



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Aviation Career and Technical**

**High School 610**

**45-30 36 Street  
Queens  
NY 11101**

**Principal: Eileen Taylor**

**Dates of review: May 3 - 5, 2007**

**Reviewers: Richard Woolf and  
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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Aviation Career and Technical School is a large, unique, specialized high school that prepares students for careers in the aviation and aerospace industry as well as providing an excellent general education with high graduation rates. The school has approximately 1900 students enrolled from grade 9 through grade 12 with a fifth year honors program.

The student population is ethnically diverse, draws from all five New York boroughs and is made up of 53% Hispanic, 22% Asian/Pacific Islander, 11% White, 8% Black and 6% others. The proportion of English language learners at 3% and special education students at 5% is lower than similar or other City schools. There are a significantly higher number of males, 86%, compared to females, 14%. The school is entitled to receive Title 1 monies.

Whilst the accommodation is impressive in size and includes an aviation hanger, there is an overall lack of space to service a growing student population in the main building. John F Kennedy airport houses an annex with a fully functional Boeing 727 aircraft for fifth year honors students.

The school has an application rate of over three thousand, with a grade 9 and 10 admission rate numbering around four hundred. The school seeks applicants who are looking to pursue a career in the aviation industry and willing to meet the stringent requirements of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as well as a strong commitment to punctuality and regular attendance. The school's current attendance rate is over 91% which is very high when compared to similar schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- This is a unique institution in providing a high quality academic and vocational education to its students.
- The depth and breadth of the curriculum offered is outstanding.
- The school sets high expectations of its staff and students, both of whom have a great deal of respect for each other.
- The behavior and the attitude of the students is first class.
- The professionalism of the entire staff is exemplary.
- The principal and her assistants typify the leadership qualities required to organize and manage a very successful school.
- The school continues to supply students of the highest caliber required by the aviation industry.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to ensure there is full integration between the academic and aviation aspects of the school.
- To implement plans that allow the teachers to have full electronic access to student data at a single point.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well-developed school.**

The Aviation Career and Technical high school is a unique institution by virtue of its close liaison with the aviation and aerospace industry. The principal is an experienced educator, in her eighteenth year as leader of the school and she provides strong inspirational leadership which is valued by staff, parents, students and the aviation industry. She is determined that the school will deliver an academic and aviation program which enhances the educational and life opportunities of all the students in her care. The principal is supported by an outstanding team of professionals who are not only goal driven but exceptionally supportive and sensitive to the needs of their students.

The use of data is an outstanding strength of this school and it informs every aspect of the teaching and learning process. A number of goals are externally set by FAA certification demands but many other indicators are used to challenge staff and students continuously to improve their performance. Parents praise the school for the efforts it makes to challenge all students to fulfill their true potential. This includes not only academic and aviation goals but personal ones like leadership, cultural awareness and sports.

The school has an incredible array of outside supporters, especially from the aviation industry, which impacts in every area of the school. An impressive outcome of the work of this school is reflected in the fact that twelve per cent of aviation technicians in America are graduates of this high 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 well developed.**

The school uses current City and State data to impact on the performance of all groups of students. This analysis is fully supported by a comprehensive range of in house data compiled by two members of staff who are responsible for supplying staff with high quality, focused data that is continuously and systematically updated. One outcome of this work is the change from testing on the two semester format to an annualization program. The affect is to make staff more accountable for their instruction and the monitoring of student achievement is now even more systematic and rigorous. The outcome has been higher passes in Regents examinations, FAA certifications and graduation rates.

On entry to the school each student is given a number of tests to verify their individual achievements and these are used to organize classes. This includes English language learners and special education students who are given all the extra support and guidance necessary to include them, wherever possible, in the general education programs. The school community is continuously assessed and the administration regularly monitors and evaluates the progress of both students and staff.

The school has a number of methods by which it identifies its higher achieving students, be that on the academic or aviation side of the school. Assistant principals responsible for curriculum areas are held accountable for the progress of their departments. The principal expects them to carefully analyze all data to identify specific groups like the higher achieving student. Their performance, like that of all students, is continuously monitored by the cabinet to identify trends both in the short and long term and adjust programs accordingly.

The school has no sufficiently similar institution to compare itself but it is constantly reviewing its progress against other schools and itself on individual cohort data. However, the school has to maintain a higher standard of academic and technological achievement in order to fulfill its FAA license and the data informs this and every other aspect of the school's work. In such a data rich environment the principal acknowledges better use of computer technology would assist staff even further in achieving their goals and ambitions.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.**

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

A key feature of the school's continuing success is the ability of the principal and administration to set challenging goals for both staff and students. There are systems in place which allow for close monitoring and scrutiny to take place at regular intervals throughout the school year. The assistant principals are given very clear goals at the beginning of the year by the principal. It is their responsibility to produce an action plan, which has clear time frames for monitoring, to succeed in the achievement of those goals. The plans are designed to demonstrate how the school will continue to move forward. These plans are shared with staff both across the faculty and subject departments. A particular strength of this planning procedure is its ability to respond to changes that may occur during the year and as a result staff can adapt their teaching methods and revise their individual targets accordingly. Each section of the school community is very aware of its responsibility, and the contribution it makes to improving the education of the students.

Students at the school have two parallel and challenging courses that make up their education program, academic and aviation. This requires very careful planning and monitoring systems to be in place, enabling students' strengths and weaknesses to be identified and quickly acted upon. The staff have rigorous systems in place to aid with this exchange of data and therefore can respond quickly to groups or individuals who may require specific attention.

The staff of the school articulates at length how high expectations are required of themselves and the students. They are involved in setting the school's overall goals. Parents acknowledge that the principal and staff are very goal driven in their attempts to challenge their students and fully respect them for this. The students are aware of the school's overall goals and what is expected of them to achieve these. Teachers constantly make them aware of the importance of high achievement and this is coupled with a great deal of peer pressure which continuously drives improvement, either individually or as a school. The school celebrates its achievements at every opportunity and this again reinforces the culture of the school.

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

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

Due to the unique nature of the school it has not only to conform to the State mandatory curriculum for achieving the Regents examinations but also the FAA certification requirements. In order to be successful in both aspects the students have to undertake a minimum nineteen hundred hours instruction over four years. This is a demanding commitment but one fully recognized by the students as essential to their overall achievements in life. The curriculum is regularly adjusted by subject leaders according to the plethora of qualitative and quantitative data amassed from teachers. The result of this has been an increase in passed Regents and FAA certifications. The school report card indicates all student sub groups meet and surpass their adequate yearly progress targets. This is due to the interrogation of the data and identification of individual student need which has led to the differentiation of instruction by teachers throughout the school. Similarly student engagement in lessons is very high and a wide variety of instructional and technical aids are used to facilitate this.

The principal's budgetary, staffing and scheduling are clearly driven by the needs of the school and the data fully supports her decision making. These impact significantly upon the school, for example the creation of an annex at John F Kennedy airport for fifth year honor students. The administration and whole staff are completely focused on improving the achievements of the school by the skilful use of resources.

Relationships between the staff and students are excellent, there is total respect of each other and behavior at all times is exemplary. The parents confirm this as a strong aspect of the school. Parental observations also endorse the huge personal and emotional support their children receive, especially after incidents like 9/11. A key condition of entry to the school is regular attendance and this remains the highest priority for staff and students throughout the school year.

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

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

The principal works with a very stable, experienced and committed staff. Over sixty per cent of the aviation staff are ex students, as are a number of the academic teachers. This has an immense effect on the students who realize they are part of a living tradition and confirms the high expectations required of everyone associated with the school.

The entire staff confirms that their professional development is clearly driven by the needs of the students and improving their achievements. Each subject leader is responsible for the identification of professional development within their areas to meet specific instructional foci. These all contribute to the achievement of the school’s overall goals. The principal and assistant principals are responsible for both formal and informal observations of teachers but there are embedded systems in place to allow for peer observations which directly impact upon instruction.

The principal has been leading the school for the last eighteen years and she is endorsed by the entire school community as being the consummate professional. One member of staff said she is the most respected non technician in the aviation industry. The procedures and systems in place testify to a well organized and managed school.

The school has the most impressive list of supporters from both within and without the aviation industry and the impact of this is not only phenomenal but significantly enhances the work of the whole school. The list includes all the major airlines and influential community based organizations.

**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 well developed.**

The principal oversees the writing of the Comprehensive Education Plan in conjunction with the school's leadership team, which includes students, parents and representatives of the aviation industry. It articulates the school's philosophy, mission and goals. It is a useful document as it has been given to assistant principals to develop working action plans that are shared with staff and when deemed necessary students.

The school is data rich and very proactive in its use and therefore all target setting processes are securely based on realistic and challenging goals. The principal is advised by each assistant principal at the end of marking periods on progress to date. This is in addition to information submitted weekly to cabinet meetings that then allow for immediate action and further prioritization to take place.

The entire school community is actively involved in an ongoing reflection and monitoring process of the needs of the school in relation to its goals. This includes the constant comparison of student progress against their individual targets. The process is a critical feature of this school in determining the success of its short and long term goal setting.

The school is very goal driven and its outcomes are shared continuously with the wider community in order to maintain and improve on the high standards it sets itself. New goals are only set after a full evaluation of previous plans and new ones set only after a complete examination of all available data.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Aviation Career and Technical High School (HS 610)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* 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.

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X