectiveness of their areas of responsibility and in planning for subsequent action, including focus on groups of students.
- Establish a cycle of planning for school improvement in which an achievable range of whole school goals are set annually and the progress towards their achievement measured and shared with the school community.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal is single minded in his determination to see improvement in the school. With the strong support of his assistant principals, much has been achieved in a short space of time. Improvements to the building, to the curriculum and to aspects of teaching have been made which reflect the very high expectations that have been set and modeled by the principal and senior staff. Exceptionally clear systems have been established which ensure that day to day organization is smooth and strong action has been taken to address the previously high levels of student and teacher tardiness. Students' behavior and self confidence are well developed, and they demonstrate an eagerness to learn. As a result the school now presents a calm and welcoming atmosphere which, in contrast to the situation that prevailed a short time ago, strongly reflects the school's character as a High School for the Arts. Due to this, and the significantly raised profile that the principal has ensured has been established, applications to enroll at the school have risen from less than a thousand to three and a half thousand.

The school has worked hard to establish a good range of information about students' achievement which, increasingly, helps departments and faculty to identify where the curriculum is successful and where improvements need to be planned. The school's emphasis on improving teachers' use of data is comparatively new and, because of this, leaders know that more remains to be done in establishing consistency. In a similar way, while the teachers' handbook very clearly identifies features of best practice in instruction, the school is still working to ensure that these characteristics are seen in all lessons. Adaptations to the curriculum have broadened the opportunities available to students. Parents are fully supportive of the school and describe it as being very much part of the community. They feel welcomed in the school, and know that their children are well cared for and supported in their learning.

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.

Over a short period of time, the school has collated a good range of information that has provided it with a very clear picture of student achievement through subjects, classes and grades. In a similar way, a good start has been made in the collation of data which enables comparisons across the different ethnicities represented in the school. These sets of information are well used by the principal and assistant principals in accurately identifying aspects of the school's work that require improvement.

Regular meetings focusing on the performance of students, undertaken by the three instructional assistant principals, have significantly strengthened the school's evaluation of its effectiveness. Special education and support teachers work well with general education teachers in reviewing and analyzing data to identify intervention points and strategies. As

a result, the support provided to students is closely targeted to areas of study which require strengthening. Patterns are carefully analyzed as, for example, in the comparison of performance between classes taking the same course but taught by different teachers. The principal's insistence on the application of interim testing in mathematics and English has helped in identifying action to be taken at an earlier stage than was previously the case, and the school recognizes the need to extend this good practice across social studies and science. The school's analysis of reasons for differences in the performance of, for example, boys and girls within and between subjects is, however, less refined, and the school is looking at ways in which this can be strengthened and so become more effective in identifying the need for timely action.

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 school's main focus, since the principal's appointment in September 2005, has been to re-establish a sense of purpose throughout the school, starting with setting very high standards of tone and safety and so re-establishing a strong climate for learning and the arts. In this, a great deal has been achieved through collaboration, particularly at a senior level, so that the school presents a very strong art-orientated character, with high expectations set and exemplified.

Goals for student achievement are set at a challenging level following a review of student achievement, particularly in English language arts and mathematics at each marking period. This ensures that discussions between instructional assistant principals, departments and guidance staff remain focused on improving student achievement. In a similar way, the analysis of passing rates and of Regents performance enables weaknesses in the curriculum and in aspects of teaching to be identified and action planned to secure improvement.

The format of the Comprehensive Education Plan goes some way to support this process; however, it tends to encourage the establishment of a large set of goals applying to all areas of the school's work that are set utilizing retrospective data. As a result, it is difficult for the school to establish priorities in its development planning, as all improvement areas carry the same weight. This significantly hampers the school both in tracking its progress and in responding sufficiently quickly to difficulties that arise in students' learning.

Parents are well informed about their children's progress. This communication is particularly effective for students who have identified difficulties in their learning. Regular meetings involving teachers and support and guidance staff ensure a rapid response to emerging issues, and the outcomes are reported to parents, ensuring their full involvement. The school is working to ensure that these strategies are applied consistently for all students, so that all members of the community are actively involved in securing improvement.

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 has made considerable improvements to its curriculum, which now aligns well with State requirements. The development of the art curriculum, in which very good use has been made of the New York ‘Blueprint’ model, has enabled departments to re-energize the subject so that it now increasingly reflects the school’s mission. This has enabled developments to be initiated within English language arts, where links are being developed to support students in their learning in social studies, an area of recognized weakness. Instructional and administrative assistant principals provide good support in this, particularly in articulating a clear sense of their accountability. This has yet to be fully communicated to teachers, as is seen in the inconsistency with which differentiated instruction is planned or data from interim assessments is used to plan appropriately challenging work. None the less, in the best practice, students are challenged at a very high level that is appropriate to their abilities. In these lessons, teachers use conferencing, exemplification and probing discussion to make students think. While these features are very clearly set down as expected practice in the school’s comprehensive handbook, senior staff are still having to work hard to establish this practice in some areas. The level of student engagement in the best lessons and activities, such as in a 10th grade life drawing class, or through the Virtual Enterprise program is exemplary.

The school budget is effectively managed and, linked with very clear staffing and scheduling decisions relating to appointments and to the acquisition of resources, impacts strongly on the school’s development. As a result of the clear systems that have been put in place and that are supported well by staff, attendance is good. This reflects the degree to which staff have students’ welfare at heart. Relationships have developed well so that students say that they have confidence in most of their teachers and councilors.

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 principal has a clear philosophy of attracting and developing staff at all levels who are skilled, analytical, and who will use their expertise to provide the best for students. At the same time, based upon gathered data that includes classroom observations, he has demonstrated the ability to take strong decisions in those cases where staff development has not secured improvement. This has made a very positive impact on the culture of the school with, for example, teacher attendance rate being considerably improved. The principal has the respect of faculty, staff, students and parents. This is not only because of the clear systems and expectations that he has introduced, but because, as one parent noted, “He’s made it clear that he’s staying for our children.”

Professional development now has a high profile, although the school recognizes that there is not always enough time to follow up and consolidate initiatives, or to allow for common preparation. Assistant principals lead departmental meetings and review groups well and fully share the principals’ vision for the direction that the school is taking. These meetings are well focused on student achievement with data increasingly being used in identifying areas for improvement. The establishment of regular conferences enables teachers to become aware of best practice across department boundaries. This has

resulted in an effective degree of collaboration at all levels in planning and in seeking improvement. The success of the art faculty, for example, in introducing a comprehensive curriculum map is an indicator of this, as is the degree to which mathematicians and scientists are beginning to consider links between their established and developing curricula. Strong links have also been established with outside bodies which, alongside effective guidance and support systems, have made a positive impact on 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 undeveloped.

Since the principal's appointment, considerable emphasis has been placed on establishing a climate in which learning can take place, and in developing the curriculum. The school has made effective use of data in this and recognizes that this is crucial in planning programs that fully challenge all students. Although this aspect of the school's work is undeveloped, recent and rapid improvements that have begun to be implemented and used by staff at different levels demonstrate the capacity for continued and rapid growth. Interim assessment data has been introduced, and has begun to be used to increasingly good effect in modifying programs for students in relation to their success. There remains, however, too much inconsistency in the degree to which teachers across subjects make use of this information.

In whole school planning, goals are set in broad terms but the school recognizes that its systems for measuring progress towards achieving its goals, or the factors that have influenced greater or reduced success, are limited. Due to this, the school is generally only able to determine whether interventions have achieved their planned aim at the end of identified review periods. The Comprehensive Education Plan is broadly accurate in its identification of development needs and, to a lesser extent, of plans designed to address these but is not used as a working document. Because of this, staff at different levels do not have a good understanding of precisely what improvements are planned or of their part in securing success.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Art and Design High School (HS 630)	∅	✓	+
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		