



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Academy for College Preparation and Career  
Exploration**

**Middle - High School 382  
911 Flatbush Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11226**

**Principal: Ditta Korbeogo**

**Dates of review: February 26 - 27, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Roy Storrs**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Academy for College Preparation and Career Exploration is a College Board middle school-high school with 328 students from grades 6, 7, 9 and 10. The school population comprises 87% Black, 9% Hispanic and 4% other students. The student body includes 0.9% English language learners and 6.1% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 91.5%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 64% eligibility.

The school shares a campus with four other schools, and shares some accommodation. As the school's boundaries are not secure it has endured a spate of theft of expensive materials and equipment which has put pressure on the budget.

The school has grown from its initial complement of 152 students in September 2006, to its current number, with the expectation that it will expand to 560 students within the next 18 months.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The dedicated principal is the driving force behind the school's development.
- The school collates detailed records of students' achievements and progress.
- The principal's high expectations are supported by teachers, parents and students and are evident in many aspects of school life.
- Regular and effective communications ensure parents are kept fully informed with many parents providing regular, invaluable support within the school.
- The curriculum is enriched by a broad range of interesting learning experiences, some related to future career opportunities.
- Teachers and students work together in an environment of mutual trust and respect so a pleasant atmosphere is evident in classrooms.
- A comprehensive program of professional development is addressing whole school and individually teachers' needs.
- Fruitful partnerships with outside organizations especially extend the horizons of higher achieving students.
- Students feel they are well supported, especially with college preparation.
- The principal's program of classroom observations enables her to monitor rigorously the quality of instruction.

### What the school needs to improve

- Provide further training and support for teachers in analyzing and using data to track and accelerate students' progress.
- Schedule more opportunities for teachers to meet in teams to set goals and plan stimulating lessons in which students learn through discovery.
- Provide opportunities for all teachers, especially those new to the school, to observe the examples of lively, interesting and differentiated instruction.
- As the school grows, delegate management tasks more widely.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### **Progress made since the last review**

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report

### **Overall Evaluation**

#### **This school is proficient.**

This relatively new school has made significant steps in its development, largely due to the determination of the principal. The principal appreciates that she will have to delegate more responsibility to others as the school grows. As the school's name implies it has high aspirations for its students, exemplified by some grade 7 students taking demanding high school courses. Rigorous collection of a range of data provides the school with a valuable overview of the performance of each student, class and grade. The principal has identified that further training will be required as the school grows, to ensure teachers make best use of this information to improve students' achievement and progress. Teachers use data to set goals individually, some using sophisticated computer programs, but there are too few opportunities for teachers to plan and set goals in teams. Efforts are underway to produce a system to follow each student's progress as they move through the school from grade to grade. Teachers and students relate well. There is a positive atmosphere in classrooms and students enjoy school. Advisories, home rooms and the specialist skills of the counselors, who work closely with faculty, effectively support students' academic, social and emotional development. The curriculum is enlivened by numerous additional programs designed to match the varied interests of the students and through productive partnerships with outside entities. Instances of interesting, well differentiated instruction provide models for those teachers whose instruction is less inspirational and for those new to the school. The various monitoring systems, such as the principal's classroom observations and teachers' testing regimes, chart the school's progress effectively. The school enjoys close relationships with parents, many of whom are actively involved as volunteers in school. All areas for improvement identified in the previous report have been addressed. The school's expectations are clear and improved data analysis and monitoring give an accurate picture of the school's performance over time. There is more to be done on developing instructional practices, including differentiation, and in establishing more effective teamwork. The inquiry team is focused on improving the organizational and writing skills of 13 students in grade 7 with low achievement in English language arts. The team is in the early stages of developing its strategies for meeting its target.

#### **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 the student's progress over time.**

#### **This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school constructs an informative baseline of data by analyzing records from students' previous schools, usefully supplemented by information gleaned during the summer bridge program prior to the students' enrollment in grades 6 or 9. The school's data specialist collates this and a wide range of other external data and internal test scores in a detailed electronic format. Her careful analysis provides a valuable overview of the achievement and progress of each student, classroom and grade level over time. In her study the principal displays this information graphically, by class, grade and gender, for all to see.

The data reveals that overall girls achieve higher than boys other than in Math B, where they perform similarly, and that Hispanic students are the lowest achievers. Rather than treat these anomalies as gender or ethnicity issues, the school is addressing them by peer support. Pairing high with low achieving students has already led to them making better progress. Additional data on special education students in their detailed individual education plans, backed by teachers' observations, ensures that they receive suitable support. These students and the very few English language learners, whose data is reviewed closely, also benefit considerably from student pairing and by teachers working voluntarily on a one-to-one basis at lunch time to help raise their achievements. While the principal compares data with other schools, there are few similar ones. Meetings of principals of the other College Board and network schools, with which she associates, provide useful sounding boards for comparison although the schools are not like this school. The school is developing a data culture, but not all teachers are confident in collecting and using data to analyze and plan. With a rapidly increasing faculty, the principal has rightly identified the need for considerably more training and support for teachers in this area to track and enhance students' progress.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

All teachers test students regularly to identify weaknesses which are translated into measurable goals for improvement. A minority of teachers take this to a much higher level by creating electronic files recording everything pertinent to the students in each of the classes they teach. From this data they are able to generate reports with different foci giving information which substantiates their goal setting for individuals, groups and grades. These successful exemplars support the efforts underway to create an individual tracking record for each student, maintained from grade to grade. Some teamwork occurs, but there are too few planned opportunities for grade and subject teams to meet to set objectively measurable goals to be achieved within specific time frames. Students in greatest need are those whose parents show little interest in their children's schooling. Regularly held "advisories", involving one teacher or counselor and 10 students, provide an effective support mechanism to alleviate this problem and to help all students set meaningful goals for themselves. The principal's high expectations are constantly promoted through the school's strongly worded motto 'Failure is not an option'. These expectations and the school's academic goals have the strong support of the whole school community. The school's open door policy and numerous forms of communication actively reinforce links between home and school. Calendars of events and testing periods, well-attended consultation meetings and workshops are invaluable in keeping parents fully informed about their children's progress and how they might best support them. Although at an early stage of development, the the school's website is

being usefully extended to enable parents to access their children's school records on line. A particular strength is the degree of involvement of parent volunteers, some of whom work in school every day helping in the office, in classrooms or as chaperones on field trips.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

Students follow the mandated core curriculum. Cooperation between English and social studies teachers, and math and technology teachers, is beginning to make the curriculum more cohesive and meaningful by taking advantage of natural links between these subjects. In keeping with the school's expectations, high achieving students in grade 7 are taking challenging high school courses. At the other extreme, students in danger of not meeting grade requirements benefit from individualized computer support programs. A breadth of other interesting activities is available to enrich students' lives and extend their education. Students can engage in dance, chess, steel pan band and model plane making courses. The "ladies in training" program is a useful initiative which help girls with low esteem resolve social issues. Talented students are involved in university research or the entrepreneurship program which teaches students to run their own small businesses. Teachers and students say how much they trust and respect one another, so there is a pleasant atmosphere in classrooms. However, not all instruction is suitably differentiated, motivating and challenging. Nor does it actively engage the students' full interest or involve them in a discovery approach to learning, which is part of the school's mission statement. School management is complicated by the need to share accommodation and by limited security. Nevertheless, budget, staffing and scheduling decisions are made thoughtfully. Math results were identified as a concern. To resolve matters, the principal hired an additional teacher to reduce class sizes and an assistant principal with a high school math background. Improved math results are already discernable. In anticipation of increased number of English language learners as the school grows the principal has made plans to hire a specialist teacher to work with them. Thorough procedures encourage good attendance. Having identified patterns of persistent lateness of a few students, the principal follows this up with parental contact, with positive outcomes in most cases.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to 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 makes regular informal, but rigorous, visits to classrooms to review the quality of instruction. Her observations may result in advice, some form of support or written feedback, which teachers appreciate. The extensive professional development program has been designed to meet the needs of the school as a whole and those of individual teachers. Early school closure for training three days a month has focused on assessment, including critical analysis of students' work. Very recently the principal established a professional development library, including CDs and video productions of quality instruction, as another useful source of stimulus for teachers. The potential of these valuable initiatives as means of raising standards has yet to be realized. The most

influential training, much of it based on developing a culture of student engagement, has been that provided by the College Board, which teachers rate highly. While teachers have opportunities to visit other classrooms informally, these are not regular enough. However, the principal arranged a learning walk by all teachers to grade the classroom environments, which was a salutary experience. New teachers to the school are made welcome, feel supported and are soon absorbed into school life. Efforts are underway to sharpen induction procedures as the school grows.

Students feel well supported by staff generally and through advisories and brief daily home room periods which give a sense of identity and security. Guidance counselors work closely with faculty to promote students' academic, social and emotional development. One counselor gives special attention to college preparation, in keeping with the school's name, and students value this feature. The school runs smoothly as procedures are understood and adhered to. The principal has borne much of the pressure as the school has grown and is now drafting handbooks for teachers, parents and students. She appreciates that she must delegate responsibility more widely as the school expands. Staff and students benefit from partnerships with numerous outside organizations such as the YMCA leadership program. Summer programs with two academic institutions especially challenge the high achieving students.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

Monitoring procedures are becoming more firmly established as the school develops. The school leadership team, which profits from supportive parental input, is engaged in constructing the Comprehensive Education Plan. In the interim, clearly expressed and measurable goals within the principal's performance review form the basis on which the school operates and judges itself. The principal knows every student and is conscientious in following their progress and that of each class and grade. The detailed graphs provided by the data specialist and displayed in her office help this process considerably. The principal's classroom observations focus on professional growth and play a key role in advising teachers on how to improve their instruction. Teachers are vigilant in setting regular tests to assess their students' progress. In some subjects the results of tests reveal specific areas of weakness which enable teachers to set new goals to overcome them. Teachers' discussions with students provide further useful evidence of their understanding and contribute to future goals setting. The most effective form of monitoring, demonstrated by a small number of teachers, uses a computer program to follow students' progress closely as a means of checking the effectiveness of their instruction. Data derived from these sources enables the school to check students' promotion status, to plan academic intervention for those in danger of not making the grade and accelerated programs for the higher achievers. Through these thorough procedures, the school adjusts its plans and moves on to the next stage of development. Meetings with staff, parents and students confirm that they are constantly striving towards their shared vision that all students will graduate, enter college, follow a successful career path and become well-adjusted members of society.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Academy for College Preparation and Career Exploration</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>			X		

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.**

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?			X		
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?			X		
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?			X		
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?		X			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			X		

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.**

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?		X			
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?			X		
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?			X		
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			X		

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?			X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?		X			
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?			X		
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X		

<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?			X		
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?			X		
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					X

<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					X

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>