



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

High School for Teaching and the Professions

High School 433

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Bronx

NY 10468

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The High School for Teaching and the Professions is an empowerment school located in the Walton Campus and caters to students from grade 9 through 12. There are currently 532 students. The ethnic background of the school population is 63% Hispanic, 33% Black, 2% White and 2% Asian and other ethnic groups.

The proportion of special education students stands at 13%, and of English language learners at 14%. The school receives Title 1 funding with 80% of students eligible. Attendance is well below that for similar and City wide schools. It is currently 77%. Turnover of staff is relatively low, and the principal has been the school leader for five years.

As an empowerment school, the High School for Teaching and the Professions has more flexibility to make key decisions and control the 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 paper work requirements. This school is also currently engaged in an empowerment schools initiative which is a small, but detailed research project with a focus on the effectiveness of learning of a group of 16 specifically targeted students.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school collects a wide range of useful and highly relevant data and the principal knows and satisfactorily understands the value of data.
- The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
- The Phoenix Academy, established to counter long term absenteeism, is an example of good use of the school budget.
- Students like their school and have positive opinions on the way it could be improved.
- Students feel that teachers are caring, supportive and willing to 'go the extra mile' to help them succeed.
- Particular attention is given to students who are most at risk of not meeting the standard.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and are very pleased with the quality and frequency of information received from the school.
- The new strategy of using comprehensive surveys to canvas staff, students and parents on the strengths and weaknesses of the school is excellent.
- Professional development is valued by staff because it is well targeted to school and subject priorities and of a good quality.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve the way teachers and the senior leaders analyze and subsequently use data to ensure high student performance and rapid progress.
- Improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation of core activities, which includes the school improvement goals, throughout the school year.
- Ensure that goal setting in all areas of the school is highly focused with straightforward measurable goals.
- Improve the level of involvement and understanding of the school community in setting school and student performance goals and plans.
- Improve attendance.
- Ensure that the scheduling of student courses is accurate and based on their needs.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school with some proficient features.

The school collects a wide range of useful and highly relevant data and the principal knows and satisfactorily understands the value of keeping up to date with school data. It is used to keep the principal apprised of the credit accumulations of students, their Regents examination success rates and therefore what has to be achieved if a student is to graduate. The first year of graduation in 2005 showed highly promising results with 86% of students gaining college places. However, since then attendance has fallen dramatically and the frequency of Regents examination retakes indicates that the proportion of Regents passes has also fallen. The school has started to generate its own very useful data through student, staff and parent surveys.

The school leadership team and senior staff meet annually to set relevant goals for the next school year. The Comprehensive Education Plan is suitably short and focuses on three key areas for development, but the strategies for implementation are not written so that senior leaders can measure and evaluate the degree of success of each goal. Goal setting within action planning across the school is in its infancy. The school does, however, know the students who are most at risk of not meeting the standard and works hard to provide a supportive framework for them.

The curriculum is aligned with that mandated. Teachers know they are accountable for improving instruction. Students find their teachers approachable and acknowledge that they will do all they can to help them succeed. Students in most classes are engaged, and where teachers have organized their groups in specific ways and use questioning effectively, student concentration and learning is high. The school budget is used well. The Phoenix Academy is costly, but successful at re-integrating students with very low attendance. However, in other areas, such as human resources, there are gaps such as too few counselors and no access to a mathematics coach. Although student attendance is given a high priority, attendance has fallen each year since the school opened. Students indicate through several sources that scheduling of their courses is problematic.

Professional development is of a good quality. The school runs smoothly. Currently there is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of core activities. As a consequence the school is losing sight of its key development goals as it operates on a daily basis.

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 undeveloped.

The school collects a wide range of performance and attendance data on all students, their classes and across grades. The principal and assistant principal responsible for supervision know the rate of students' credit accumulation. They also know the likely success rate of each student and by grade in their Regents program. The school has designed its program of Regents examinations so that students might have opportunities

to retake failed examinations before they leave school. There is sound knowledge of the students who are not performing as they should. Equally, staff know and understand the credit accumulation situation for special education students and the achievements reached by English language learners, many of the latter becoming proficient in English well before leaving school. There is no analysis of data, for example, by ethnicity or gender. The school knows the progress of individuals, but it is rare for data analysis to do more than relate poor progress due to lack of attendance. This year the Phoenix Academy was set up for students who were long term absentees and on the verge of dropping out, and to date early findings indicate that it is a successful investment.

The school has recently undertaken a detailed well-being and satisfaction survey of all parents, students and staff. These have provided the school with extremely useful additional sources of information. The school has collated the data and early findings indicate that the school has armed itself with an invaluable resource to aid well-focused school development. However, no analysis has been done as yet. The school does not use its performance data to make comparisons with similar schools, and although much is known about individual students, and teachers are acutely aware of performance of the classes they teach, there is little other analysis to aid teaching and learning.

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.

Collaborative long term planning is mainly through the school leadership team. The resultant Comprehensive Education Plan, although useful, is not used as a working document. However, there is little attention given to the reviewing of such goals at different points in the year, and most importantly the language of the plan makes it difficult to measure the degree of success of the strategies and, therefore, the overall success in reaching each goal. Some subject departments set goals, but there is an inconsistency of approach towards goal setting and the way the plans are evaluated. Equally inconsistent in quality are other goals set by staff and required by the principal. The school is engaged in its own empowerment school initiative. Sixteen students have been identified as the basis of a research project on aids and barriers to literacy. However, it has taken nearly all of the school year to establish the parameters and focus for this project and it remains undeveloped.

Because the monitoring of student progress by teachers is largely thorough, the school has an up-to-date record of which students are making at least satisfactory progress, and those who are not. Therefore the school is able to target those students in greatest need of improvement. Apart from traditional intervention schemes, the school has introduced the Phoenix Academy for those at risk of dropping out. Active parents have high expectations for their children. They are in frequent contact with teachers who provide them with a wide range of valuable information. Teachers, likewise have high expectations of students, but absence impacts on the progress of many students. Personal student goals are not set nor are students held especially accountable for drawing up goals or adhering to them. Written goals and plans are not the main drivers of school improvement. However, the faculty and school leadership team frequently discuss issues about school improvement that often lead to specific types of professional development.

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 provides a broad curriculum aligned with the mandated curriculum. Students are able to follow all courses they require to graduate. However, the arts program is not especially developed for all students. There are many extra-curricular activities, several of which result in major events in the school, such as drama productions, fashion and talent shows. Teachers recognize that they are accountable for the quality of their teaching and the performance of their students. They know their students well and, through a basic analysis of individual and whole-class data, teachers respond to specific needs, either individually or by grouping students for specific tasks.

The budget is used satisfactorily, although by comparison with other schools, insufficient time is available for students to see counselors, and there is no mathematics coach. Apart from these areas, staffing decisions are made on the basis of student need. A very good example of the use of the budget is the establishment of the Phoenix Academy which is successfully meeting its goals of bringing back into school many students with very poor attendance and on the verge of dropping out. However, too many students indicate that their course schedules are not working in their best interests because they are timetabled into courses for which they already have credits. Equally, there is some concern on the part of the students about the blocking system that keeps the same students together all day. Teaching largely engages students. In some classes the planning is exemplary and teaching is of a high quality. However, the main concern for teachers and senior leaders is the high rate of absenteeism. Attendance has been falling over recent years and is now at 77%. Attendance is given a high priority, but except for the work of the Phoenix Academy, the strategies are not making an impact in raising attendance. Staff respect students and in most cases plan and teach in such a way that learning is interesting and effective. Students have adults that they trust and can talk with, but too frequently they find it difficult to access counselors.

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.

Staff are appointed on the basis of their knowledge and skills. The interview process tries to draw out whether prospective teachers can maintain high expectations for students. It is important to the principal that teachers bring practical enthusiasm to the job and a dimension to school life beyond their subject. Professional development is valued and is of a good quality. It also exists in many guises and at different times. For example, teachers have the opportunity to undertake courses beyond the school, as well as take part in department meetings and whole faculty events. Professional development is well targeted according to the needs of teachers.

One of the two assistant principals observes lessons frequently, and the principal also observes lessons and undertakes walkthroughs. There is an inconsistency in the way feedback is written up. Few teachers have the opportunity to observe peers, and the program of internship for students in relation to the teaching profession is insufficiently refined.

Subject planning takes place in teams. The common preparation periods are used well. For example, common preparation periods are used to ensure that teachers have a common understanding of the way a specific program of study is to be taught. Planning teams are responsible for designing their programs of study and are of a high quality. There is no formal exchange of departmental goals because there is no clear guidance as to whether departmental goals should be set and evaluated over and above those generated through the school leaders and the school leadership team. The principal is respected by staff and parents, and has the capacity to manage change. The school runs smoothly and basic procedures are clear although there are several systems that are applied inconsistently. The school dress code is not adhered to and too many students appear to take detention too lightly. The school aligns all partnerships and support services with its academic aims.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

The Comprehensive Education Plan goals are not evaluated at specific times during the year. These and other goals used by the school to aid development are rarely written in to allow for objective measurement to occur, which would in turn determine the degree of achievement and success. While school leaders comment on the progress of specific actions, there is no built-in mechanism in school plans for taking stock of where the school is on its way to the achievement of any of its goals. Because staff and senior leaders know their students well, they are able to compare progress in classrooms and between subjects. Teachers differentiate as a consequence of differential performance, and where necessary, intervention programs are provided for other students. However, the outcome of other aspects of such knowledge leads to little or no action. Therefore subject data from teachers' own and the school's periodic assessments often lead to changes in the way students are taught and organized. However, at a whole-school level such data is not used as effectively as in classrooms. Therefore, there is no evidence showing the changes made as a consequence, for example, of one subject having a higher success rate than others.

Because the quality of monitoring and evaluation of core activities is insufficiently rigorous or robust, there is no specific analysis of the success or otherwise of the main school improvement goals. Conversations at senior level and periodically with the faculty provide information about what appears to be working and what requires attention. As a consequence urgent issues are attended to. It is this interim information, rather than that from formal evaluations at set points in the year, which drives some of the work of the school. Therefore the school developments that occur are based on immediate needs, rather than planned for as a consequence of any detailed evaluation of the school's position towards the end of a school year. Hence there is no specific re-alignment of practices and resources to improve student performance. Planning for the new school year occurs, but the processes are insufficiently sharp and do not engage enough staff as partners in school development.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: High School for Teaching & the Professions (HS 433)	∅	✓	+
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		