



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Pathways College Preparatory School

Middle and High School 259

109-89 204 Street

Queens

NY 11412

Principal: Michele Shannon

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Reviewer: Carol Foresta

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Pathways College Preparatory School is in its second year of growth and development. There are 305 students in grades 6, 7, 9 and 10. Next year the school will gain an 8th and 11th grade. At 6%, there are far fewer special education students than in similar and City schools. There are a very small number of English language learners. The majority of the students are Black (84%). Of the remaining student population 7% are Hispanic and 9% are from other ethnic groupings.

At 91%, attendance is below City averages. The school is not eligible for Title 1 funding.

As an Empowerment School, Pathways College Preparatory School has more flexibility to make key decisions and control resources for their school community. Empowerment Schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is well respected for her honesty, accessibility, determination and passionate dedication to the children and the mission of the school.
- The school cabinet and administration make good use of a wide range of data to promote progress for children of all abilities.
- The school has established a curriculum based on State and College Board standards addressing different needs, interests and aptitudes.
- By creating a supportive community culture, the leadership is trusted and effective at all levels in encouraging high expectations of student learning and behavior.
- Each student is respected and known well as an individual, with good relationships amongst their peers and with the staff.
- The advisory system keeps students connected to the school, and to all of their teachers.
- The school has high expectations for all students and looks thoughtfully at student work and their progress in order to challenge and support their learning.
- The school sees parents as their partners and frequently shares its goals, and expectations for students as individuals and as a group.
- Teachers are energetic, reflective and enthusiastic about their work and value the collegial relationships they share with their peers.
- Parents feel welcome, believe their voice is heard and respected, and that the plans and goals of the school are clearly communicated.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop data management systems in a more formalized way.
- Schedule regular and organized teacher inter-visitations to build on good practice and expand and strengthen classroom management skills.
- Continue focusing professional development on differentiated instruction and collaboratively designed projects in order to increase student engagement.
- Increase formal peer teacher observation process which includes both oral and written feedback.
- Explore creative ways to pursue absent and late students.
- Develop rubrics based on specific tasks and units which share meaningful comments on expectations, goals, outcomes of assessments and on student work.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

This school has high expectations and these are reflected in the principal's honest assessment of its development. Students are being supported well in meeting learning standards. At the same time, since this is a new school with a relatively inexperienced faculty, teachers are working hard to develop better differentiated instruction. They have shown great dedication and commitment to the mission of the school and spend time working collaboratively to develop their skills to deliver instruction in a more effective way.

The school has implemented the 'Heart of Change' for professional development. This partnership has benefited the teachers by providing them with five retreats on Saturdays. The focus has been on how to actively engage every student and to differentiate instruction. The administration is aware of the need to support teachers in their ability to analyze student progress through the use of data.

Data has been used by the administration to make important decisions about how the school is organized. Systems have been set up within the school to support at risk students and follow up systems have also been introduced to work with these students and with their teachers to ensure that their needs are being met. These systems for professional development and student achievement are still too new for impact to be measured. However, because of the strong leadership of both the principal and the assistant principal, the school is well placed to develop data and to support teachers in its use to support their work as the school grows and develops.

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 administration gathers a wide range of data about individual student's achievements and so has a clear picture of what each student knows and is able to do. The testing data is used to group students with mixed levels of ability and help them make progress and to start academic intervention groupings for special education students. The school uses the Princeton Review information as interim assessments to drive academic interventions. For example, the school has identified mathematics and science as the two areas where students are not making as much progress.

The administration uses the high school scheduling and transcript web data produced by the school system to look at student results and their performance in different classes, grades and subjects throughout the school. There is work being done in the school to have teachers learn to use data effectively to impact instruction. As yet this work is uneven with some teachers using it more effectively than others. Teachers do generate their own data and this is reflected in the reports sent home to parents.

The systems are newly in place and as such have only yielded data for one year to enable the school to analyze and make comparisons of the performance and progress of different groupings. As a result, full comparison of student progress across grades and across schools in order to better plan and make interventions for student success has not taken place. The school is aware of the usefulness of being able to perform these functions and is making progress towards institutionalizing them.

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 functions as a community based on collaboration and teamwork. There is an advisory system in place which supports teachers in their efforts to know their students well. Each member of the teaching staff has an individualized goal setting session with the administration to ensure their involvement in the process. The whole staff works on addressing the issues of school culture and climate collaboratively. There is an active school leadership team that works to set goals for the school and create plans and timeframes for reaching those goals. The school leadership team looks closely at the passing rate data in each subject area. This analysis gives them a clear understanding about student achievement. For example, analysis identified that mathematics was an area of concern particularly for the incoming 9th graders.

The school’s cabinet is responsible for implementing the goals. Target school wide goals for performance are set. When the school understood that students and teachers were struggling with the goals set for each academic class and each student, a decision to re-work the schedule for the second semester was made and implemented. A school intensive team sets the goals for targeted groups of students. This team looks at data and items analysis information generated by the Princeton Review to create a spreadsheet outlining goals and dates for observations. Professional development has been planned to ensure that teachers know how to use item skills analysis to impact class work.

The school uses its advisory system to conference with all students, advisors and parents to establish long-term goals and associated planning for the school year. Teachers set challenging instructional goals which reflect the school’s high expectations for students. A ‘roadmap’ is created together and this drives the conversation about goals in ‘kid talk’. Using the ‘kid talk’ logs, all students are reviewed by an interdisciplinary teacher team at least one time during the school year and next learning steps are identified. Parents feel welcome, believe their voice is heard and respected, and that the plans and goals of the school are clearly communicated. Middle school parents are actively engaged in the school and an effort to engage high school parents is consciously evolving.

Particular attention is given to students who need most help with their learning. Goals inform plans for services. All students who are performing at a low level receive academic intervention services three times each week in addition to regular instruction. All of the students who enter performing below grade level in reading receive an in depth reading assessment to decide the academic intervention services best suited to their needs. The students benefit from a summer program which has helped those students identified as being at risk to meet the standards and be promoted to the next grade.

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 its cabinet to ensure that the curriculum is meeting the needs of the students. The school’s programs are supported by the College Board Springboards curriculum which is built around reading and writing workshops. These are supplemented with other texts and materials the school researched. In addition, the school uses College Prep mathematics

Teachers are held accountable for improving instruction through using better pedagogy. The school intends to build on the team structure to support teachers in developing consistent strategies for classroom management and differentiated instruction. Teachers keep their own qualitative and quantitative data in their classes. A developed and systematized school wide system for using data, especially with regard to student achievement in mathematics, is not yet in place because the school is still young.

Teachers do not use rubrics which are specific for tasks and unit work in all classes to help students become more sophisticated at assessing their own work and build student engagement. There is a focus on targeting specific students who are at risk, and these students are tracked at team meetings. At “kid talk” meetings the staff discusses the need for academic interventions, goal setting and reviewing. There is specific focus on mathematics since it has been targeted as an area of concern for the school. The special education teachers are coaching colleagues in how to differentiate instruction in order to meet the needs of all children.

Standardized assessment data is used mostly by the cabinet to make school wide decisions about budget, staffing and scheduling. For example, when the school realized upper grade students were leaving at the end of the day instead of staying for academic enrichment and tutoring, the school re-scheduled its program and placed these special courses in the middle of the day, thus capturing a wider group of students.

Teachers know their students well. Each student feels respected and knows there is someone on staff they can trust and turn to if they need adult support. The school has appropriate systems in place for monitoring attendance and for tackling absence quickly.

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 school selects staff based on their commitment to learn and develop students’ achievements. The staff exhibits a high level of commitment as demonstrated by their ongoing professional development program. The strengths of the cabinet are that they work with the teachers daily over the school year. They are respected and their expertise is valued. However, as yet professional development has not been completely formalized in this new school. Systems to track the impact of professional development on instruction are still in the process of developing. Professional development has been focused on pedagogy and as a result improvements have been made in teacher practices. Professional development is being modified so that it is driven by the needs revealed in student data.

Teachers work together as teams to reflect on practice and share ideas about teaching methods. This links closely to the professional development focus of developing pedagogy. School-wide teachers do not have time built into their schedules to do inter-visitations. The mathematics team, though, does have this opportunity. Scheduling conflicts makes inter-visitations difficult, but the school intends to revise the schedule so that these types of observations are conducted in the future.

The principal and assistant principal spend two full days each week observing in classrooms. Teachers get immediate written feedback from these observations. The assistant principal spends time planning with teachers, especially with the science teachers since that is her field of expertise.

The principal is well respected for her honesty, accessibility, determination and passionate dedication to the children and the mission of the school. She has successfully led change and improvements. Clearly communicated systems and procedures ensure the school runs smoothly every day.

Well organized academic intervention services ensure students' with a particular need are given the support they require to make progress. The school benefits from its collaboration with the College Board which provides a summer institute for teachers and ongoing professional development on Saturdays during the school year.

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's leadership monitors the work of the school closely through data analysis, observation of teaching and learning, and talking to teachers, parents and students to identify areas in need of improvement as detailed in its Comprehensive Education Plan. Teachers receive performance data every six weeks and every marking period to help guide their work. However, at this point not all teachers are using the data they receive to fully individualize and customize instruction. The school recognizes that student engagement is increased through the use of project-based learning and through the use of rubrics which involve students in assessing their own progress.

The information generated by periodic assessments helps the school revise plans and move in the direction needed in order to reach its goals. This is especially so for special education students and those who need extra help to reach grade standards. Students' progress is discussed in teams and this ensures the school is able to evaluate how well certain programs are working in raising student performance and accelerating progress.

Although the school is relatively new, it has a system in place for reviewing its performance each year. A range of evidence is used in this work. The data collected so far has ensured that the school has an accurate view of its effectiveness, and knows its strengths and the areas it still needs to improve.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Pathways College Preparatory School (MS/HS 259)	∅	✓	+
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	