



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Frederick Douglass Academy III

**High School 517
3630 Third Avenue
Bronx
NY 10456**

Principal: Rahesha Amon

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Reviewer: Ken Bryan

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Frederick Douglass Academy III is a replication of other schools within the Frederick Douglass academies, serving grades 6 through 11. There are seven other such academies across New York City. Frederick Douglass Academy III opened its doors for the first time in 2004. The school's ethnic composition is 57.3% Black, 40.6% Hispanic, 1.3% Asian and other ethnic groups and 0.9% White. The proportion of students eligible for Title 1 funding is 62.7%, which is higher than similar schools. The proportion of special education students is 5.5% and there are 3% English language learners, whose first language is Spanish. The student attendance rate is 90% which is broadly in line with similar and City-wide school averages.

Frederick Douglas Academy III is an empowerment school. Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make 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 paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is well respected by staff, students and parents and she demonstrates significant capacity to manage change.
- Adults have excellent relationships with the students which are developed through very effective academic and personal guidance.
- The school is very data rich and it systematically generates and analyzes student, class, grade and subject statistics to inform its goals and plans.
- Very high expectations are conveyed to the students and their response to this level of challenge is excellent.
- The school significantly enhances the educational programs through the creative use of international visits, trips and other collaborations.
- Very rigorous procedures are in place to identify, challenge and meet the needs of students in greatest need of improvement.
- The schools collaborative teams effectively set demanding goals for improvement.
- The school runs very smoothly, being calm, purposeful and a goal oriented learning community.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to raise levels of student attendance in all grades.
- Raise levels of parental involvement.
- Continue to review the curriculum maps to provide integrated, differentiated and engaging programs.
- Continue to develop the faculty's confidence and competence in the use of data to inform differentiated instruction.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Frederick Douglass Academy III is extremely proud of its intimate learning environment which combines rigorous college preparation with meeting the needs of the whole child. As a result the teachers have an excellent understanding of the academic and personal development of all students. The school is very well managed by the principal and her cabinet and they are supported by a highly committed faculty. The school uses data very effectively and there are very robust procedures to identify, challenge and meet the needs of all groups of learners. The systematic analysis of the data through the school's management system is rigorous. Extended day programs, advanced placement classes, college preparation visits and small group instruction are very powerful vehicles to promote progress. The targeting of individual students through the challenging credit accumulation data means that no student is left behind. The school effectively sets goals for individual students and high expectations are communicated to the parents. The teachers are held accountable to provide differentiated instructional programs and most of the students are well engaged. Professional development programs are planned and delivered effectively.

Excellent relationships, a calm and purposeful atmosphere, clear and decisive leadership and the use of foreign visits are key features of the successful Frederick Douglass Academy III.

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 and generates data extremely effectively. Systems for the gathering of data from a variety of assessments are rigorous, systematic and are used consistently by most staff. The school's data analyst competently analyzes trends and he communicates these outcomes very efficiently to all members of the learning community. The school analyzes data from a number of State and school-based periodic assessments using the student assessment management system. This Frederick Douglass Academy III device stores and interprets student, classroom and grade information and rigorous comparisons are made with other cohorts, departments, the school's own past performance and peer schools.

Frederick Douglas Academy III successfully analyzes sub-group data. It has clear and coherent achievement indicators for its English language learners and its special education cohorts. Personalized intervention plans are devised to target remediation to support those freshman 9th graders who arrive in the school working below grade level performance. The guidance counselor and the pupil personnel and cabinet achievement teams are very effective in assigning students to individualized programs which involve extended day and lunch and learn sessions. The early identification of trends and relative

performance also applies to gender and ethnicity. The empowerment schools initiative target cohort is another significant group tracked through this process.

Time related comparisons are clearly communicated, and the school demonstrates high expectations and rigor with regard to students at risk of not meeting the standard through the analysis of credit accumulation.

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

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The cycle of self review, action planning and the completion of the Comprehensive Education Plan is extremely thorough and robust. Through excellent collaboration, the school sets its goals mid-year, in June, at the beginning of the year and in January. A process of rigorous continuous modification adds to this formal cycle, using constantly available data from summative, formative and diagnostic assessments and from class-based periodic data. The principal’s performance review has also contributed to the focus.

The advice from content area specialists and the use of an externally sourced consultant helps the teachers to set challenging goals according to the available data. Consequently, the faculty is developing its levels of competence and confidence in the use of data for setting challenging goals and for planning differentiated instruction.

The school uses credit accumulation statistics to inform the goals for students at risk of not meeting the standard. This process is a very strong tool for identifying the small number of off-track students. Academic and personalized intervention plans are excellent examples of the level of academic and personal guidance and support for all students.

Information regarding student achievement and progress is regularly communicated to parents, by phone, by letter, through consultations and through the growing use of e-mail and staff web-sites, which include links to Princeton Review information. This area is particularly strong at Frederick Douglas Academy III. Successes and achievements are effectively communicated to parents and expectations are rising.

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 aligns its curriculum with the state mandated programs. The teachers and the school’s coaches regularly review data to determine modifications to the curriculum. As a consequence, the school is currently undertaking a program of realignment with the help of a consultant, in order to modify the pacing calendar, instructional approaches and the use of resources. Further materials have been bought to address the needs of the schools elective programs and Regents and college preparatory components. This process, based upon student data is rigorous and a developing feature of the school.

Teachers are held accountable for improving instruction. Levels of confidence and competence in the gathering and use of data are steadily increasing amongst the faculty. The use of differentiation informed by meaningful interim data is proficient and developing. Students are carefully grouped and resources are now being selected according to the outcomes of data analysis.

Budgeting and scheduling decisions are based upon the data from periodic assessments and other interim measures. This extremely rigorous process has enabled the principal to provide elective courses, extended day programs, summer school courses and double periods within the schedule. This has resulted in very good credit accumulation and pass rates.

The classes actively engage the students. The students feel challenged but supported through very close relationships with the teachers. One child stated that, "life is full of constant obstacles and Frederick Douglas Academy III helps us to overcome them and move forward."

The levels of student attendance are higher in the lower school when compared to the high school grades. Levels of absence are higher in 9th grade, which is clearly demonstrated by the data. The school effectively challenges absence through robust systems and the work of the attendance team and it celebrates good attendance accordingly. The school is seeking to raise the levels of student attendance through increased levels of engagement with the parents.

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

Collaboration lies at the heart of the teacher hiring process. The principal and her cabinet actively seek teachers who are highly qualified, passionate about education, have the capacity to develop their understanding and use of data and are able to articulate high expectations. Teachers are required to be subject specialists but have the capacity to plan in an inter-disciplinary way.

Differentiated professional development is given a high priority in the school. Programs are determined by student data and are planned collaboratively according to need. Opportunities to turnkey information to the staff are frequent and are effectively delivered. Analysis of scholarship reports, the Princeton Review and classroom data is collaboratively used to plan differentiated professional development for all staff. This is effectively augmented by frequent and regular classroom observations by the principal, other members of the cabinet and by the subject coaches. There is a strong sense of peer support and collaboration within the faculty. Communication between faculty members is effective. For example, the meetings schedule is very thorough and the use of a weekly staff newsletter and frequent e-mails ensures that the entire faculty is on message.

The principal has the full respect of the teachers, the students and the parents. She is highly visible in the school and she demonstrates excellent instructional and academic leadership. The school is extremely well organized and runs very well on a day-to-day basis. The hallways and classrooms are attractive and well organized.

The school has very well established collaborations and partnerships with outside agencies and organizations such as with Replications Inc., who have helped in the creation of the school, community based organizations and other after school providers who significantly enhance the education of the students. Each community based organization supports the mission statement of the school which is to send each scholar to the institution of higher learning of their choice.

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Collaboration, effective communication and the rigorous use of data are at the center of the school's self evaluation process. The school uses interim diagnostic assessments to inform its mid-year modifications to its goals and plans. The grade data and Regents outcomes are disaggregated using scholarship and item analyses. Consequently, judgments are made about the effectiveness of curriculum plans, periodic assessments and goals. Comparisons of student progress, grade performance and the relative progress made within departments are effective. This intrinsically informs the personalized education plans for target and at risk groups. A good example is the way 9th graders are now being challenged with regard to credit accumulation targets and attendance. The school has planned a summer bridge program to compensate for the lack of achievement on entry. Frederick Douglas Academy III is beginning to make informed comparisons with its statistical neighbors. Other modifications to the plans this year have been the introduction of double periods, the blocking of science and mathematics to facilitate inter-disciplinary planning, and for the provision of Advanced Placement classes for above credit students.

The school has an effective cycle of school self-review and planning. A faculty retreat is used to plan for the year and to inform the Comprehensive Education Plan. All constituents of the school work with the school leadership team to create the constantly modified Comprehensive Education Plan. Good examples of this endeavor are the rewriting of the curriculum maps through collaboration, the work of an external consultant and the emphasis upon the use of technology for professional uses.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Frederick Douglass Academy III (HS 517)	∅	✓	+
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	