



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies

High School 520

470 Jackson Avenue

Bronx

NY 10455

Principal: Leba Collins-Augone

Dates of review: February 8 - 9, 2007

Reviewer: Helen Donnellan

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies (FLAGS) High School provides instruction for 465 students from the Bronx. The number of students enrolled has risen steadily and a continual growth in numbers is predicted. This school has occupied three different sites since it was established and is now located within a district 75 school building. There is limited access to the cafeteria and the gymnasium at the site.

Seventy-three percent of the students are Hispanic, 22.2% Black, 2% Asian, 1% White with American Indian or Alaskan Native students making up the remainder. Approximately 10% are special education students and some special education students from the host school are included in global studies classes. Just over 7% of the students are English language learners. The school is eligible for Title 1 funding. Attendance, at 89.7% in 2005, was higher than similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- This is a school with high expectations for behavior, attendance and academic outcomes and students progress well in their studies.
- The principal provides strong and visible leadership, makes clear what is expected of staff and students and is effective in managing change.
- The principal ensures that data, which shows how well students are performing, is regularly gathered and analyzed.
- Staff and leaders co-operate well to deliver a widecurr iculum within the constraints of a physically limited educational site.
- A range of effective working relationships with other professionals provides good support for students and helps them to prepare for their lives after leaving the school.
- The curriculum is broad and provides students with good opportunities to gain a good undestanding of global studies in this country and through international visits
- The curriculum is regularly reviewed and the views of students are taken into account so that the content more closely reflects their needs and interests.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the use of data by faculty teams and teachers, to inform planning and set goals and targets for improvement.
- Ensure that teachers use data routinely in their planning to differentiate what they teach within their classes.
- Compare the achievement made by all students so that the progress of students at all levels can be recognized and celebrated.
- Strengthen the professional development program to increase staff understanding and use of data and monitor closely its impact on practice.
- Increase student involvement in classes, making them more active in their learning.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

This is a school with high expectations for behavior, attendance and academic outcomes and students progress well as a result. The principal is not complacent about what can be achieved and is open about working for continual improvement. She provides strong and visible leadership, making clear what is expected of staff and students and is effective in managing change. Her analyses of data are clear and show how well students are performing. This information is used well to monitor progress and to inform any adjustments required to the curriculum or intervention strategies for individuals. There is some good practice in the use made of data by teachers to inform instruction. Some staff, however, do not use the information on a regular basis and therefore miss opportunities to differentiate what is taught and make students aware of what they need to do in order to achieve higher grades.

Staff and leaders collaborate to deliver a curriculum that moves the students forward despite the limitations of space. The principal and her team are aware of the strengths and areas for development within the school and have the capacity to secure further improvement.

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 proficient.

The school has a comprehensive range of standardized test data and teacher observation information on its students. Test results for English language arts, mathematics, English as an additional language, foreign languages, physical education, art, business education, music and social studies give a clear indication of progress towards Regents and graduation requirements six times during each academic year. This data is analyzed carefully at whole class and individual student level, so that a clear picture is available of how each student, including English language learners, is progressing towards the pass mark needed. The progress of special education students is carefully recorded and tracked by the special education and resource room teachers, who make clear links between the needs of these students and the general education curriculum.

Although progress is measured against pass marks, the school does not systematically track or compare the progress made by students from one marking period to the next. This means students who make significant progress without reaching the pass mark have fewer opportunities for their achievement and progress to be celebrated.

The principal undertakes some useful comparisons of data as she evaluates the impact of teaching on learning. Student performance between different classes is closely contrasted and considered alongside the information from lesson observations. In this way the

principal is able to identify good practice and aspects of teaching that require improvement. Comparisons of the relative performance of different ethnic groups are currently not in place. The data systems in place enable the school to track trends in performance and compare its results to those of similar schools.

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 undeveloped.

The school is rich in data, which is used to inform the ambitious goals established in the Comprehensive Education Plan. This is a collaborative exercise involving the faculty and members of the school leadership team so that all are aware of what the school is trying to achieve. The principal’s reviews of performance data of different groups and subject areas inform discussions about goals to be set at departmental and class level. There is a drive to ensure that departments play a more proactive role in this process. Goals are set for students in terms of end of grade outcomes, but interim milestones are not consistently in place so the students do not always know the particular skills and knowledge that they need to master in order to achieve their goals. Some staff use data well to identify students’ strengths and areas to work on. However, others are more resistant to the use of formal data, preferring to rely on informal and observational information about students. The principal recognizes the need for all teachers to apply both formal and informal assessment data routinely to check progress.

Performance data and lesson observations are used by the principal systematically to identify students who are not making the expected progress so that the reasons for the underperformance can be explored and appropriate intervention strategies can be put in place. The regular tracking of special education students informs both the goals set and their progress towards them.

Students and parents are made fully aware of the schools’ expectations for all students to achieve the 44 credits for graduation and Regents in five subjects. Parents receive regular feedback about the progress of their children and the monthly parents’ association meeting provides good opportunities to share important information about the school’s work. Students and parents are clear, for example, about areas to focus on to improve behavior through the personal behavior contracts between the school, student and parent.

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.

Students follow the mandated curriculum of English language arts, mathematics, social studies and science and elect subjects from theater, persuasive speech, technology, journalism, dance, street law and etymology. Student opinions, alongside other data, are taken into account by the accreditation committee in their regular reviews of the curriculum. English language arts and social studies teams are further ahead of other subject teams in the way that global studies are incorporated into what is taught. After

school classes constructively extend and reinforce content from lessons through a varied program that includes a model United Nations. The physical education curriculum is limited by access to gym facilities on the shared site, which restricts students wishing to participate at higher levels of sport.

Despite some good practice, not all teachers are using data on student performance regularly to inform their planning and match the content of each lesson to the different needs of the students in each class. The administration team has taken active steps to address staff reluctance through a planned program of external training and support.

Budgeting is driven by the needs of overall student performance. The school has implemented from its own resources, for example, the 'Ramp Up' program for students performing at levels 1 and 2 as it recognizes the positive impact that this can have on achievement. The allocation of staff to classes is carefully informed by students' preferred learning approaches as well as teacher preference. Scheduling takes into account the needs of the students but is constrained by the fixed times for accessing the shared facilities of the host school.

Students like the range of classes and recognize the different styles of instruction used by teachers. They place particularly high value on sessions where teachers draw out learning from them, seek their views and encourage their active participation. The extent to which this happens varies across classes. Students would like to have more opportunities to use computers and technology.

Students recognize that teachers want them to achieve well and that instruction focuses on them achieving the necessary credits to graduate. Students can and do share their personal concerns with individual staff who they respect. Student attendance and punctuality are tracked with rigor. The time between the school opening and start of classes allows little time for all students to pass through security, which results in late arrivals for the first period of the school day. Data has shown that pass rates are lower for first period classes and administration is exploring ways to overcome this.

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.

All staff at the school are committed to working with the students to help them achieve academic success, which is reflected in how they work beyond their contracted hours to support the students. The principal has clear expectations of existing staff who are in school and any applicants who may apply for posts that become available.

The principal actively leads staff in the use of data to support them in their work and recognizes that considerable support is needed in order for all staff to be comfortable with using data. External consultants support the principal well in developing the use of data in classrooms. Teachers who are positive about using data share their good practice to encourage others to use evidence as the basis for what they teach. This is well illustrated by the art department where progress is carefully tracked and data is shared with students so that they know which skills and aspects they need to work on. Lesson plans are carefully linked to the tracking information.

Lesson observations are carried out by the principal and assistant principal, which helpfully extend their knowledge of instruction gained from their daily 'drop-ins' and other informal observations. Follow-up conferences with the teachers enable points for development to be shared but suggestions relating to the use of data are not always fully adopted by teachers, leading to inconsistency across the school.

Faculty conferences take place twice each month, where plans and interventions are fully discussed and adaptations made on the basis of staff observations. The meetings provide regular opportunities for sharing and evaluating practice. Inter-visitations are, however, informal and infrequent, thus limiting their use as a tool for improvement.

The principal shows clear leadership and models high expectations to staff and students. Students readily approach her with concerns, which she listens to and makes clear what can and cannot be done. Notwithstanding the limitations of the accommodation, the principal has established a school that runs smoothly by ensuring that protocols are consistently followed.

The range of after-school activities includes good opportunities for students to develop both local community and international links, such as those established with a school in Mali. Well-focused support and guidance are provided within the school to give all students a unified service. This ensures that the school is effectively supporting students in achieving its goals of developing their global understanding and awareness.

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.

The principal openly shares her approach of continual reflection and review through the question "How can we do this better?" as part of the formal and informal monitoring of the school. This reflective style underpins the regular monitoring and review of programs from whole school to class plans. The administration team uses the data from each of the six marking periods to review whether plans and interventions are leading to what students need to achieve. This is then considered alongside the goals within the Comprehensive Education Plan to evaluate effectiveness at a whole school level. Formal monitoring of the Comprehensive Education Plan goals is ensured as this forms part of the twice yearly review of the principal's performance.

Information from classroom observations and class test results are compared to identify those aspects of practice in need of a changed approach or intervention. As soon as information indicates a need for review of intervention, the administration team begins to evaluate different options that will lead to goals being achieved. Analysis of test scores, for example, revealed that the limited range of vocabulary was hampering student achievement. This was addressed by the vocabulary enrichment program, which has led to teachers in all curriculum areas explicitly incorporating vocabulary into lessons. This is a comparatively new initiative so it is too early to measure the impact on student outcomes.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies (HS 520)		∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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	