



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

IN-Tech Academy

Middle School/High School 368

**2975 Tibbett Avenue
Bronx
NY 10463**

Principal: Rose Fairweather-Clunie

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Reviewer: Andy McClean

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The school is located in the Bronx. It serves students of grades 6 through 12. There are some 900 students enrolled at present with 15% English language learners and 8% special education students. 5% of students are White, 18% Black, 75% Hispanic and 2% Asian and other. 88% of students are eligible for Title 1 funding. This is much higher than the averages for both City and similar schools. Attendance is 93%, which is well above the average of both City and similar schools. The school has been in existence for seven years.

It has occupied a state of the art building for the last three years having transferred from temporary accommodation before that. It is an empowerment school with a specific goal to use all its array of technology to achieve the highest possible academic standards for all its students.

Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. They are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

This school is currently engaged in a research project to design its own periodic assessment materials.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides a safe and stimulating environment which fosters self belief in all students.
- There are well developed systems to collect and use data to impact upon instruction to raise student achievement.
- The staff is open to embracing change and improving the lives of all students.
- The school provides all students with the tools to become independent learners.
- The staff uses data to identify students in greatest need of improvement and intervene to improve their attendance and learning.
- The school provides a very effective use of technology both as an instructional tool and as a means to motivate students' learning.
- Teachers use specific instructional techniques to improve higher order thinking skills.
- Staff ensure students accept responsibility for their own learning by treating them as mature partners in all school experiences.
- The principal is energetic, reflective and forward thinking; she communicates a positive vision of student success and is very well supported by the school's administration.

What the school needs to improve

- Opportunities for senior staff to identify the root causes of recent instructional improvements and how to provide even greater challenge to its students.
- The means to disseminate innovative instructional methods, already in existence in school, to all staff.
- Extend specific support programs to those students identified as in greatest need of improvement at an earlier stage in their schooling.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The school provides all students with a stimulating and safe learning environment. The effective use of technology is a common thread seen in all classes. Teachers and students are very comfortable using computers, laptops and smart boards as part of their everyday lives. The school has a wealth of student performance data that is used effectively, not just to measure group or grade progress, but also to inform all students individually of their progress and how they can achieve their next goals.

The school has a successful scheme to allow parents on line access to student transcripts; this provides valuable information to parents and motivates the students. The scheme forms a key element of the school's, and particularly the principal's educational philosophy, which is to treat all students with maturity. As a result, students take responsibility for their own academic progress. Regular testing informs students about their progress and what their next goals should be. The teachers have developed good systems to allow students to discuss their learning and how to meet their challenging targets.

Senior teachers mentor students who, from data on academic performance, are thought to be at risk of failure. This typifies the "can do" spirit of the faculty, which arises from strong and visionary leadership of the principal. She demands that everyone works and plays with equal rigor, and that everybody uses performance data to seek ways to remove barriers to student achievement. These helpful strategies ensure there is no complacency.

Teachers know their students very well and regularly discuss and view the best instructional practices in school, but the school's leadership understands that this is an area that can still be improved. Professional development programs are well structured and geared towards the school's primary goals of improving standards in English language arts and mathematics through the use of technology.

The school works hard to keep parents informed; it does its utmost to remove any language barriers for those parents whose home language is not English. As a result, parents have great pride in what has become a true center of community education. Students demonstrate great respect and trust in their principal and teachers, all of whom are deeply committed to realizing all students' potential.

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 test data, including its own school generated statistics effectively to determine its course of action in both the short and long terms. Everyone, staff, students and parents have ready access to the data on students' results through on line facilities. The data is used successfully to monitor individual progress and then instructional programs are modified to improve standards. Each student have their own portfolios of work which include test results and targets for future improvement; these are developed at

regular student conferences. A high percentage of students in school have a home language which is not English, but every effort is made to provide translation facilities for parents to understand the data produced.

Teachers regularly scrutinize and compare data to assess the relative performance of individuals and groups such as special education students and English language learners. This information is then used to intervene where necessary, or to adjust instructional programs. For example, the mathematics and literacy coaches' use the information to counsel individual teachers in improved instructional focus in their classes.

The school goals arise from an interpretation of the current data and comparisons with what has been achieved in the past. The administration is productively focused on determining the value that the school has added to its students' academic achievement. The analysis of trends since the school's creation are used very constructively to identify which areas need to be targeted as whole school or departmental goals.

The use of technology by teachers to collect and interpret data has resulted in them being able to plan and differentiate learning for all students. As a result special education students receive focused support and guidance and they make good progress. Assessment outcomes are used well to determine which aspects of a particular unit of work have not been successful, which need changing and which need repeating.

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.

The leadership has used the school's technology very effectively, to outline to everyone the major areas for development. The schools communication systems, particularly weekly newsletters, use data very effectively to show progress towards these goals. The school sets high expectations on student performance and the evidence for this is made clear to teachers, students and parents. The regular updating of this evidence ensures there is great clarity in the immediate steps that students need to take to improve their standards. The frequent testing of student reading levels ensures that students are always challenged to do their best.

Conferences with individual students, particularly those identified through test data as failing or falling behind, are a well established feature of support in school. Effective use of technology efficiently identifies areas of need for individuals or groups such as English language learners and allows teachers to create programs to address these needs. Coaches and grade leaders reinforce this process successfully during formal and informal meetings with teachers. At the regular grade and faculty meetings there are further discussions about successes and areas that need to be addressed. The school's collaborative planning process is a valuable tool in identifying those aspects of instruction that need to be reinforced in a particular module.

The school keeps students and parents well informed of the nature of the challenges faced by each student. It lets them know what the school's expectations of them are, in making progress and how teachers will assist them in their learning.

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.

The school makes constructive use of technology to build a high quality, wide ranging and stimulating curriculum. All classes benefit from this focus on technology. In addition to the mandated curriculum, the principal ensures that there are many opportunities for students to show their talents in the fields of art, sport, robotics and drama. A recent drama production of ‘Guys and Dolls’ required the students to work as a team. The success of the production and the publication of many high caliber pieces of student writing are proof that the school’s very high expectations are effective.

The principal, school leaders and coaches use the school data to measure group and individual progress. The teachers are all held accountable for student progress, with action plans being formulated to improve specific aspects of their teaching. These plans are time limited and reviewed regularly to evaluate their impact on student learning. This is carried out in a very supportive manner by leaders who seek to assist and mentor the less experienced members of staff and those who need subject specific guidance.

The principal makes good use of information from the previous year’s results to make sound financial decisions as to where to deploy resources. For example, by employing experienced art and drama staff to reinforce the links between different areas of the curriculum. The school’s philosophy is to provide a stimulating relevant daily program of study, students are thoroughly engaged in classes.

Students trust their teachers to help them when they have difficulties. Teacher and student relations are good, and based on a mutual respect and understanding of the challenges that each student faces. Parents have good access to all staff and the very caring support staff try hard to address any concerns they have about their children.

Student attendance figures and patterns are regularly scrutinized. Systems to deal with attendance problems are very well developed and regularly reviewed. Productive use is made of technology to scrutinize daily figures, make comparisons with other schools, and identifying students whose attendance or lateness give concern.

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 selects staff for their subject expertise and their ability to respond flexibly to challenges. The principal requires all staff to convey the message that there are the highest expectations of all students. Teachers know what these expectations should be as they have access to up-to-date, comprehensive data. This makes the teachers very aware of their responsibility for improving student achievement. There are many appropriate opportunities for teachers to discuss results and trends. This is particularly evident in relation to the special education students and English language learners, where individual staff have clear lines of accountability.

The principal’s leadership style is a collegiate one. All staff understand their specific responsibilities and how they are accountable for them. Professional honesty and a desire

to learn from each others' successes and mistakes are widespread throughout school. Regular lesson observations are seen as opportunities to learn and progress. Professional development addresses areas in greatest need of improvement, particularly writing skills.

The principal ensures that when change is necessary, teachers know why. However, although the senior staff are fully supportive of the principal, they have yet to step back and devote time to reflect upon why the school has made progress, or to fully involve themselves in identifying the challenges the school faces. The principal is respected by all for her honesty in all dealings with staff and students alike. New members of staff are very enthusiastic about their welcome and support from mentors and senior teachers. The school runs very smoothly. It is a calm and student-centered community, where all students feel safe and valued and can take a mature responsibility for their own learning.

Good links with outside bodies enrich school life, with many corporations providing resources and expertise, particularly in technology, to enhance student learning. These are valuable as they increase student motivation. Links with local colleges and other educational institutions are strong and help students move smoothly to the next stages in their education. Many links exist with local arts and sports groups these widen students' horizons and improve their enjoyment of school life.

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.

Plans for the school's development are clearly outlined within its Comprehensive Education Plan and in other more focused documents within school. Goals are produced collaboratively and regularly revisited and evaluated. They show a precise analysis of the school's immediate challenges. A wide range of data has been used to draw up specific action plans for areas of concern.

The principal is very much aware of the need to sustain progress and evaluate these actions to ensure that such plans and goals are appropriate. Each phase of development is regularly revisited to see what progress is made. The school's empowerment team is particularly successful and adaptable in using data the school has generated to adjust plans and devise new strategies for improving student learning. Budgets are closely monitored and evaluated to see whether money is well spent or not.

The school is well developed in its analysis of its results. It understands that this is the key measure of success when judged against its peers. It makes daily use of its technological expertise to intervene when data on students indicates they are not making progress. This is at the forefront of all the school does. Every student is regularly updated on their progress. Students know their teachers and parents get this information and that any slackening of progress will be dealt with immediately.

The principal and senior staff knows their colleagues and their students well. Staff relationships are respectful and developmental, for instance, they are in the process of establishing ways to compare each other's instructional practice. Data is the driving force of school improvement, and technology is used as a powerful tool to analyze this. Full time technicians ensure the school's technology works well.

Complacency is unacceptable in this school. Programmed evaluation of specific actions drives the school's planning for the future in seeking to identify, and then realize every student's potential.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: IN-Tech Academy (MS/HS 368)	∅	✓	+
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