



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**The High School for Youth and Community
Development at Erasmus**

**High School 537
911 Flatbush Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11226**

Principal: Marie Prendergast

Dates of review: April 10 - 11, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Corinne Brown

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The High School for Youth and Community Development at Erasmus is a high school with 411 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 87% Black, 10% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 12.7% 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 84%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 62.8% eligibility.

The school opened in 2004 and this year has the full range of grades, 9 through 12. It is located on the Erasmus Hall campus site with four other small high schools. They share facilities such as the library, gymnasium, auditorium and cafeteria. The school shares two assistant principals with other schools. Teachers of art, music and English as a second language divide their time between this school and another.

The High School for Youth and Community Development at Erasmus is a small, liberal arts school which prepares students for college through an unscreened program.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's passion and effective leadership drive the school in its commitment to develop students holistically.
- The school has a thorough understanding of students' performance and progress through systematic use of data.
- Students in need make good progress through timely interventions.
- The school's high expectations are fully shared by its supportive parents.
- Staff are united in their dedication and determination to nurture students and foster leadership qualities in a supportive and reflective environment.
- Professional growth is encouraged and supported effectively, so that students experience success.
- Students feel safe, enjoy varied learning opportunities and value the efforts of all staff.
- Teachers are enthusiastic, collaborate well and so create interesting lessons based on the analysis of data.
- The school uses its resources carefully to support student learning and engagement through a rich curriculum.
- The administration work cohesively to refine practice in the light of data, with a clear vision for the future of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Incorporate quantifiable interim checkpoints into all goals to measure progress toward the target..
- Maximize student learning through varied tasks and questioning that develops higher order thinking skills.
- Ensure that written feedback to students is specific about their achievement and progress, with clear next steps delineated that are based on the rubric.
- Evaluate the impact of strategies toward consolidation of student attendance.
- Build further on teacher skills in using data to set goals and align instruction in order to ensure consistency across departments and grades.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The High School for Youth and Community Development at Erasmus is characterized by the energy, drive and compassion shown by the principal since opening the school four years ago. All staff are highly dedicated to promote the holistic growth of every student. They cohesively enable students to become independent learners and to take control of their own lives. The rapid growth in teachers' understanding of the effective use of data, so that its use is routine, reflects their energy and commitment. Data informs all meetings and decision-making. Analysis of performance, progress and intended outcome informs goal setting at every level, although it differs in refinement. The school revisits goals regularly. Goals do not always include quantifiable markers to measure progress toward the goal. Students who need additional support make good progress as a result of ongoing assessment and timely interventions.

Teachers are self-motivated and work tirelessly in a cycle of reflection. They tailor learning to students' needs by adapting practice. The school has a focus on personalized learning through creative and cooperative lessons. Some lessons incorporate varied tasks and skilled questioning that challenges all students' thinking. The school's positive culture nurtures students academically and develops social and emotional growth. Grading does not consistently state why students have achieved the grade, nor indicate their next steps. The school uses its budget carefully to provide good resources that enhance learning opportunities. Students are respected and have a strong voice in this school. Parents appreciate the school's high expectations for academic and social progress. This is explicit in the school's maxim, "Effort creates intelligence".

The school has undertaken significant work that benefits students following the previous Quality Review. It reviews student progress more frequently to revise and modify plans and goals. Teachers are more adept at using data to plan lessons that address student needs. The school compares its own performance with similar schools and with previous years to measure its effectiveness. Staff routinely analyze data by gender and other groupings in order to raise student achievement. The school's inquiry team meetings are well structured and rigorous. The team's target group of students represents common factors shared among wider groups in the school. Students were chosen through data analysis and staff consultation. The team has refined its skill focus, so concentrates on vocabulary in following directions across the curriculum. Meetings include regular comparative case studies. These heighten awareness of factors affecting performance and explore effective strategies. The team shares its findings with all staff.

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 well developed.

The school is rigorous in its use of data across the school. Meetings at every level refer to evidence to inform decision-making and adaptation of plans and goals. As a result, the school has a thorough understanding of student performance and progress by individual, group, class, grade and subject. It uses available City and State data reports to examine scholarship and attendance progress. As part of the New Visions network of schools, cohort data tracks student progress toward meeting graduation requirements. The school generates its own relevant data including baseline and interim assessments, teacher reports and electronic grading. Graphic representation, charts and tables, enhance the understanding of staff, students and parents. The school also conducts detailed case studies as part of ongoing practice to monitor progress. The instructional support services team rigorously monitors special education student progress and shares information with all staff. The team's own "Student Performance Monitoring System" is an innovative electronic database that carefully tracks student progress and monitors the impact of interventions. These students make excellent progress, with many passing Regents tests. The school suitably monitors the progress of English language learners in the same way as other students and using specialized test data.

The school generates focused data to track the relative performance by gender and by broad ability groups, such as advanced placement and lower achieving students. Where patterns or trends emerge, the school adjusts programs or initiates interventions. Perceived social and emotional needs inform supportive guidance and leadership programs, such as the rites of passage program for boys and girls. The school identifies patterns in grades and classes. It changed classes for ninth grade students to equalize performance in heterogeneous groupings. Teachers produce comprehensive data reports including detailed analysis of their class performance by marking period. The school compares itself to its network, district and peer horizon schools, makes links and so shares best practice. There is an upward trend in the credit accumulation of students each year.. Weekly professional development and individual meetings, software and data guides provide effective support in data utilization.

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 well developed.

Clear goal setting based on data is a systematic aspect of this school's work at every level. Whole school goals are clear and relevant to student performance and progress. Departments set year-end goals with inbuilt tracking to monitor progress. Teachers set class goals and students set their own goals each marking period. There is some inconsistency in goal setting across departments and grades as teachers build their skills in using data and aligning instruction. Significant numbers of students enter the school with very low achievement in literacy. They make good progress because of

interventions and targeted instruction. The school carefully tracks the performance of its lowest performing third of students, higher achievers and students with attendance issues. Students with emotional and social needs receive good support through targeted youth development services support. The school has devised community development seminars for ninth grade and made organizational changes to strengthen their sense of belonging. Indications are that these are having positive impact.

The school has an effective parent coordinator who engages parents through informative, well-attended workshops. Teachers contact parents frequently to formulate achievement plans, share good news and solicit support. Parents appreciate staff accessibility and efforts. The school uses multiple ways to communicate its high expectations to the community. Students feel safe, identify with school and have a voice, in line with the school's youth and community development mission. They welcome staff support and that they can talk to adults. Students appreciate the compassion and strong direction of the principal. One student commented on her support of the individual in crisis, "She really pulled through for me."

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

Teachers and administration analyze data by marking period to look for growth. They continually reflect on the progress of students and so modify practice and programs to better serve them. The school-wide grading policy informs rubrics across all classrooms that highlight effort and achievement. The school heterogeneously groups students and offers classes to meet identified student needs. The dedicated staff nurture students and foster leadership qualities in a supportive and reflective environment. The curriculum encourages student growth in academic, as well as social and emotional skill development. They express themselves and experience success through high quality art, music, sports, digital photography, and the use of the television studio. Students benefit from the small school culture but with access to campus facilities. Teachers are enthusiastic and positive. They are mutually supportive and create interesting lessons based on data. Students explore chemistry through poetry and fictional writing. Test results reflected their motivation and engagement. Video clips show student growth in public speaking confidence and mastery of content. Teachers are fully accountable and model positive interpersonal relationships. Students are involved in learning as they make connections to real life and work collaboratively. However, some lessons do not have varied tasks and questioning that challenges all students. Grading references rubrics, but does not always indicate why students achieved the grade or clearly indicate next steps.

The school uses its resources well to meet student learning and development needs. Respect and supportive relationships infuse the school culture. Students take greater responsibility for their learning and lives through exposure to the principles of youth development and community engagement. The school has suitable structures to support and encourage student attendance and minimize tardiness. It has noticed a pattern of decline in summer months so is implementing additional strategies to counteract this. Early reports show some positive results but there is not sufficient data yet for full evaluation.

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 and administration understand teacher strengths well through frequent walkthroughs and supportive observations. The school has a common language to discuss instruction and learning, with an explicit rubric, based on the "Principles of Learning" framework. Professional development is effective, targeted, and differentiated. Weekly meetings focus on student data so that lessons engage students. Regular common planning time and planned intervisitations refine practice. The administration encourages growth and builds capacity, so teachers design and lead some professional development sessions. Teachers confidently pursue ideas and initiatives, such as creating the student performance database. The new teacher induction committee is comprehensive, effective, and supportive.

The school invests heavily in effective partnerships, guidance, and support services to support student holistic growth. Two full-time youth development counselors provide integrated counseling and programs that enhance student personal growth. The Brooklyn College Community Partnership offers comprehensive academic support at the school and motivating enrichment classes. The school leadership programs benefit from the new alliance with College Summit to build a strong college culture. Brooklyn Central Initiative provides critical therapeutic services for all identified students. Student conduct is generally very good because of clear structures and procedures. Teachers have ownership of rules within classrooms based on school-wide expectations.

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 well developed.

The cabinet carefully monitors school and other goals regularly and adjusts plans and interventions as indicated. Although goals across the school have interim checkpoints, these are not routinely quantifiable to measure progress toward the goals. The administration ensures congruence of goals across the school. It cohesively highlights data use in all aspects of school life. Teachers rigorously analyze student assessment data by marking period. They revise instructional plans and interventions as indicated. The Freshman Institute uses the "Gear Up" program that significantly increases student identity with the school. It originates from analysis of students' fall semester report cards and other data. The administration revised the master program to ensure there are sufficient economics classes for students.

The school reviews data to make strategic, future plans. The principal is a strong leader who devolves responsibilities to empower staff. The cabinet is revising the student recruitment package to include new programs, such as legal studies. It is planning increased advanced placement classes. The school community embraces necessary change that benefits students. One teacher stressed, "The principal is a visionary, so I had to work here". All staff work tirelessly to improve student outcomes.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: High School for Youth and Community Development	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
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Quality Score				X	
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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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				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 demanding, 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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				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?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

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.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
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?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					X

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.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped