



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Tottenville High School

High School 455

**100 Luten Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10312**

Principal: John P. Tuminaro

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Reviewer: Mike Doran

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Tottenville High School is a school for students in grades 9 through 12 with an enrollment of 3870, comprising 81% White, 9% Hispanic and 3% Black students, with the remaining 7% from Asian and other backgrounds. The number of special education students with individualized education programs is high and increasing compared with City and similar schools. The number of English language learners is low compared to City and similar schools. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school has a very clear commitment to enabling students to reach high standards, and has been recognized as a “school of excellence” by the United States Department of Education and the New York State Education Department.

Attendance is 90%, in line with similar schools, but well above that of City schools. The number of suspensions is low and has been reducing year on year.

A distinctive feature of the school is the exceptionally wide range of instructional, extra-curricular, and academic support programs and activities offered to students.

Graduation rates for both general education and special education students are above those of city similar and City schools, with a similar pattern for post graduation destinations to college and employment. The overall percentage of students who have dropped-out or are still enrolled after four years is well below those of City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides outstanding leadership and has high expectations of himself, his staff and the students.
- The principal is supported by a committed and effective team of administrators and teachers.
- The school has the full trust and support of parents, who hold it in high regard.
- The school's high expectations lead to high achievement.
- The school provides a calm, orderly, safe and supportive learning environment.
- Students are very well behaved and have a positive, responsible and enthusiastic attitude to their learning.
- Teachers' outstanding mutual support, central to the good teaching, reinforces well-planned professional development that draws on shared good practice.
- The extensive program of instructional, extra-curricular, and academic support activities matches the identified needs and interests of the students.
- The effective intervention programs, informed by the close and detailed monitoring of individual need, support those with additional needs.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school, under-pinned by the effective gathering of current student performance data, leads to continuous improvement planning.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the use of computer technology to support differentiated teaching and learning in the classroom, and to support collaborative working between faculty and administration.
- Extend collaborative working between departments in order to promote the development of literacy across the curriculum.
- Further develop the depth and longitudinal analysis of student performance data from a value-added perspective to better inform planning, goal setting, and monitoring of progress.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

The school has developed a strong climate of mutual trust and respect between the leadership, staff, students and parents. The staff enjoy coming to work, the students want to learn, and teachers constantly reflect on their practice and how to more closely align it to the needs of their students to accelerate their learning.

The school's emphasis on the effective development and use of internal qualitative and quantitative data has been central to year-on-year school improvement. The school's greatest strength lies in the detailed picture it builds up of each of its students, enabling it to promote the highest expectations for academic achievement, but without losing sight of the need for individual personal development and support.

Areas for improvement identified in this report are mainly issues that the school has already identified for further work. The school is well placed and has a high capacity for carrying out these improvements.

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.

Drawing on external data available prior to enrollment, counselors meet with students individually, carefully planning their program of study, and guiding them to appropriate teaching groups and electives that match current proficiency and interests.

The school has effective systems for collecting and analyzing a wide range of data relating to the performance and progress of individuals and groups of students in each grade. This includes information from standardized tests, tests produced by teachers to monitor learning in subject areas of the curriculum, and continuous assessment during lessons. This data, together with information about students' personal development, is carefully analyzed at classroom and departmental level, and by the counselor attached to each student. This gives a detailed picture of the progress of each student, and indicates next steps in learning and any particular support needed.

Concerns arising about an individual student that cannot be resolved at the classroom level leads to referral to the pupil personnel team, where a well-planned support program, overseen by the student's counselor, is provided. The school has a clear policy for following the progress of every student throughout the year, and timely contact is made with parents during each marking period to address any concerns.

The progress of students in each curriculum area is systematically tracked, by class and grade, to ensure that students continue to be matched to the right teaching groups and electives, with adjustments made as and when necessary.

The progress of specific groups of students, such as those with individualized education programs and those in support classes such as English language learners, are monitored systematically by the Instructional Support Service team and the Pupil Personnel Team, and their programs are adjusted as necessary.

The school is further increasing the scope of its data gathering to take a more comparative and longer-term, value-added perspective, in order to more rigorously inform strategic planning at a whole school and departmental level

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.

Data is an essential driver for making budgeting, programming and instructional decisions. The school has recently appointed an assistant principal to take a specific lead on programming, assessment and accountability. The principal has given departmental assistant principals a clear brief on making effective use of data to inform planning at both classroom and school levels, to set learning goals for students and for their departments, and to monitor progress towards those goals. They receive support from the assistant principal for programming, assessment and accountability in this and it is impacting through annually improved levels of achievement in Regents Examinations and graduation rates.

The very detailed performance data systems are well used to ensure that students make good progress. This is monitored closely, and where there is a concern, parents are involved, and students are referred to appropriate support and, or, intervention programs, such as the Saturday Learning Center, Extended Day, lunch and break-time tutoring. Systematic and well-documented support systems are in place to identify students causing concern or at risk, providing individualized support programs as needed, coordinated through the pupil personnel team.

The school has well-established organizational structures that encourage collaborative working at grade and departmental level in developing the curriculum, instructional programs and assessment. The high level of trust that exists between staff means that teachers are not afraid to share reflection on their practice and make improvements, though there is currently a lack of development of literacy across the whole curriculum.

The school communicates clearly with parents and involves them from the start in their child’s learning. Parents appreciate the ready access they have to staff and the timeliness with which teachers let them know of any concerns

The school’s greatest strength lies in the detailed picture it builds up of each of its students, enabling it to promote the highest expectations for academic achievement, but without losing sight of the need for individual personal development and support.

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.

There are high expectations of students, while all teachers are involved in curriculum development - reviewing and evaluating the impact of their teaching. The school has been successful in developing instruction to meet the needs of students - those at level 4 and high level 3 through Advanced Placement, Honors and accelerated Institute classes; and through opportunities for collaborative teaching for students at levels 1 and 2.

Instructional programs require students to take responsibility for their learning. Much teaching is of good, some of high, quality. Lessons are usually well planned and structured, including individual and group activities, though some reflect a limited range of teaching strategies. Much student discussion is of high quality, contributing significantly to learning and students feel safe to try out ideas and solutions.

Information technology is recognized as a powerful learning tool in the classroom, but its potential has not yet been fully realized. Differentiation can be further refined, as can links between faculty and administration. The school recognizes that teachers require professional development in order to implement this more consistently.

Attitudes to learning, behavior and attendance are very good. Attendance is monitored closely and teachers follow up issues directly with parents. Students are very appreciative of the openness and approachability of staff. They are able to identify a staff member with whom they would wish to discuss issues of concern. They also confirm that the principal’s open-door policy works in practice.

Knowledge and data about student performance drive key decisions on the budget and resourcing, including staffing. The school ensures that curriculum requirements are met and that students are well prepared for tests. It is also concerned to provide opportunities for developing skills and interests, offering an extensive program of enrichment and extension activities to interest and motivate students. The school’s Career and Technical Education program has been cited as exemplary by the New York Education Department, and the Performing Arts program is nationally recognized.

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 school carefully selects staff using a range of criteria and procedures, such as modelling a lesson, and involves the principal and administrators in a rigorous interview process.

Professional development is firmly based on the continuous drive to improve student achievement, and is well managed by the cabinet in consultation with staff, drawing on rigorous monitoring of the school’s performance. Newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school confirm that the school provides an extremely supportive professional environment, for example through peer-mentoring. Discussion and debate in subject and grade teams is an important part of professional development. The school provides a good

allocation of individual planning time for teachers, with carefully scheduled common time for teams to meet. This provides a forum for planning interventions, collaborative team teaching, and revising decisions in the light of new information.

There is a systematic, rigorous and well documented program of formal and informal classroom observation carried out by the principal and assistant principals. Feedback, both verbal and written is given, and outcomes inform the planning of professional development at individual and school levels.

The school runs smoothly, and is welcoming to students, parents and visitors. School leaders, especially the principal, are highly respected, and provide a model not only of their high expectations, but also of their care and commitment.

Partnerships with other schools support professional development, while those with feeder schools prepare students for effective transfer into the school. The school has successfully sought additional funding from various sources, including the Beacon Program, and has created an exceptionally wide range of student support programs and extra-curricular activities. The school runs a "College Now" program enabling students in both grade 11 and 12 to accumulate college credits, as well as reducing college costs. Externally raised funds are also used for school building projects, including astro-turfing and redesigning the auditorium.

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.

All areas of the school's work are carefully planned, drawing on all available data and kept under constant review. The way that the analysis and use of data permeates the school's practice is a major strength. Staff at all levels assume responsibility for assessing and analyzing students' progress and for planning, evaluating and revising interventions according to need. The recent appointment of an assistant principal for programming, assessment and accountability demonstrates the importance the school attaches to monitoring and evaluation and the effective use of data to drive and modify planning and decision making. This is increasing the flexibility to realign instruction in the light of identified needs during the school year.

Students are also engaged in the review process and have a formal voice in the decision making process through a very proactive student consultative council. Additionally, the parents are well informed and have a strong role in the school's decision making through the parent teachers association and the school leadership team.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is used as a working document, reviewed as a whole regularly throughout the year, and overseen by the school leadership team. In addition, elements of the plan are reviewed through cabinet meetings, departmental conferences, staff conferences, and in meetings of the various school constituencies. In view of its large size, the school is actively seeking new ways to improve communications, particularly between departments, to support planning and evaluation. An area currently under consideration is literacy across the curriculum, giving departments a common focus in the development of literacy across the school and in strengthening differentiation in the classroom.

The school recognizes the need to further extend the depth, longitudinal analysis and use of student performance data to better inform the annual Comprehensive Education Plan about the comparative performance of specific student groups, and in particular to take account of the starting points of students through consideration of value-added performance data.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Tottenville High School (HS 455)	∅	✓	+
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