



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Teachers Preparatory School

Middle School-High School 697

**226 Bristol Street
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Michael Alcott

Dates of review: December 12 - 13, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Roger Holmes

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Teachers Preparatory School is a middle-high school with 600 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 88% Black, 11% Hispanic, and 1% White and Asian students. The student body includes less than 1% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 37% of the students enrolled and girls account for 63%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 86.5%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 73% eligibility. The school shares its building with another high school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's leadership skills, determination and modeling of good practice ensure that the vision for the school is driven forward.
- The school makes very effective use of data to review its performance and make well planned improvements.
- Teaching is good with data used effectively to plan instruction that is differentiated to meet the students' needs.
- There is a strong collegiate spirit amongst the staff in the school that supports reflective practice and encourages professional growth.
- There are positive relationships in the school that promote students' self belief and motivate them to do well.
- The school has a broad and innovative curriculum, which is enriched by the Teaching for Tomorrow and the Arts Centered Program.
- The arrangements for professional development are very effective and lead to consistent approaches that help students to learn.
- There are well established procedures, which enable the school to run smoothly.
- There is a firm and clear sighted belief in the school that the students deserve the best.
- Students make good progress academically and in their personal development as young adults.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the already effective use of data to identify students who are currently performing just below their expected level.
- Provide targeted support to continue to lift the achievement of underperforming students.
- Take forward the school's idea of developing portfolios of students' work to include material from all subject areas.
- Continue searching for ways to improve attendance, setting realistic short term targets so that progress can be seen and celebrated.

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.

Teachers Preparatory is a vibrant, successful school that makes a huge difference to the life chances of its students. Many of them are the first in their families to go through high school and most will be the first to get to college. The school's mission to provide high quality education for the benefit of the community is driven forward relentlessly by the principal. His dedication and highly skilful leadership are pivotal to the school's achievements. He has brought together a team of committed professionals who focus their work on the personal and academic development of the students. "They always go the extra mile," one student said. Teachers work very well together, sharing ideas and always looking for ways to be better. The care and concern that adults in the school show towards students, coupled with clear expectations of conduct and performance, have led to an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Students feel that they are listened to and that teachers want the best for them. As a result the school is a learning community in which everyone participates.

The school makes very effective use of a wide range of performance data. Students know how well they are doing and how they can improve as a result of the feedback they receive from teachers. Teachers know very clearly how well their students are performing and plan lessons that match their needs closely and that are also often lively and stimulating. Students who are underperforming are identified and given extra support. School leaders analyze data very effectively and use it to improve the way the school works, revising the way subjects are taught and identifying issues, such as students' restricted vocabulary that need to be addressed across the whole school. Classroom observation has given the principal important opportunities to affect the way teachers work as well as helping to shape the very effective professional development program in the school. His credibility and standing in the school has been further enhanced by his stepping in to rescue a class who were struggling with math.

The school runs smoothly and there is a positive climate that encourages students to learn. Students generally behave well in the school but attendance is below average, despite the considerable efforts that the school makes to improve it. Parents value the work of the school, particularly the high expectations it places on students. They also appreciate its willingness to listen to them and the way it works with the students. The school has a number of partnerships that support its work well, for example putting the school in touch with actors to support its arts program. As a result of all of these factors, students make very good progress.

The inquiry team has made a good start with its investigations and the school has made good progress since the last review, tackling the issues raised in the report and continually searching for ways to improve even further.

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 collects information from a wide range of sources including numerical data from tests and assessments and qualitative data from surveys, observations and discussions. This wealth of information provides an accurate and detailed picture of the way the school is performing and the progress that students are making. The principal and other school leaders analyze the data extremely effectively and are very clear about the messages it conveys. They compare the school's performance with other schools and look for ways to improve when they think the data shows that they could do even better. Students' performance is examined closely to see that they are making the progress that is expected and the school is very quick to intervene with extra support if anyone is seen to be slipping behind. The school also compares the results that students achieve each year including the percentage that pass the Regents examinations. The school does not sufficiently use the data it has on the progress that students make to measure its success and consequent trends over time.

Teachers have received effective training in using data. They know their students well and plan lessons that meet their needs and are well differentiated. Students know how well they are doing and how they can improve as a result of the clear feedback they receive from teachers. They feel very well supported by the teachers, "They want the best for us, they really do try," one student said. This effective, well matched support enables students to perform well and make very good 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 well developed.

School leaders and teachers examine data carefully and use it to set targets for students' performance. Teachers monitor work carefully and set goals, making sure that each student knows what they need to do to improve. Students appreciate this support and most respond very well to the well directed suggestions they receive. The principal and other school leaders track the performance of individual students and the way different groups are performing. The school intends to collect more assessment information by establishing portfolios of students' work in English. Any students who are seen to be underperforming are evaluated carefully, counseled and given extra support. The school is particularly successful in identifying these students and searching for the reasons behind their underperformance which often lie outside the school. Although it is very good at addressing underperformance, the school does not use its data to identify students who are close to achieving a particular target, such as reaching grade level, in order to focus extra support on them. Students and parents are made aware of the school's high expectations from their first contact with the school. Students know that

they will be given support and encouragement in order to achieve the best they can and that their conduct and behavior should be equally good. These expectations are reinforced continuously by everyone in the school and students welcome this consistent approach to their development. Parents respect the work that the school is doing. They feel well informed about the progress that their children are making and value the school's open door policy that gives them ready access to school leaders and teachers in order to discuss any issues they may have.

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 well developed.

The school has a broad and balanced curriculum which is greatly enriched by the Teaching for Tomorrow and the Arts Centered Program. Both of these programs give students unusual opportunities to extend their experience and apply their learning in real situations as was demonstrated when some students performed on a Broadway stage and others taught a lesson. Data indicates that these lessons have a high impact on improving student performance. The curriculum is strengthened by lessons after school and Saturday clubs which help students to catch up if they have not progressed at an accepted level. There is also a very full program of visits that enliven students' learning. School leaders identified a widespread problem that students encounter in reading complex texts. As a result they have instituted a concerted approach across the curriculum to develop these skills. This initiative is already having an impact on students' comprehension.

Lessons are well planned and often lively and interesting. Teachers take a great deal of responsibility for the progress their students make. Students appreciate their commitment, recognizing that many go the extra mile, meeting students after school or being available over the phone to discuss their work. School leaders are very aware of how well things are working in the classrooms, through frequent visits, analysis of data and from their discussions with staff and students.

Led by the principal, staff provide very good models of conduct which leads to the very strong climate of mutual trust and respect in the school. Students and staff acknowledge their responsibilities and feel supported and respected. The school takes the personal development of students very seriously and there is close collaboration between the guidance team and academic staff. Addressing problems that students have outside school often has a major impact on the progress that they make with their studies. The school works hard to encourage good attendance as part of its program to support students but it recognizes that levels of absence are still too high and is determined to continue working with parents and the community to tackle this issue.

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 assistant principals spend a great deal of time in classrooms, assessing how well the students are learning. This high profile reinforces the importance given to the quality of instruction in the school. Teachers value the professional discussions that follow these visits and the climate of continuous improvement that they encourage. Teachers collaborate very well through formal planning meetings, by visiting each others' classrooms and by sharing ideas. Teachers new to the school and those new to the profession are helped to settle in very effectively and value the support they receive from all sides. The overall program of professional development is very strong and effective. The school leaders' monitoring visits are a central feature of the program providing important information about the training that is needed and also providing closely focused individual support. Effective training has been provided on the use and interpretation of data and on lesson planning. There is always a strong focus on applying the school's agreed principals of instruction. The consistency of this approach in classrooms is a significant factor in the progress students make.

The school has well established procedures that help it to run smoothly so that teaching is not disrupted. Students generally respond well to the clear expectations of conduct in the school, particularly when they are helped by the friendly but persistent reminders from staff in the halls. Students feel safe in the school and most enjoy their time there.

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 school monitors each student's performance during the year comparing progress from the student's baseline performance to identify anyone who is falling behind. Teachers are very quick to provide extra support and try new strategies to help students catch up. School leaders maintain an overview of the process using data at the end of each marking period as well as direct observations during their visits to classrooms. This analysis has led to whole-school issues being identified, such as students' relatively low performance in social studies. As a result the school has introduced a new program and revised the way it is taught which has already led to students performing better. Students' difficulties in getting detailed meaning from text have also been identified in this way which has led to a school wide drive to develop this skill.

The school also sets appropriate expectations for teachers' performance, which contribute the good quality of instruction that the students receive. School improvement plans are based on an analysis of the school's performance and an examination of where this falls short of the demanding goals that it sets itself. These plans are reviewed regularly to see if they are working successfully and are modified if necessary or strengthened, sometimes by the provision of additional training for staff.

The school is always looking for ways to improve. It is already doing very well, but is far from complacent. The school's purpose and vision is very clearly understood and accepted by the whole school community and there is determination to keep driving it forward.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Teachers Preparatory School	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				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	
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