



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Abraham Lincoln High School**

**High School 410**

**2800 Ocean Parkway  
Brooklyn  
NY 11235**

**Principal: Ari Hoogenboom**

**Dates of review: March 3 - 5, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Roy Storrs**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Abraham Lincoln is a high school with 2674 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 33% Black, 22% Hispanic, 24% White, 18% Asian students and 3% from other ethnic groups. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 82.4%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school has been restructured recently. Using a grant from the Gates Foundation, the school has been working with an organizational facilitator from John Hopkins University to establish "small learning communities". Eighteen months ago, the school established a ninth grade academy located within a defined physical area, directed by two assistant principals and a lead teacher. Eight core teachers working in four teams have their own classrooms. A team room for teachers, guidance counselors and social workers helps bond the team. After its success, three other vertical academies (Math, Science and Technology, Humanities and Fine Arts and Sports and Fitness) have been established starting in grade 10. These also have two assistant principals as directors, a pathway coordinator who leads team-planning activities, and dedicated teams of teachers, guidance counselors and social workers.

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## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Faculty and students respect and admire the principal's considerable skill as a teacher and his dedication to the school.
- The supportive assistant principals have enthusiastically accepted their dual subject and academy responsibilities.
- The strategic decision to create the ninth grade academy has been successful in raising achievement.
- The ninth grade academy provides a good model for the three upper academies, which have made a positive start in grade 10.
- The school collects and records a wide range of useful data on students' achievements and attendance.
- Guidance counselors and support services work in close collaboration with teachers to promote students' academic, social and emotional growth.
- Administration's regular formal and informal classroom observations constantly monitor the quality of instruction.
- Displays of work, especially the exceptional photographic images and art work produced by the students, enhance the environment.
- Students enjoy a wide range of arts, sports and cultural activities and links with outside agencies which enrich their learning.

### What the school needs to improve

- Provide further training for administration and faculty in the effective use of data to follow students' progress over time.
- Instill a culture of critical data analysis throughout the school to enable teachers to set more specific, time-related goals for students.
- Be more proactive in using interim assessments to identify and help students on the cusp of meeting grade or Regents requirements.
- Look at ways of helping teachers make instruction more interesting and suitably differentiated so, that it engages students and meets their needs.
- Provide more opportunities for teachers to observe each other and evaluate one another's instruction to raise the quality of teaching overall.
- Sharpen and make more cohesive the various monitoring systems with the clear focus on improving student outcomes.

## 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.**

The school is moving forward under the principal's dedicated leadership. The bold strategic decision to change the structure of the school radically is proving to be well founded. The creation of the ninth grade academy as a small learning community, with a defined team of teachers, guidance counselors and other support staff who share a team room has been a success. Students, especially the less confident ones, enjoy the more confined learning environment. After only one year, the graduation rate from grade 9 to 10 has improved dramatically which is encouraging to the three newly formed upper school academies. A strong sense of identity is already emerging within the academies. Assistant principals who work in pairs as directors of the academies are enthusiastic about this additional responsibility alongside their subject administration.

A wide range of useful data is collected and being used more methodically to review students' performance and to set broad goals. Within this context, a culture of critical data analysis is not in place throughout the school, indicating the need for further training in using assessment data to push students on and to set appropriate goals. Students experience a varied curriculum and are supported well in their overall development. The school's focus on "Understanding by Design", whereby assessment is an essential lesson component, is evident in some classrooms. However, some instruction is not engaging nor is it suitably differentiated. Sound monitoring procedures maintain an overview of the school, but do not focus sharply enough on improving student outcomes.

Work on addressing the issues identified in the previous report is ongoing. The school has introduced a computer system to collect and analyze data and departments are devising interim assessments to help them set measurable goals. The foundations of three new academies have been laid in grade 10 and professional development is being enhanced by the school-based teachers' centre. The inquiry team is in the early stages of its focus on supporting 20 grade 9 students identified as being weak in science.

### **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 collects a range of valuable data from a variety of sources and a recently installed computer program is making it easier for the school to store the information in a logical, manageable form. Alongside academic data, regular analysis of attendance and

cutting data provides supplementary evidence about the students' profiles. Data available is equally detailed for special education students and English language learners, who represent a wide variety of home languages. Scrutiny of this array of data enables the principal and cabinet to identify students who have failed one or more classes, declined between marking periods or require other support and to plan appropriate intervention programs for them.

The principal is comfortable with electronic data systems and uses it to look at whole school scores in every subject. When data reveals variations between classes in the same grade or department, or disparity between the achievement of male and female students in different subjects, he investigates to see whether these are associated with the quality of instruction and takes action as necessary to rectify the anomaly. Assistant principals are now taking on more responsibility for collecting and analyzing data within the newly created academies as small learning communities. The principal's useful comparison of data from peer schools has indicated that the school is keeping its head up in English language arts and math. In social studies, it is slightly lower, so the assistant principal visited a similar department in another school to glean ideas. As data is not analyzed routinely across the school more training is planned for assistant principals and faculty to optimize use of such valuable data to follow students' achievement as they progress through the school.

**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.**

The principal is alert to the importance of analyzing data critically, but there has been no school-wide culture of teams and individual teachers using data to set specific, time-related goals for students. A positive step is the common preparation time which facilitates effective teamwork within departments and the four recently formed academies. Team members meet regularly to plan and assess their work and are using available data to review the performance of their students and set broad goals. The school is very supportive of students who are not succeeding for one reason or another. Academic recovery arrangements, such as ARC (academy for recovering credits) for students in grade 9 or the "Regents Review Modules" for students who have failed certain Regents examinations, are effective in helping these students make progress. The school is less alert to identifying students on the cusp of meeting grade or Regents requirements and helping them to succeed and, thus improving the school's overall performance. A few teachers have taken the initiative of purchasing computer programs which they find to be efficient and effective means of recording data, checking progress and setting learning goals for the students they teach.

The very caring principal is highly regarded by the students who are aware of his expectations which are stated formally in the student contract. This gives clear messages to students and their parents about all aspects of school life and the commitment expected of students. High standards are promoted by displays around the school, especially the exceptional photographic images and art work produced by the students which enhance the environment. Using numerous forms of communication, the school keeps parents fully informed about whole school matters and their children's achievement and progress. The parent teacher association strives to involve more

parents and has had success in involving parents of English language learners who are keen to support their children's progress.

**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.**

The school covers the mandated curriculum effectively and makes adjustments to resolve issues as in science where a low pass rate in life sciences in grade 9 led to an additional lesson. The focus for all departments upon "Understanding by Design" whereby assessment is built into lesson planning is beginning to take root in some classrooms. A wide range of additional electives and outside school cultural activities effectively broadens students' learning. Good Shepherd and Horizons organizations provide after-school programs based on drop out prevention. Their popular activities include a drama club and talent show. Within school, strong features are photography, art and physical education in which students achieve high standards. Some teachers also give freely of their time to lead hikes for English language learners as a way of helping them learn about the country beyond the City. The principal has produced very clear guidance on lesson planning. He expects students to be active participants in their learning and that teachers end lessons by checking whether students have understood the key concepts. However, in some classrooms instruction is uninspiring and not suitably differentiated, so does not engage students or meet their needs adequately.

The assistant principal for organization plays a key role in her prudent management of the budget and schedule, which is further complicated by the new academy structure. Recognizing the need to lift the school's performance, the principal believes that to effect change you need to change structures. This is reflected in the academies which are developing well and the way the supportive assistant principals have enthusiastically accepted their dual subject and academy responsibilities. The principal sets a good model for staff and students in the way he goes about his work. This is reflected by many staff whose relations with students are trusting and respectful. Sound procedures for promoting regular attendance are in place. There are also attempts to reduce the incidence of cutting by identifying possible links with particular lessons or subjects.

**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 proficient.**

Administration undertakes regular formal classroom observations and walkthroughs which constantly monitor the quality of instruction. The principal's acknowledged skill as a teacher is a significant factor in the process of identifying good practice. Information thus acquired directs aspects of professional development which is planned to balance whole school and individual teachers' needs. The work of the school's own teachers' centre is effectively coordinated by a trained coach who works with groups of teachers. A recent focus has been on developing good questioning skills as an assessment technique within the "Understanding by Design" approach. A particularly strong feature of professional development is a group of teachers observing the principal teaching a

class, followed by focused discussion. There are few opportunities for teachers to observe one another and evaluate one another's instruction as a means of extending good practice. Beyond the official mentoring program, new teachers are made welcome and supported by their departmental colleagues.

The impact of guidance counselors' work with teachers has been enhanced considerably by their relocation within academy team rooms. As a result, students feel very well supported in their academic and personal development. In such a large establishment, procedures have been set in place to ensure the school runs as smoothly as possible. Students are actively involved in this by having a voice through the student government which holds monthly consultative meetings with the principal to discuss issues which concern them.

Students benefit from links with a variety of outside agencies. Valued guidance from a John Hopkins University facilitator has helped establish the academy structure successfully. The Gilder-Leherman Foundation sponsors a popular Saturday School in American Studies and Kingsborough Community College supports the successful "College Now" program.

**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.**

The active school leadership team sets whole school goals that form the basis of subsequent planning and goal setting. Sound mechanisms for interpreting and redefining these goals and monitoring their impact are evident within departments and academies. Their potential effectiveness is diluted to an extent as they do not focus sharply enough on improving student outcomes and are not fully cohesive. In contrast, administration's regular and well-documented classroom observations provide an invaluable overview of the effectiveness of instruction across the school. These celebrate good practice and result in suitable support if necessary. The principal also reviews data to check students' achievement by grade in each subject and thus to assess the performance of teachers within the departments. Teachers within each department regularly assess their students' performance and progress and are prepared to make adjustments if necessary.

At whole school level, identifying the need to raise the performance of the school as a whole, led to the strategic decision to establish the academy structure. This bold move has given rise to the ninth grade academy. This has been successful in raising achievement and has provided a good model for the three upper academies, which have made a positive start in grade 10. Abraham Lincoln, after whom the school is named, stated that education was a key to give each citizen an "unfettered start" in life. The dedicated principal and his staff are working conscientiously to promote this fine aspiration.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Abraham Lincoln High School</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>